

Sermon Title: Love the Lord Your God (With all You Are)

Sermon Text: Mark 12:30/Jeremiah 1:1-10/Psalm 139:13-16

Sermon Presenter: Pastor Larry

Sermon Summary: This message examines four ways we can love God with all we are! We are to love God with every aspect of our lives. We will take an indepth look at what it means to love God with our heart, our soul, our mind and our strength! This question is examined as a foundation for the message: How can you love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength and love your neighbor as yourself if you don't love yourself and if you think you are worthless, no good, and unlovable? The answer is you can't! The message ends with examples of how different people can use their God given gifts and calling in life to love the Lord your God with all you are!

Full Sermon Notes:

“Come Holy Spirit, move in power, ignite my heart with Your holy fire” Today we’re going to talk about loving God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength! Let’s ask The Holy Spirit to teach us today how to do just that! Pray! “Father God, I humbly ask You to ignite us with a passion to love You with all we are! Teach us how that’s done and give us the desire to do that every single day of our lives! Lord, we pray for our nation and its leaders. We pray that our freedom to worship You, and live for You will continue. Maybe the church has become overly dependent on social media to get it’s message out! Maybe we need to remember that it’s grassroots movements that change the world and to remember that our movement is not political but spiritual! Revival has come to the church and spread across nations who had no freedom! I pray that as we love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, people will see Jesus in us and desire to follow You! Please be with our church members who are fighting for their lives with illnesses. And not just church members, but all! And please continue to be with our health care workers and first responders as they put their lives on the line to help others. Hide me behind the Cross and anoint Your Words with Your Holy Spirit today, I pray in the sweet name of Jesus and I pray believing!”

Last week we talked about loving God for who He is! We talked about the fact that Yahweh God is the One True God! In that message I talked about the problems that happen when people turn away from the One True God and set themselves up to be their own God or worship false gods or idols. We talked about the unholy trinity of me, myself and I. When self is promoted or elevated to a level with God a person becomes prideful and there are many tragic consequences. Dr. Daniel Akin put it this way: “While we often underestimate the value of human beings, we frequently overestimate their virtue. Our culture conditions us to think that people are intrinsically good and possess an innate desire to live righteously. Most people believe this about themselves. But Scripture describes humanity as sick and sinful.” God wants us to humble ourselves, admit we are sinners in need of the mercy, grace, forgiveness, and love of God! However, God never, ever intended for us to hate ourselves or despise ourselves! In fact one of the biggest lies of our enemy, Satan, is that we are no good, useless, worthless, unlovable, unforgivable, and have no value to God or to others! Satan has been spreading this lie for many years and the sad thing is many people buy the lie! Satan has sold this lie to the Christian community for many years and sadly we've bought it too. It is a lie that has literally

destroyed countless lives. It has prevented untold millions from experiencing a beautiful relationship with God. This lie destroys people's ability to develop and maintain meaningful personal relationships with their spouses, their children, friends, co-workers, and above all, with God. The lie has come to those in the church disguised in a religious form. Because we cannot save ourselves, true, and we are unworthy of the grace and love of God, true, this does not mean that we have no worth to God! Again, we're not worthy, but we are not without worth!

And you know the terrible things Satan has tried to tell you about yourself! Satan really wants us to hate ourselves! A survey of the best looking teenagers on college campuses asked if there was one thing in their life that they could change, what would it be? Most of them said: "my looks!" If you look in the mirror and hate what you see, think about this: If you think God messed up on your face, you're probably not going to trust Him with your life! You must believe God made you special! Say it with me "God made me special!" God lovingly made you and loves you! Say it with me "God loves Me!" For too long we have been taught that to take a positive, loving view of ourselves would be prideful, arrogant, and vain. Now I know there are those who are prideful, self-seeking, and self-serving. For some of those people, Satan uses a different approach. He tells them they are the best, better than everyone else, smarter, better looking, stronger, and more deserving. Pride comes before the fall! But that's another sermon for another day! Far too many have come to believe that true humility requires us to constantly demean ourselves. This is not only wrong, it is a sin. A little self-deprecating humor is okay, but those who really believe they are no good and worthless will miss God's best for their lives. Satan will tell you that no one really loves you or cares for you, including God. One of Satan's goals is for you to be self-hating. Self-hate is a terrible sin. But you might say: "To have love for myself would be selfish and couldn't be right." To which I would reply with our text for today...

Mark 12:28 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?"

Mark 12:29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Mark 12:30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

Mark 12:31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Here's my question: How can you love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength and love your neighbor as yourself if you don't love yourself and if you think you are worthless, no good, and unlovable? The answer is you can't! Zach is going to preach a whole sermon next week on what it means to love our neighbor as our self! But let me ask you another question: Is it right to hate someone God loves? Answer: No! That includes you!!! But wait a minute Bro. Larry doesn't the Bible teach that we are all sinners? Yes it does. Doesn't the Bible teach that without Christ we are without hope? Yes it does. Doesn't the Bible teach that our righteousness is like filthy rags compared to God's

righteousness? Yes it does. We are all sinners and have fallen short of the glory of God, but Scripture states the following...

Rom 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Rom 5:7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die.

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God would not send His One and Only Begotten Son into the world to die for people who were worth nothing! Even when we were sinners, God still saw something about us that He loved! And what was that something God sees in you? He sees your God given potential, your potential to grow, to become, to be creative, to be loving, giving, and caring. Have you forgotten this Scripture...

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

(the "let us make mankind in our image" and the "in our likeness" is evidence of the Holy Trinity way back in Genesis)

Genesis 1:27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

The fact that you were created in the image of God alone gives you worth! God is our Heavenly Father and a good father loves His children even when they've done wrong! He doesn't like the fact His children have done wrong and sinned, but He loves them!! Let me put it this way...

God created you and God doesn't create worthless junk!

You see without Christ we are without hope, but we are not without worth! Without Christ we are hopeless, but not worthless! And once we discover Christ, we are no longer hopeless!! There's only One God and there's only One You! There's not another one like you and there will never be another you! In order for us to love God with all we are, with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we must understand the concept of our uniqueness and our worth to God! God loves us so much we ought to love Him with all we are! And how do we do that? Our text tells us.

Mark 12:30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

There's four things here, but we need to understand something: The Greeks had a philosophy that a human being was divided up into separate parts. They pretty much saw the body and the

soul as being completely different and separate. However, the Hebrews had always had a more holistic view of a person. The Hebrew word was nephesh, a living being, a living spirit, inseparable in body and soul. Listen to this verse in Genesis...

Genesis 2:7 Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

The King James version says: "the man became a living soul!" In fact this is what sets us apart from all the other creatures on this planet. We don't just have a soul, we are a soul, a living soul! That's why the resurrection of the body is so important in Scripture. Paul did say this in 2 Corinthians...

2 Corinthians 5:6 Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we live by faith, not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

This is the passage that we use to say "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord!" This is true, however, God meant for us to live forever as a whole being, a living being and that's why we will someday receive our resurrected bodies. All of this is a bit above my ability to fully comprehend, but I want you to know that when Jesus was talking about loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, He was talking about loving God with all you are, with every aspect of your life! We are to love God with our physical lives, with what we do, and what we say, but we are also to love God with our spiritual lives, our attitudes, and our thoughts. These various aspects work in unity. Some people back in New Testament times were trying to say as long as your spirit was good, it didn't matter what you did with the body! This was a branch of Gnosticism and New Testament writers were constantly battling this heresy! By the way, some of you may have seen the Walt Disney movie "Soul." Let me just say it was a bit trippy, but it had some good points about what should be our priorities in life. And I am just glad to see Hollywood acknowledge the reality of the spiritual realm of life. That's at least a start. Let's pray they come to realize the truth of God's Word as it relates to spiritual reality. With that said, as we look at these four aspects of who we are, heart, soul, mind and strength, let's remember these things overlap and are tied together. We are to love God with our whole being, heart, soul, mind and body, because we are living beings! With that in mind let's look at...

1. Loving God with all your heart!

Jesus said...

Mark 12:30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart..."

The heart, or as the Greeks would call it, the kardia, is at the very center of our physical lives. Our physical heart pumps life giving blood throughout our bodies. In the same way, the Bible

tells us that our spiritual hearts are at the center of our lives and form the essence of who we are and what we value. What we value affects everything we do! It affects our priorities, our goals, our attitudes and our actions! If we are to love God with all our heart, our heart must be in the right place. Jesus told His disciples this...

Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

He went on to say...

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

He didn't say you couldn't have money, but if things are your priority, God is not! Jesus then said...

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

If we are to hear God speaking to our heart, our heart must be receptive to God's voice. The Psalmist said it beautifully...

Psalms 51:10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psalms 51:11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Psalms 51:12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

I hope you will actively participate in our reading plan this year! It will help you grow in your relationship with God! Do you take the time to talk to Him in prayer and then anxiously await His reply? The Psalmist said...

Psalms 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God..."

Psalms 81:13 "If my people would but listen to me, if Israel would follow my ways,

Psalms 81:14 how quickly would I subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes!

Loving God with all you are starts with the desires of your heart! Make it a priority to listen for and hear the voice of God. It may come during your quiet time, it may be while your driving, or in the middle of your work day. Just make sure you're listening at all times. And by the way, once God has spoken to your heart, your desire to hear His voice over and over will grow exponentially! Okay, let's see what's next.

2. Loving God with all your soul!

Mark 12:30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul...

God told Jeremiah this...

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

Regardless of the circumstances of your birth, you are not an accident! Folks, we are not just physical, we are spiritual! We are a living soul, a spirit! When God created this earth and all of its creatures, there was only one creature that was created in the very image of God and that was humankind. Having said that let me say this...Some of you were born into good circumstances, some of you were born into difficult or even harsh circumstances. It doesn't matter! You are not an accident! God knew your name before your parents even picked it out! We read the following Scripture at our Baby Dedications. It applies to us all...

Psalms 139:13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

Psalms 139:14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Psalms 139:15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

Psalms 139:16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

You, my friend, are not an accident, a happenstance, or a quirk of nature. You have been lovingly designed and lovingly formed by a Creator who knows your name. And regardless of your beginnings, God has amazing plans for your life. Max Lucado put it like this...

"There is more to your life than you ever thought. There is more to your story than what you have read. There is more to your song than what you have sung. A good author saves the best for last. A great composer keeps his finest for the finish. And God, the author of life and composer of hope, has done the same for you...The best is yet to be. And so I urge you, don't give up. And so I plead, finish the journey. And so I exhort, be there. Be there when God whispers your name."

I want to hear the words Jesus spoke in one of His lessons to the disciples about the home going of a faithful servant...

Matthew 25:23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

3. Loving God with all your mind!

Mark 12:30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...

Listen to these powerful words from the Psalmist...

Psalm 139:1 You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.

Psalm 139:2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

Psalm 139:3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Psalm 139:4 Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.

Psalm 139:5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

Psalm 139:6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

God determined your unique personality and abilities before you were born. There's only one you! You were meant to be a stand out! You were set apart! Not just one of the crowd! God set you apart. You have a unique personality, unique talents and gifts. God knew what you would need in order to be all that He created you to be. To be set apart is a big deal. It means you have been selected for a reason. It means you've been dedicated by God, chosen by God, blessed by God, and if you accept, you will be led by God. Personally led by God!

I love what Paul told Timothy in his second letter to him...

2 Tim 1:5 I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

2 Tim 1:6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

2 Tim 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

Don't think for a minute that God has not equipped you to live your life. He has. All the raw material is there. It may need to be shaped, molded, developed, trained, directed, and guided, but it's all there! And what did Paul tell young Timothy? We've been given, not a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

However, many times we doubt our giftedness, our ability, our strength. You might remember that Paul had to remind Timothy not to let anyone look down on him because of his young age. Jeremiah also had his questions and doubts, listen ...

Jeremiah 1:6 "Alas, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young."

Jeremiah 1:7 But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you.

Jeremiah 1:8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 1:9 Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth.

Jeremiah 1:10 See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

We've all been called, set apart and gifted by God for a task. A calling. A life work! We've not all been called to do the same thing, but in the end, we've all been called by the same God for the same reason, to make a difference in this old world! Our final point then...

4. Loving God with all your strengths!

Mark 12:30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

Loving God with all our strength means that we use our physical bodies to carry out the will of God. We read the following passage a few weeks ago, but if you ever wanted an example of how the Hebrews saw the body and soul as one, listen to these words from Romans 12:1-2...

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.
Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Loving God with all our strength means using our body and our mind to serve God. Living sacrifices serving a living God! You have been given special strengths, talents, gifts, abilities, and you are to use those to bring glory to God! Listen again to what God told Jeremiah...

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

This scarred Jeremiah to death. Remember, he was just an old country boy. Raised in a very small community. It wasn't even on a main road. His priestly family served a very small community. The thought of being a prophet to the nations, was frightening to him. But God will not call a person without equipping them with all they need and if God promises to equip you and also to go with you, what are you waiting for? What is keeping you from experiencing the life of purpose God has called you to?

Is it fear, is it distractions, is it disobedience, is it ignorance of God's plan for your life, or maybe all of the above. Maybe you've got your own plans and you just can't imagine that God's plans could be any better. Let me assure you, you can't even imagine how wonderful God's plans are for you. How fulfilling, how meaningful, how purposeful, how exciting. God has plans to use your unique personality and gifts to achieve His great purpose for you!

Josh McDowell, an amazing Christian teacher, put it this way...

"Life is too precious a gift to be left to chance. That's why Life's Designer, Jesus Christ, has promised every one of us that He has had a purpose and plan for each of our lives from the foundation of the earth--now all we have to do is discover it, live it, and love it...God intends for

your life to be an amazing journey of faith, family, friends, work, and adventure! He designed you to change your world, grounded in the belief and conviction that God wants you to know Him personally, serve Him faithfully, and to follow Him obediently. He has created you and called you to be on mission for Him...starting right where you are!"

If you were thinking your plans were better than God's...Well God says...

1 Cor 2:9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"--

That's One God making big plans for One You! You can't even imagine!

At your creation He breathed into you the spiritual breath of life and you became a living soul. He set you apart from all the rest of creation. We all get so busy, but when you get still and it's just you and God and your thoughts, what happens then? This is a crucial matter because if you don't trust God, you will not place your faith in Him.

Trust has to do with what you believe about a person; their abilities, their intentions, their integrity, and their love.

Faith is acting on that trust. Faith is taking a step based on your belief that God is trustworthy.

You Must Know . . .

God wants you to love Him

God will not force His love on you (it's your choice)

God wants you to trust Him

You mean the world to God. When the Bible says "For God so loved the world, you can put your name in place of the world. If you were the only person in the world, Jesus would have come and given His life just for you.

God accepts you and loves you just the way you are, but He loves you too much to leave you where you are! He loves you even with all your blemishes, shortcomings, and sin. But He loves you too much to just ignore the sin. He knows all too well the tragic consequences of sin. He wants to help you overcome sin and become all that He created you to be.

God loves you with all He is and He wants you to love Him with all you are!

Paul put it this way in his letter to the Colossians...

Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters,

Colossians 3:24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

So if you're an artist or an architect create to the Glory of God, like God you are a creator
If you are an engineer, engineer to the Glory of God, God engineered some pretty amazing things in creation.

If you are health care provider or a first responder, remember you are bringing help and healing like Jesus did!

If you are an administrator - administrate and remember God is the ultimate administrator, He administers the universe

If you are a student, learn for the glory of God, wisdom and knowledge are gifts from God

If you are a teacher, teach to inspire the next generation to change their world for the better!

If you are a writer, whether you write to inform, entertain, or instruct, be motivated by a desire to encourage others!

If you are a lawyer, think of justice, truth, and helping those who have been wronged

If you are a construction worker - remember that God is a builder, and never forget the people who will inhabit your building are more important than the building!

If you are a musician, sing, play or compose first and foremost for an audience of One, your Creator!

And if you ever think you're not good enough, or strong enough, or smart enough, just remember this...

Phil 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Let's Pray!