



7.11.10 – Mark 12:28-34

Materials Needed: Print a copy of the Mark 12:30 Prayer for each child. Crayons, markers, colored pencils, etc.

Opening Activity

Tonight we're going to talk about the greatest command that Jesus ever gave us: To love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We'll talk about how we need Jesus to be able to do that, so we're going to start off tonight by coloring and illustrating a prayer for us to say as we seek to follow this command.

Read the prayer aloud to the children and then have them illustrate the words Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength to their best ability. Feel free to define what these things are. The hope of this activity is to help them visually see these areas of themselves better so that as they do pray this prayer, they'll have a better idea of what they're giving over to Jesus.

Read Mark 12:28-31

And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall 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: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.'"

Discussion

As we've seen before and as we see in this passage, the rulers of the day were trying to test Jesus to see if He would speak falsely about the Law of Moses – the laws and regulations that the Jewish people had followed since God inspired Moses to write them. And since these rulers held the law high and did their best to follow it, they thought that if they could get Jesus to say that any part was greater or lesser, they'd catch him in a trap. But when they asked Jesus, "Which commandment is the most important of all?," Jesus simply defined the law and explained it in its entirety, instead of elevating or demoting any part of it as the rulers tried to get Him to do. The law, as He said it, is first and foremost about loving God, and then loving your neighbor as yourself. Jesus said this because He knows that if we truly love God, we will obey Him and do our best to follow His commands as a result.

Question One: What does it look like for us to love the Lord with all of our HEART, SOUL, MIND and STRENGTH? *Since we're sinful and broken beings, it's impossible for us to do this on our own. We can certainly try, but it's never going to work very well. Instead, we need to give ourselves to Jesus so that He can enable us to do it. Asking Jesus to do this could sound something like this: "Jesus, I need you and I need you to show me how to love the Lord with all my being. Take my heart, soul, mind and strength, make them obedient to you and allow me to love the Lord with all that I am."*

Now, when we say that we need to give ourselves to Jesus, we're doing that because He's the only one that can love perfectly, and when we believe in Him and accept Him as our Savior, He allows His love to work and shine through us! 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a shows us this love: "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."

Romans 5:6-8 shows us this love in action: "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person one would dare to even die – but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."



And it is through this love that the Lord has rescued us from our sin and brokenness and makes us new in Him!

Question Two: When Jesus tells us to love our neighbors as ourselves, who are the ‘neighbors’ that He’s referring to? *The term ‘neighbor’ here is used very broadly. A neighbor could really be anyone that Jesus places in our lives. It could be someone who lives next door to us – a true neighbor by our definition – or it could be the kids at school, teammates on a sports team, or even a bully on the playground.*

Question Three: Who are the ‘neighbors’ in your life? *Allow the children to answer on their own. Be specific.*

Question Four: How does Jesus’ grace affect the way we should love the neighbors that we listed above, thus following the second greatest command? *Just as we mentioned above, when we become followers of Jesus, it is His love, not ours, that works and shines through us, so when we’re asked to love our neighbors, it is Jesus who compels us to love them through the love that He gives us. Therefore, no matter how much we like or dislike a person, Jesus’ love is bigger than that. His love can overcome our broken thoughts and compels us to love them just as He loves us.*

Wrapping Up

Loving God and loving others on our own is tough. But as we learn more about Jesus and how He loves others and us and pray that He would change our hearts to love like He loves us, God will give us the ability to do this. Let’s close our time by praying for these things and thank God in advance for the work He will do in our hearts to love as is exemplified in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a.