**Follow – Gospel of Mark - Wk 31 – The Greatest**

**Mother’s Day – how many of you are celebrated the worlds greatest mom’s today! What a wonderful day. Today the world’s greatest verse.**

**We have been walking with Jesus, through the gospel of Mark.**

**It is currently the last week - 3yrs has come down to 3 days.**

**(TUESDAY) – Spends the week pouring into people**

**Long day - 4 groups try to corner and confront him**

**The Priests - “Who do you think you are?” 12:1**

**The Teachers of the law (Rabbis) – How can we arrest this man? 12:12**

**The Pharisees & Herodian’s – How supportive of govt and patriotism? 12:13**

**The Sadducees – what happens to a marriage after death? 12:18**

**Now a different person approaches him with a question – A Scribe- guys who hand write copies of the Torah- they know it.**

**With a question about the Torah – which they knew very well.**

**Mark 12:** **28 And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, (But this time the attitude is different. An honest seeker… with an honest question) “Which commandment is the most important of all?” (what’s the big dog command?)**

**With over 613 laws, 365 commands, and added oral Torah commands by the Pharisees. How was Jesus going to answer without drawing criticism? Jesus had no problem answering.**

**(Jesus the Torah in the flesh – answers with two - using the Torah Deut 6) 29Jesus answered, “The most important (the greatest one) is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. (Jesus begins by giving the Sh’ma = listen, this is the one and only God of all creation speaking – here it is…) 30Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (they are intertwined – Matt 22:40 – “all the all and prophets hang on these two…”)**

**32“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. 33To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” (he affirmed what Jesus said – loving God and loving others is more important than offerings – a thousand burnt offerings are not greater than a single act of love) 34When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.**

**What love is? Who are we to love? How are we to love?**

**There are three to Love**

1. **LOVE THE LORD GOD**

**God wants our (doesn’t need it) not 100 things – 1 thing. From that flows everything.**

**30Love the Lord your God…**

**\*\*Our love for God is to be – Relationally His**

**God’s plan from the start has always been about relationship.**

**God can be known and loved. He is personal, emotionally connected, and decidedly active in our lives - not a force or a idea**

**You have heard - Christianity is not religion but a relationship with Jesus – It’s true. God in the flesh Jesus – loves you!**

**God relationally and personally loves you - He really does - John 3:16**

**God reached out to us - the Mystery - why would God love us?**

**Rom 5:6-10 - When we were powerless, haters of God still living in sin – Christ demonstrated his love for us by dying for us. (He loves you)**

**God is the source of all love – it is intrinsic to Him - belongs to Him -**

**indigenous to Him – not just something He does, but who He is – all love begins and belongs to Him**

**1John 4:7 … love comes from God… because God is love.**

**Crazy thing - even our love for Him comes from Him**

**We can’t even love him without his love first…**

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

**Everyone wants to be “in love”, but we can’t know “true love” until you know God’s love.**

**We get glimpses, tastes, hints - but we cannot fully experience the depth of true love apart from Jesus - That is why the world struggles with love so much – because so many struggle to know and walk in love without Him.**

**Ephesians 3:17… And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, (Firmly planted in God’s love - that you) 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, (love w/out limits) 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.**

**God so radically unconditionally loved those who hated him and were his enemies that he suffered and died so we can live & love.**

**How are we respond to this love? With a - Wink, back at ya, want to give a shout out to the big guy, man upstairs – thank the landlord?**

**30 Love the Lord your God…**

**\*\*Our love for God is to be - Exclusively His**

**The one and only expects our one and only devotion to exclusively His. God will not share his place of love with anyone or anything?**

**Imagine this talk w/ my wife? Honey I love you, but I’m going to see other women? That is how we are w/ God. God and I have an agreement - it’s an open relationship. God will not share your devotion w/ your boyfriend, spouse, kids, a sport, or hobby – it’s exclusive.**

**Guy meets girl - She smells… like a girl - When I’m with her I feel… She could be the one / Girl meets guy - Have you seen the way his skin wraps around his skeletal frame? His cologne, jeans, hair, raspy voice, must be a Christian, he has cross tattoo… could it be… have I just met the two?**

**To truly be fulfilled in life, you have to find the one - God is your one**

**Jesus is quoting Duet 6, but it echoes the first of the 10 Commandments - Exodus 20:3 - You shall have no other Gods before me”. The Lord God is to be our true hearts devotion.**

**Exodus 34:14 - Do not worship (bow to) any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, (his very name is exclusive) is a jealous God.**

**God has a jealous (intolerantly exclusive) love for you.**

**He is passionate about his relationship with you. If you love Him above all, He’ll make you a great lover of others.**

**Mark 12:30 Love the Lord your God with all (not part) your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ (Love wholly)**

**\*\*Our love for God is to be - Completely His**

**It’s a full meal deal – He wants every part of us – not just our spirit.**

**Christ gave his whole self, our love for him is to be our whole self**

**Four areas Jesus mentions:**

**\* Heart- our desires and will. Spiritual EKG check out any heart damage**

**\* Soul - our passions / emotionally. What stirs you? He wants that…**

**\* Mind - our mind / thoughts. What’s on your mind? He cares, give it…**

**\* Strength - our body / physically / We are to love him with our body…**

**He wants us to love him emotionally, spiritually, mentally, and physically – with our time, energy, resources, and devotion - He wants every part of you – completely. (99 ½ won’t do)**

**The whole, not a part - all. God alone gets this kind of love.**

**After we understand the place of God’s love in our life.**

**We understand another we are to love…**

**31The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’**

**2. LOVE YOURSELF**

**You won’t know how to love yourself in a healthy way until you know and love the LORD. But once you truly know his love, you see yourself differently.**

**Two unhealthy views of self – 1. The Loathers**

**Many loath themselves – looking in the mirror with disgust or hate. Sometimes due to sinful choices or years of abuse & neglect.**

**As a result, you have a hard time knowing love and giving love.**

**“Well – I don’t think we should love ourselves…”**

**\*\* We are to love what God loves and guess what? God loves you!**

**I am not talking about pride and arrogance… but seeing yourself the way God sees you.**

**Two unhealthy views of self – 2. The Lathers (lathering themselves…)**

**Unfortunately - Many develop a narcissistic self-love and self adoration in an effort to like themselves, approves of themselves, and justify themselves. This is not biblical. I’m talking a humble grateful love.**

**To truly know love and truly give love - begins with knowing God’s love for you - through Jesus.**

**When we learn to truly LORD GOD (above all things) – then we begin to see ourselves through his eyes and we LOVE OURSELVES in a healthy way – which leads to…**

**31‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’**

**3. LOVE OTHERS**

**You will always struggle to love others as long you struggle to love yourself. But once you have a biblical view of yourself…**

**How are we to love others – “as we love our self”**

**\*\* We are to care for others as consistently as we take care of ourself**

**We feed, clothe, comfort, bless, pray for, do nice things for, work for, plan, we want to be loved… so we do this to others.**

**(State fair food demos) The Love Demo - Jesus modeled this**

**Romans 5:6 At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly… 8 God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us… 10 While we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son… (He demoed His attitude on love - when we were his enemies, unloving, ungodly, sinners, and hated him…)**

**\*\* When we love GOD fully – we begin to love what and how He loves**

**We know we’re in love with God - when we care for what he cares for.**

**- He loves the church (MT 16:18; Acts 20:28; Eph 5:25;** **Phil. 2:5)**

**Christ loves the church & gave Himself for it, planned it, built it, saved it, died for it, commissioned it, sent it, and is coming back for it!**

**He loves the community of faith - We are not meant to be spiritual hobos – wandering around as citizens with no home**

**- He loves the lost (He came to seek and save those hostile to him - so are we)**

**- He loves the forgotten & outcast (sick in spirit and abandoned by society)**

**Sick, hungry, homeless, orphan, widow, single mom, prisoner**

**- He loves all people - Think about it, who does God love? The lost, forgotten, poor, rich, clean, dirty, nice, hatful, victims, the guilty, the hard to love – every nationality and color!**

**He cares about injustice - about the hungry - about what others are going through!**

**John 13:35By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, (By this they will know… if you quote verses, give a lot, volunteer often, by how they vote… no) if you love one another. (by their compassionate actions to others)**

**Not just words or feelings, wishful thoughts, and prayers- but ACTION!**

**He loves us so much that he bore a cross - and what we find is - Jesus says that if you love me, you’ll bear that cross too.**

**Jesus said - 31‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ – whose is our neighbor? Jesus tells us in LK 10:20-37 (in response to this question, Jesus says)**

**\*\* Our neighbor is - anyone God brings across our path**

**That includes the people you despise – the people you would rather let suffer… Who is that person for you?**

**Your neighbor begins with who you cross paths w/ every day. If a need is in front of you, it’s your need, no matter who they are.**

**I want pointout what Jesus said to this scribe - Mark 12:34 - When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” (You’re almost there…)**

**Knowing is just a part of the doing. He was not quite there – but he was close… he understood this, but did not embrace this… He knew the data, but not the heart.**

**He knew what it was… but still needed the movement.**

**\*\*Love is a choice backed up by action.**

**I should dance with her… but you never ask her to the dance floor.**

**I should apply for that job… but never fill out the application.**

**I should go back to school… but never enroll for classes.**

**I should get married… but you never propose to your girlfriend.**

**I should love the LORD above all – and love others as myself… but never walk it out.**

**Filling us a class of water – to overflow. God’s love overflows to others when we know His love.**

**I want to end with what Jesus was quoting… Duet 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (here is the next part) 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. (affects what we do and think) 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (our homes)**

**I am thankful for moms and dads that do that. My mom – was a single mom – who took us to church. Exposed us to Jesus. My grandma – was the first person to ever tell me the gospel…**

**\*\* Prayer for moms -**