

Week 4 - Day 22

First things first - Love God, Love Others

Read: Mark 12:28-34

An objective observer has been watching Jesus give answers in the temple courts. Having admired His wisdom and understanding of the law, he comes to Jesus with his own question. We would boil this down to "Love God, Love Others", but it starts initially with the Shema. The Shema was the declaration of the Jews to hear what was about to be said, but it has action attached to it. (Hear O Israel). It's where names like Ishmael come from. God hears, but even more, like God has harkened. Hagar was worried in the desert, but God heard, and took care of the circumstance. He has heard, and He's acting. It's why Hannah called her son Samuel, which was Shemuel for her - God heard my prayer, and He acted. So when Shema is said (Hear O Israel), it is expected that there will be listening, there will be receiving, and there will be obeying.

Jesus went on to give the instruction 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. Also, love your neighbour, as though you are loving and looking after yourself.

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The expert in the law declares that to carry this out would be better than all the effort they had been going to and sacrifices they had offering. Why? Because the life that God gives, the life of the kingdom, flows from that foundation. If we love God with everything, and love others, and put that into action, then all else begins to flow as it should.

Question: Honestly assess yourself - do you love God with everything? Does He have your heart? Does He have your will? Does He have your thinking? Does He have your day to day activity? What about others? Do you love your family? Do you love your Christian brothers and sisters? Do you love the rest of the world?

Prayer: Lord, show me how to love everybody, always. Holy Spirit, convict me when I give myself an excuse to not love some people. Show me when what I am doing is not coming from love. In Jesus' name, Amen.