

The Great Commandment - Psalm 105:3
Brother Barrett Holloway
Cherith Baptist Church
02/15/2026

Matthew 22:37 (KJV) Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Turn with me, please, to Matthew 22. We'll begin shortly. reading from verse 35 down through verse 38. And I want to speak to you on the great commandment. One that outshines by far all God's commands. Would you bow with me and join together Our Lord.

Our Father, it is good to be a part of an assembly that continues seeking Thee, striving to follow Thee, Longing to know you more than we do today will be our ambition throughout the coming days. Loving thee as we ought. Every person here, every Christian, knows we fall short in this. But thankfully, because your love is so great, you never give up, you never leave us, and you continue working in our hearts, bringing us into obedience. of the great commandment. In ourselves, we cannot achieve that, but in Christ and by Thy Spirit, we can continue to climb that mountain where our Lord sits, ruling and reigning. I pray that you might provide for each year this day encouragement, a challenge, a greater desire to please you in every aspect of our lives. I ask that you might, by thy Spirit, lift high the Lord Jesus, for in Him we can do all things. And you never issued a command in which you do not provide the strength and the will to follow on. Be magnified, O our God, in the hearts of these Exalted, and may the saints be edified, ministered to by Thy Spirit from the Word. Give help in preaching, give help in hearing, and then give help in striving to obey. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Matthew 22, beginning with verse 35. No, let's begin with verse 34 because it's from that crowd. But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, not one of the law of the land, but one of studying the law of God. A lawyer asked him a question, tempting him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment? Which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

When we come to think of God, our thoughts are so, so limited. And I often feel like the one on the receiving end of what Luther said to Erasmus, your thoughts of God are too human. In the land, especially in the larger cities, many places, the police force have a sketch artist. And a witness that saw can describe the person and that artist can take from her or his words and draw a picture, usually very close to what that man or woman looked like that committed the crime. But we can't when it comes to God. Now as to the massive objects on the earth, we can form some ideas.

You all know what a square mile is. If we measured from the Shoppette to here, it's about a mile. Now you take that mile and you run it west and south and east, and you've got a square mile. And 640 acres of land are in that square mile. Now, you can comprehend that. But compare that to the Pacific Ocean, the largest body of water there is. larger than all land masses put together. Matter of fact, 60 million square miles. Now that's vast, but it can be measured. It's not infinite. And when you come to God, he's infinite. He is complete within himself, within the Godhead. Nothing can be added that would make him more than what he already is, nor can anything be taken from him. And it's hard to get that in our minds. But I want you to turn, keeping your place here, to 1 Chronicles chapter 29. First Chronicles 29. First Chronicles is the 13th book, beginning with Genesis, going to your right. First Chronicles 29, beginning with verse 13.

Now therefore, our God, we thank thee and praise thy glorious name. But who am I and what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sword? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee and sojourners, as were all our fathers. In our days on the earth or as a shadow, there is none abiding.

Oh, Lord our God. All the store that we've prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thy hand. All and is all thine own. Whatever we do, as David mentioned there, if we donate whatever, that that we give came from the Lord. And whatever we do in our obedience, it adds nothing to the infinite God. We can build a house, we can dedicate it to the Lord and His worship, but all things to do so are from Him. Your time, He gave it to you. Your money, He enabled you to work. And that was from Him. Your will to do so. He so worked in that that you were willing to build Him a house. But our obedience, full obedience adds nothing to God. But in our obedience, God begins to open the storehouse of His treasures, which is a greater revelation of His heart.

He said to Joshua, Joshua, I'll give thee the land, but it's only that which the sole of your feet can tread upon, striving to obey the great command enables me to receive the promises that God has made to His children. He that hath my commandments, and keep them, he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and I will manifest myself unto him. And then John writes, that previous was from John 14, but in the epistles of John, my little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, in labor, and in applying myself to work. Let us love in deed and in truth.

And Moses requested one day to see the Lord's face and he said, no, No, you can't see my face and live. But He did tell him, Behold, there's a place by me, alongside me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock. I'll fix it, your foundation, firmly. Every command of God gives God nothing, cannot add to the Godhead, But every command that He gave is for me. My benefit, your benefit, and our gain. When God gave Israel the commandments, the Lord Jesus said, it's all fulfilled in this. Love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, mind, soul.

And that is repeated in Mark and Luke, and one of them adds strength. That's the law being fulfilled. The greatest. He gave you that for the purpose of enlarging your heart. to receive more from Him. The more you know of Him, being taught by the Spirit of God, the more your love increases. In many ways, and God made it this way, an earthly father, in his position and role that he is supposed to fill, is to resemble the Heavenly Father.

That earthly father will wait till that son is mature enough that he can handle a pocket knife without cutting off one of his fingers or doing great harm. And he waits a little longer until that son is mature and he gives him a gun. He said, now you can have this. And then later, the most dangerous of all, weapons. an automobile. You're old enough, hopefully you're mature enough that you can handle that. And the reason that parents wait, they know by personal experience. All of you here know this, some more than others.

There's something within us as children that's just rebellious. We came into the world that way. Even saying no to a little toddler, they rebel against that. Who are you? And you remember parents saying, you cannot do this, you cannot go there. And there was just something within that said, that would be fun, that would be a challenge to me. And they're just holding from me that which would be fun. When they caught you and they punished you, you were thinking, I'd be glad when I'm grown and away from home and I can do what I want. And no one can tell me what to do. But something strange happened to you when you were married and your children began to come into the world. There was a great transformation in you.

And you look back and you see we were told no because that was what was best for us. We were told we could not do that because at that time that would have been harmful to us. Now therefore, whatever comes your way, whatever comes your way, if the Lord takes a rod to discipline you, it's from His heart, from His great love. When He grows silent and you do not hear Him in His Word, you do not hear Him in preaching, it is from His heart and for you.

You go through darkness and all children of God will. afflictions and sorrows. Walked through the valley of depression at times. All because he loves. All of it. Do you know what God does to those that do not belong to his family? Nothing. Never bothers them, just leaves them alone.

When the disciples were in the middle of the sea there and a great storm arose, it was from the heart of the Lord Jesus. For he had that that he would make known to them about his power. They would see more of him than ever before, all due to the storm. Sometimes you might be miles down the road away from the storm before you ever learn.

That was for my benefit. If I am faithful, always obedient to the Lord, and I never forsake the assembly, never, always here, that doesn't add anything to God. God only issued that command because He had something that He would add to me in my heart. Therefore, every command is for our benefit and for our profit. Holding your place here, Psalm 61, and we're coming back to the Psalms. Psalm 61. Verse 5.

For thou, O God, hast heard my vows. Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name. I told you the reverence, respect, the awe, putting God above all things, everything in your life, putting God up there, He gives you, brings you in to more of your heritage as a child of God.

Sometimes it's through the fires, sometimes through troubled waters. God leads us. But He has a heritage for us. And it is these commands that he issues, not to be a stern father that's always issuing commands so that he can punish the children. That's not our God. That's not your God.

Psalms 16.6, the lines are falling out unto me in pleasant places. Yea, I have a godly heritage.

And no one begins their journey because they love the Lord. We always begin because something in our hearts created the reality and danger of the lake of fire burning with brimstone. The eternal lake of fire. We didn't go to God at first because we loved Him. We went to God because we love self, and wanted to get away from the danger.

And whatever our motive was then, Christ gladly received and forgave. But now, we look at His commands. Not out of, what will this benefit me? But we look at His commands, God issued that from love. And that's the reason loving Him is listed as the great commandment. For therein lies the greatest wealth. As your heart opens to Him, so He opens His to you.

If such a command, I'm first, I'm first in your life, I'm beyond and above all things and all people. If such a command came from any source other than the eternal God, it would be from a selfish, egotistical being. And there are people like that. What I've done for you, I deserve. you thinking this way of me. But coming from the Lord, it's for your good.

And it's listed as the greatest command, for therein lies the abundance of wealth. I don't like dark places, but the light sure is brighter when I go through them. We don't like afflictions. We don't like that which grieves us within. But that's the treasures of God being open to us.

If we love Him above all things and all people. And there, the revelation of the heart of the Lord Jesus. is open to you. And from His heart flows all things, be that which affects us in a way that is good for us, and we get a sense of good from it, or in that which seems harmful or unfavorable. Whatever God does, whatever God commands. If every individual on the face of the earth and all the saints in glory loved God with all their heart, mind, strength, it wouldn't add anything to God. Nothing. But God put it there for He had that for you. that you could gain from it.

Now once again, if you go back to the Psalms, chapter 4 this time. Psalms chapter 4, verse 1. David, hear me when I call. Oh, God of my righteousness, thou hast enlarged me, not on the days when the sun was shining, not on the time that I sat as king and all the tribes came. No, God has enlarged me. when I was in distress, have mercy upon me and hear my prayer.

If we receive nothing more than eternal life, nothing more than just eternal life, then the ultimate reason we love Him is because every Christian will face God as a perfect being. We did not achieve that of ourselves apart from Christ, the Savior, our Lord. We're sinners. How shall we stand perfect before God? For within me sin, expressing itself in many ways. How?

Because he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquity, and the chastisement of our peace came For upon Him, and by His stripes, we're healed. In Zechariah 13, that was Isaiah 53. Zechariah 13, one shall say unto him in that day, what are these wounds in thine hand? And he shall say, those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

We enter perfect. The perfect being in Christ as we enter into eternal life. Now had we been at Calvary and not known, not known why the wounds in his hands, or not known why the bruises

on a face that was swollen and black and blue, Had we not known about the torture in the judgment hall with all the stripes laid upon him, with that Roman scourge wrapped around him, tearing off pieces of flesh, chunks of flesh, blood flowing, because the first place that your veins are opened up is your back.

It has less fat than any part of your body. They opened that. And they put a robe on him when they took him from the judgment hall, and he goes over and sees this, they take that robe off and add another, like pulling a Band-Aid off a cut you've got, and the blood starts flowing again. Torn flesh.

Had we seen nothing of what transpired in the judgment hall? And looking at that figure on that middle cross, we'd all walked away that day saying that was the greatest sinner that there's ever been. And the Jews were right in their torture of him. for what grieves us and yet brings peace within. The fact that he was a sinner. Not because he committed a sin against God, but because he carried our sins. Instead of God punishing us in the end and sending us to hell, God punished our sins in the blessed Redeemer.

To the judgment hall He went. Before the high priest, before the Roman soldiers, and then to Calvary. Hanging there fighting for every breath that He could get. Every blow to His face, every lash He received, it was justified before God, for He was guilty before His God. That's because He carried our sins.

That's because God so loved the people that He had given an eternity to His Son. And to receive all of us into his eternal presence as an innocent one, not once in charged to your account, meant his blessed son had to carry your punishment. Spend your eternity in hell. And you step in as an innocent human being having never committed one sin, none charged to your account.

But because of that, it meant that all our sins were placed into the account of Jesus. And now we stand righteous for God pronounced his son guilty. And there was a transfer of my guilt to the innocent one, and there was a transfer of the righteousness of the innocent one to my account. Zechariah 12, they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they'll mourn for him as one that mourns for his only begotten son.

Now, In considering his words, the Lord Jesus, as a man, his actions, the motive from which he did everything, everything, all had to be perfect. His thoughts, perfect. Considering His power, Colossians 1.15, He, or by Him, were all things created. Whether they're in heaven or upon earth, visible or whether we do not see them, all things were created by Him and for Him.

And on those six days where He worked in creation, let there be. And that came forth which had never been. light, water, dirt, grass, rocks. The sun beginning to rise on the fourth day, the moon and the stars. and not just our galaxy, but untold numerous galaxies out there. He said, and it was so.

And yet that one made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, just like us, except there was no sin in him. And this one, in the fashion as we, Prior to that night in which He was born in darkness in Israel, by just His Word,

He created all things. But His first appearance as the Son of Man was that night when Mary birthed him and they laid him in a manger, he couldn't lift his head. He couldn't walk. He couldn't talk. He was a helpless human being.

Upholding all things by the word of his power, yet he cannot stand. If he gets anywhere, someone carries him, and they pick him up very carefully, stabilizing his head. That one that was in all places at all times is now confined in the stable and lay in a trough where animals would eat. There lay almighty, sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, All present, God now clothed in a body of flesh.

He couldn't do anything. As he learned and began to speak, never a vain or idle word. You and I came into the world speaking lies. We'd cry when we wanted attention. We found out that worked with our mothers. Not because we needed a change, not because we were hungry, we just were selfish little creatures.

But from his earliest thoughts to his last, all were pure. In his attitude, when he began to grow in his attitude, it was always right. When He was old enough that a task could be assigned to him, he did it immediately. He started out to accomplish it immediately.

Not saying, wait a minute, let me finish this, then I'll get to it. No. For obedience, full obedience, is doing what we're commanded. But we failed there growing up, didn't we? Not the Lord Jesus. When told, he was up and doing. No excuses. He was always respectful, always honoring his parents, kind. Kindness always to others, even those his enemies never once selfish thought or desire.

Can you imagine Mary and Joseph when they're Mary's second child and Joseph's first child when they came along? Can you imagine the difference? Ooh. We didn't see that in the Holy Son. We didn't hear that from Him. But the Lord Jesus endeared the jealousies of His brothers. If you're who you say you are, go up there to Jerusalem and show them. It wasn't that they just wanted Jesus to perform a miracle. They would be known as the one, the brothers of the one who performed the miracle.

No, he kept all things to himself except when he was supposed to speak. Always turned the other cheek when one asked him to take his load, take his load, carry it for a mile. He'd say at the end of the mile, you want me to carry it the second mile? Silently endeared all things. Not one grumble. Not one complaint. Not one vain thought. Not one vain string of words. Not one. Never attack anyone in word. Silently endeared all things. Kind to the unkind. Loving to the unlovely.

And we know in his growing up, Mary and Joseph never wondered He's not home yet. Is he in trouble? Is she in trouble? Never did he create grief or anguish in their hearts. You think something's happened to him? Why is he late? He was always where he was told to be, when he was told to be. And they never laid down at night thinking, I hope he doesn't get in trouble out there. That just never entered. She never saw that it's his mother. She never heard or knew of one wrong deed that he ever did.

That was the innocent Lamb of God. Yet in sight of the Jews, he was a wicked, blasphemous man deserving the beating, the torture, the pain, He even claimed to be equal with God, that God was his father. Claimed that when Abraham was here, he was before Abraham. We know when he was born. But he never insulted. He was always a kind, gentle, loving young man, and then adult. But because he never caused Mary one moment's grief. Remember when Simeon, the old man, waiting in the temple when they took the Lord Jesus up there?

After the custom of the law to be circumcised that eighth day, And he held him in his arms, and he looked at Mary, and he said, a sword shall pierce thine own heart. Now folks, in light of what I've tried to tell you, is it any wonder that the greatest command God ever gave was to love him? With all our hearts, how often our hearts run after vain things. How often we listen to our heart when we should not have. How could his father require anything less of his children? How?

If my son endured such hardships throughout his life and died in such excruciating pain until he breathed that last breath, when his people find out how he lived and how he died and why he died, and that they will stand before Almighty God spotless, Don't you think it would be right for us to strive to love Him with all our hearts? You think God has too much of us?

I don't. I don't live there. I haven't reached that pinnacle of love yet, but I'm striving after it. And I think our God's justified and the Lord Jesus is justified enlisting this as the great command. And now in closing, I know full well that some of you will, walk out of here condemning yourself because you don't love him as you should. I did not speak this to condemn you where you are.

I just spoke to challenge your heart to continue reaching after him, your heart. And the Lord said of David and said unto David, you had a desire to build my house, but I'm not going to let you. Your son will. But in collecting everything, getting all as much material as possible to give to him, thinking that you might build a house under my name, God said, you did well because you wanted to. Now you got that? David, you did well because you wanted to.

And I'd like every child of God to walk out of here today with a want to. I've not loved him as I should, but just walk out with a desire to do that. And guess where that desire originated? In the heart of our God and his son. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 8, if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. So in leaving, as Paul to the Ephesians, neither give place, neither give room or license to the devil.

He would condemn us and bury us in great depression. You don't love him. If you loved him, this is what you would have done instead of. Don't give Satan room this afternoon to make his cutting remarks to you. and to take you down a path that the message is not intended for you to go. It's intended that you go towards Christ and don't give place. You're going to hear, some of you are going to hear from your great enemy, well, that surely didn't mean you. With what love you have, you approach God and always approach Him with that desire within to love Him greater.

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<https://www.cherithbaptist.com>

God had a right to ask us to love Him with all heart, mind, soul, and strength. He had a right. He had a right because of what he did to his Son. And that Son's got a right to your heart. May the Lord add His labor in your heart and bring us all to that place.