



Last week we talked about the tension of Christ... He alone was suspended between heaven and earth for us. He links the things of heaven with the things of dust. He connects the eternal and the temporal. He is the Son of Man, and the Son of God. He is both and. And He invites us into a religion of both and. He is our Savior, and this is our inheritance.

Colossians 1

[15] He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. [16] For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. [17] And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. [18] And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. [19] For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, [20] and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Jesus is absolute. He is Lord of all. His reign is all-inclusive. With Christ there is no separation of church and state. Everything is in His jurisdiction. He is Lord of ALL. Your dust, your daily routine is His business. Your life, and everything about your life, is meant to be infused with the Spirit. He came to reconcile. There is now no separation in Christ.

Jesus did not come to be your Sunday God. He's not your weekly routine. He's come to be Lord of your life. He won't settle for less. Everything about you and your life falls in His domain. Last week we talked about the tension, and this week will be a continuation that truth. It's about the vertical and the horizontal. Remember, it's not either or, it's both and.

I. #40-LOVE THE LORD

Matthew 22

[34] But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. [35] And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. [36] "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" [37] And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. [38] This is the great and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [40] On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

- A. God who lacks nothing desires love. Because we are made in His image, we long for what He longs for: LOVE. We were made to be wholehearted and single minded. We were made to be passionate and steady. We were made in love for love. Love isn't optional... it is entirely necessary. It is eternal. Love is primary. Love is everything.
- B. The Lord is perfect, absolutely complete, not lacking in anything and yet His heart searches for love. Love is perfect. Love searches because it is complete. Out of His utter completeness, God searches and desires love. He wants. He longs. He loves.

2 Chronicles 16



9 For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.

- C. Other translations say describe those whose heart is loyal, fully committed, or completely His. He searches for those who love Him. He searches the earth to find anyone who is loyal.
- D. What a profound mystery...that God in all completeness searches for commitment and loyalty. He is moved by loyalty. Though all we have is shrouded in weakness...the heart of man moves Him. This is astounding. This is incredible. To think that we move the heart of God! He strengthens those who love Him. He searches out and then supports those who have loyal hearts.

John 4

23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

- E. The Lord is seeking something. A people who are born of the spirit and who pursue Him in the light of revealed truth. He is seeking a people to love Him as He has revealed Himself.

Deut 7

6 "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt

- F. And why? Why is He seeking? Because He has set His love upon us. He has chosen us. He has decided that He is towards us. Before we did anything right...before we did anything wrong...He decided to love us. He set His heart and affections towards us.

1 Corinthians 1

26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, [2] not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being [3] might boast in the presence of God.

- G. We need to really get the fact that love is all God's idea. We had nothing to attract Him to us. It's not because of our charisma and charm. It had nothing to do with our beauty...we had none. He decided to love us. He set His love over us. This was His idea.

Deut 6



6:1 "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules [1] that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, 2 that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. 4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. [2] 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

- H. Now consider the story line here. Moses has just led the people out of bondage with signs and wonders and supernatural provision. Israel cried out and God answered. They could not deliver themselves and so God delivered them. God has redeemed them. Clothed them. Provided for them in every way... It is only after deliverance that God now calls for partnership. He first delivers. He first releases. He first frees. Then he calls for love.
- I. He declares something about Himself. He is singular. He is not divided. He is fully intentional in heart, mind, and strength. It is out of this declaration of complete unity of focus and love that He calls us to be singular.

Mark 12

28 And one of the scribes came up and ... asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 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.' 31 The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

- J. Being wholehearted, passionate and focused is not the Great Option...it is the Great Commandment. He commands love to awaken because He has given love in this exact proportion. He has released singular, focused love... We were made in His exact image. So what He is, He commands. There is power and liberty when we grasp that love has been literally commanded. We are not meant to be fragmented parts and pieces, but rather in wholeness He calls us into Oneness.
- K. There is a growing trend in the church, it's destructive seed isn't new, but the harvest of it's heresy is in full bloom in our day. And that's the idea that you can believe in God but not live for Him, or that we can love Him without obeying Him. It's too cling to the idea of fragmentation, when the message of the Gospel is about reconciliation and wholeness.

II. #41-LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Matthew 22

[39] And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [40] On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Luke 10



29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 30 Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii [3] and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ 36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” 37 He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

- A. There were two religious men who passed by and did not respond to the need before them. Maybe they were on the way to a meeting. Maybe they didn't want to defile themselves. Maybe they didn't want to trouble themselves. Maybe they thought the man must have deserved it... whatever their reasoning, they did not respond to the need before them. Jesus describes a scene... and in it religion leaves a man for dead.
- B. The Samaritan in this story would have really been an enemy to the Israelite, not just a neighbor. God, though we were enemies... crossed the road for us. This is mercy. This is right. Jesus says, “You go, and do likewise.” Our spirituality must be more than intentions and meetings. It must play out in demonstration. Jesus is the great challenger. How can he be so sure we were wired to show mercy... because we were made in His image and He loves to show mercy.
- C. Jesus didn't ask us to find out if the guy dead on the road is worthy of help... He commands us to show mercy. He doesn't ask us to discover the person's worth because that is not why He shows mercy. He didn't show us mercy because we were deserving... He showed mercy because He is merciful.

1 John 4

19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot [1] love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

- D. We cannot escape this. Our religion is only as real as our love for one another. We are delusional if we believe that our love for God is unrelated to our love for each other. Our spirituality is measured by our love for one another. Community is the great chisel. It is the great shaper. Community is the great offender. God has designed it that way. This is how we are molded. We need a Saul. We need an enemy to become who we are to become. We need an enemy to show mercy to. We need a brother to forgive.

John 13

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

