

TITLE AND NUMBER: 209 It's all about love!



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSES: Mark 12:28-31

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, 'Of all the commandments, which is the most important?' 'The most important one,' answered Jesus, 'is this: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these.'

LOOKING FURTHER: 1 Samuel 16:7; Deuteronomy 11:13-15; Psalm 119:132; John 14:21-23

What does the Bible passage tell us?

We can't go very far in life without coming up against rules. That is true in prison even more so. Sometimes, trying to follow all the rules can feel overwhelming. When the teacher asked Jesus which was the greatest commandment, he probably expected Jesus to name one of the Ten Commandments. Instead, Jesus wrapped up the rules which had become such a burden to God's people with a principle: love God and love other people absolutely.

Rules can't cover every situation, but principles do. If we follow the principle Jesus gives us here, to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength' and 'Love your neighbour as yourself', then it follows we will also want to do the things that bless them. Even when we let God and others down, He knows when deep down in our hearts we wanted to do right. He looks at our hearts, not our failures (1 Samuel 16:7).

God responds to us according to our love for Him, even when our actions fall short. He promises His people that He will meet their needs if they love Him with all their hearts (Deuteronomy 11:13-15). He will always show mercy to those who love Him (Psalm 119:132). Jesus Himself sums this message up in John 14:21-23: 'Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them.'

In this world, we do often have to live with the consequences of our actions; but the message of this passage is that if we love God with all our heart, then He will come to us and reassure us of His love and mercy towards us.

Reflection

- To put these principles Jesus taught into practice, why not make the prayer of St Richard of Chichester part of your daily prayers: - 'May I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.'
- Is there someone you struggle to love? You can begin to change your heart for them by praying for them.
- Think of something about Jesus that you love particularly and thank Him for it.

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

