

**Sermon Title** - Love the Lord Your God (For Who He Is)

**Sermon Text** - Mark 12:29

**Sermon Presenter** - Pastor Larry

**Sermon Summary** - This message looks at loving God for who He is! The first half of the message sets the stage for understanding God as the One True God. Some of His attributes, characteristics, and activities are examined. However, there is no way one sermon could ever do justice to who God is! A non-exhaustive, but lengthy list is given that helps put into perspective why we love the Lord our God for Who He is! However, five things from the list are elaborated upon: God is Holy, God is Eternal, God is Love, God is Spirit, and God is Personal! Reasons are given as to why these things cause us to love God for Who He is!

### **Full Sermon Notes**

What a powerful song! “All my hope is found in the hands of Christ my King So may my life be found in the hands of Christ my King” Folks this should be the rallying cry for the church! This should be the motivation and the heart of the church! This past week should serve as a wake up call for the church! Jesus is our King! There is no earthly king who can take the place of Jesus! Our faith, our hope, our trust, our future depends on our heavenly King Jesus! I was talking to my dad and he said “Son the church needs to be on its knees praying for revival and seeking God!” In other words our answer is not political, but spiritual. Vote your convictions, but at the end of the day, put your trust in your Heavenly King. Let’s pray and we’re going to discover why we should love the Lord our God for who He is! Pray!

Last week Andrew preached a powerful sermon on the Great Commandments as given to us by Jesus Himself. We are going to read this again and then focus on a particular aspect and verse of the text!

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.”

So many times we rush past verse 29, skip it altogether or just never really focus on it. But verse 29 is what makes verses 30 and 31 possible. We memorise and quote verses 30 and 31, but rarely verse 29. Listen again to the beginning of Jesus’ reply to the teacher of the law...

Mark 12:29 “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’

There is so much theology and doctrinal truth to be discovered and uncovered in this verse! First of all, there is not two, three, four, five or fifty five God's there is only One! We know Him in three ways, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but there is only One God! The Holy Trinity is a wonderful mystery that you and I will never fully understand or comprehend, at least in this life. I have a friend who lives in Las Vegas. He said something that was so powerful. Listen...

"If God were small enough for me to comprehend, He wouldn't be big enough for me to worship!"

Augustine tells of a vision of seeing a little boy at a beach scooping up the ocean thimbleful by thimbleful and emptying it out on the sand. Then he sees an angel who tells him that this boy will have emptied out the entire ocean long before Augustine has exhausted what can be said about God.

But here's something to chew on...a lot of people today do not want to understand or know God! Others refuse to even acknowledge that God exists! Others question the truth of only One God. Jesus was clear on the subject when He said there is only one God! This truth is more important than you might think! Without a strong understanding of the concept of one true God, we are left to wander around in a world of religious and cosmic uncertainty where there is so much vagueness and lack of conviction many people just give up on any possibility of knowing spiritual truth! And when you walk away from the spiritual realm of life, you are left with only the passing, fleeting, fading, unfulfilling things of this world which can only satisfy temporarily, and will always leave you empty and wanting. When you walk away from the truth of an Almighty God who is worthy of our worship and our love, then you are left with only one alternative. You become your own god, little g! You become the center of your universe and everything really revolves around you, your wants, your wishes, your desires, your personal goals in life and Relationships suffer, because it's all about you and if a relationship gets in the way of what your flesh wants, you'll eventually destroy that relationship by your selfish actions: whether it's your relationship with God or others! Do you know what this is called? Idolatry! Idolatry is the worship of something or someone who is not God, but is worshipped as if it were! Remember that two of the ten commandments deal with this issue specifically.

Exodus 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before me."

Exodus 20:4 "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

Exodus 20:5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them..."

Let's read our main verse for today again. When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment of all was, He began by saying...

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

Why is the oneness of God so important? Why can there be only one God and not many gods? Paul tells us this in 1 Corinthians 8:5-6

1 Cor 8:5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

1 Cor 8:6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

An older copy of The Britannica World Language Dictionary Defined God like this:

God – The one Supreme Being, Self-existent and eternal; the infinite creator, sustainer, and ruler of the universe; conceived of as omniscient, good, and almighty.

Newer dictionaries are a little more fuzzy with their definitions. The truth is, God is really beyond our ability to define Him. We can describe Him, and talk about His attributes, but no human definition could ever capture the fullness, the totality, the awesomeness, the grandeur, the splendor, or the infinite reality of who God is! But this description of God reveals in a powerful way that there cannot be but one God! Why? The answer is found in what I call language math?

God = Supreme being

Supreme Being = The best, the highest, the greatest, almighty, all powerful

There can't be but one supreme being.

There can be many greats, but only one Greatest!

There can be many mighty, but only one Almighty!

There can be many powerful, but only one All Powerful!

Pop Culture Says Otherwise! In an interview in Time magazine with Willie Nelson on his book – "The Tao of Willie." Willie Nelson said this...

"I've always been the kind of guy that looks for the easy way, and it seems to me the easiest way to get through life is just to accept it and live in the moment. I believe that all roads lead to the same place. We're taking different ways to get there, but we all end up in the same place. It's kind of like Kinky Friedman's statement, 'May the God of your choice bless you.' That's the main thoughts that I have about life." Time August 7, 2006 pg6.

That's so sad to me! People are so deceived! The Bible tells us that we were created in the image of God, but it is an impossibility for us to create God in our image! We can only create false gods, and false gods cannot save your soul or give you real meaning in life! Jesus was clear in His response to the Jewish teacher of the law that the God of The Bible is the One true God. Here are some questions to ponder when it comes to the concept of One true God: I wrote these down years ago and I can't for the life of me remember where I got them. I think they're just a little too good for me to have thought them up! But for some reason I didn't footnote them, Here they are...

Whose revelation in creation has caused all cultures throughout history to grapple with the idea of a creator?

Who decided to reveal Himself far beyond what can be seen in creation?

Who is not simply an idea cooked up by one man or woman, but who revealed Himself to many individuals over thousands of years?

Who by the very nature of His revelation to many individuals over thousands of years gave His revelation credibility?

Who allowed His revelation to be recorded and protected in a book of books we call the Bible?

Who took revelation to the extreme by allowing that revelation to take on flesh and live among us, thus revealing His true nature?

Who allowed that living revelation to die upon an old rugged Cross in order to reveal His desire to love, forgive and forever live in relationship with you and me?

The God of the Bible! The God who has awesome and amazing attributes, and when we think about loving God for who He is, it would be appropriate to talk about the many, many attributes of God. What are attributes?

Attributes are: Qualities, Characteristics, Principles.

I want to give you an idea of how vast this list is!

The God of the Bible: He is One! He is unique! He is First, the Alpha! He is Last, the Omega! He is everything in between! He is infinite! He is everlasting! He is all knowing! He is ever present! He is all powerful! He is Holy! He is Just! He is provider! He is Creator! He is Sustainer! He is comforter! He is protector! He is director! He is Faithful! He is giving! He is sacrificial! He is forgiving! He is Savior! He is Lord! He is Redeemer! He is Personal! He is love!

Let me just elaborate briefly on a few of these. And let me give this shout out to the Holman Bible Dictionary. Some of what I'm about to talk about is either quoted or derived from this powerful work.

**We love God because of who He is...**

**God is Holy!**

Isaiah said it well...

Isa 5:16 But the LORD Almighty will be exalted by his justice, and the holy God will show himself holy by his righteousness.

"The most basic word we have to describe God is holy. This is the unique quality of God's existence that marks Him off as separate and distinct from all else. Holiness includes the ideas of righteousness and purity, but it is more. Holiness belongs to God alone. It sets Him above us in majesty, power, authority, righteousness, and love. Persons or objects can be said to be holy only by virtue of being drawn into relationship with God!" (Holman Bible Dictionary) God's Word says this...

1 Cor 1:30 It is because of Him (God) that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

1 Cor 1:31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

God is Holy and we are sinners, but our Holy God wanted to cleanse us from our sin and to free us from the clutches of sin! That is why the Psalmist said this...

Psalm 98:1 Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

Psalm 98:2 The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.

Psalm 98:3 He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Psalm 98:4 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;

I'm so thankful we serve a good God, a holy God! We love God for His holiness, but additionally

**We love God because of who He is...**

**God is Eternal!**

Isa 26:4 Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.

"God is eternal. He has no beginning and no ending. All else begins and ends as an expression of the will of God, but God has always existed and will always continue to exist." (Holman Bible Dictionary) The God of the Bible, Yahweh God, is not like the gods of men who can be destroyed. The God of the Bible is not man made! Jeremiah made a great distinction between the One true God, the creator God of the universe with those gods who had been created by human hands...

Jer 10:2 This is what the LORD says: "Do not learn the ways of the nations or be terrified by signs in the sky, though the nations are terrified by them.

Jer 10:3 For the customs of the peoples are worthless; they cut a tree out of the forest, and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel.

Jer 10:4 They adorn it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so it will not totter.

Jer 10:5 Like a scarecrow in a melon patch, their idols cannot speak; they must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them; they can do no harm nor can they do any good."

Jer 10:6 No one is like you, O LORD; you are great, and your name is mighty in power.

Jer 10:7 Who should not revere you, O King of the nations? This is your due. Among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like you.

Jer 10:8 They are all senseless and foolish; they are taught by worthless wooden idols.

Jer 10:9 Hammered silver is brought from Tarshish and gold from Uphaz. What the craftsman and goldsmith have made is then dressed in blue and purple-- all made by skilled workers.

Jer 10:10 But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King.

Peter said it so well in this story in Matthew's Gospel...

Matthew 16:13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

Matthew 16:14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Matthew 16:15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

So we love God because He is Holy and the Eternal living God, but there's more...

**We love God because of who He is...**

**God is Love!**

John wrote the following words in his 1 epistle...

1 John 4:16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

"God is love. 'God is love itself' is the nearest humans can get to making a non-symbolic statement about God. His love is coordinated perfectly with His righteousness. God's love is always righteous, and His righteousness is always marked by love. Love is the primary motivation behind revelation (John 3:16). God's love is expressed as His mercy in forgiving sinners and in rescuing or blessing those who do not deserve His attention. His love is expressed in grace, the love and power of God reaching to those who do not deserve His blessing. God's grace is shown in forgiveness, conversion, blessing, nurturing," (and loving correction.) (Holman Bible Dictionary/additional ltm) One of your readings for this week has this to say about God's love...

Ephesians 3:17 ...And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,

Ephesians 3:18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,  
Ephesians 3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

And here's an amazing thing about God...He created us in love, and in love He sent His Son Jesus to show us the love of the Father and to save us from our sins! But He didn't stop there. When Jesus ascended to heaven God took another step to make sure we could still have His presence with us...

**We love God because of who He is...**  
**God is Spirit!**

The Psalmist gives us great insight into this truth...

Psa 139:7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?  
Psa 139:8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.  
Psa 139:9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
Psa 139:10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

God is spirit. He is not material or physical as we are. As spirit, He does not have the limitations of material form. This enables God to be with His people everywhere simultaneously. But here is another fantastic truth! As spirit, God chose to humble Himself and take on the form of human flesh, for a time, so He could make a way for us to have a loving relationship with Him. Paul said this in Phil. 2:6-11...

Phil 2:5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:  
Phil 2:6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,  
Phil 2:7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.  
Phil 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

If there were ever a reason to love God, there you have it! God, who is Spirit, taking on human flesh and allowing that flesh to be broken and torn so we could know His love, be cleansed of our sin, and be filled with His Holy Spirit! In fact Jesus said this to His disciples just before His crucifixion...

John 16:12 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.  
John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

John 16:14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.

John 16:15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you."

However, we must understand that The Holy Spirit, He is the Spirit of God, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity and as such...

**We love God because of who He is...**

**God is Personal!**

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

1 John 1:2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

1 John 1:3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

God is not a robot and neither are you!! He is not an impersonal force like gravity, exerting influence in some mechanical, automatic way. He has personal characteristics, just as we do. God is living, working in His world, and relating to His people. He is aware of what is going on, makes plans, and carries them out. He forms relationships and has purpose and will. If you ever wondered about the personal nature of God, hear these words about God's personal love for you from the Word of God...

Psalm 68:19 Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens.

Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.

Isaiah 40:11 He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Psalm 17:6 I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.

Psalm 17:7 Show me the wonders of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes.

Psalm 17:8 Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings

Psalm 68:4 Sing to God, sing in praise of his name, extol him who rides on the clouds; rejoice before him—his name is the LORD.

Psalm 68:5 A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.

Psalm 68:6 God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing...

The power of This One God Can Change Your Life!! The question is; will you let Him? Will you love Him for who He is? What is the first step in loving God for who He is? Loving God begins with...

## Faith

The writer of Hebrews reminds us...

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

Do you need a boat load of faith? No you only need a mustard seed of faith. Remember, it's not how big your faith is, but how big the God is in whom you place your mustard seed of faith! Listen to what happens when you have enough faith to trust God's love for you through His Son Jesus...

1 John 4:15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God.

1 John 4:16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

1 John 4:17 This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

We love God for who He is! Who is He? He is the One True God who first loved you! He created you in love and when you sinned, He still loved you and made a way for you through the precious blood of Jesus to come into the presence of a Holy God, to live in eternity with the eternal God, to experience the genuine love of God, to be empowered by the Holy Spirit of God, and to have a personal relationship with a very personal God! If you don't know Him, I pray you'll accept His personal invitation to allow Him to be your Savior and your friend! Let's pray!