

Recap of 2/18/24 message by Pastor Chris (Mark 12:28-34):

- We are to love God whole-heartedly, with every ounce of our being. The four-fold explanation that we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength is not meant to express delineations of human life, rather it is a statement that is to be all encompassing. There is a comprehensive nature in the command to love God. It is an undivided love for He is God alone, and thus worthy of all of our love. We tend to be creatures who compartmentalize our lives, and too often we end up dividing our love for God among other things, often good things. However, even good things, like family, friends, and work, should never take the place of God in our lives. CS Lewis says it like this: "Our Lord finds our desires not too strong but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures fooling around with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."
- We are to love our neighbors as ourselves. This command has its roots in a call toward communal holiness. Taken from Leviticus 19:18. This command is not saying that we need to love ourselves more as is often stated in the modern therapeutic movement. It presupposes that you already love yourself. It is highlighting that we are creatures who are naturally selfish, turned in on themselves, and to love our neighbors is to turn out toward them. To get rid of selfishness. Leviticus 19 calls the people of God to be holy, for He is holy, and then proceeds to give guidance on how relationships should look in light of this. Things like caring for the needy, respect for others, not showing partiality nor deference based on one's financial status, are all a part of loving your neighbor as yourself.
- So is the call to reprove/rebuke your neighbor if they are in sin. (Lev 19:17) This flies in the face of worldly arguments regarding loving someone, namely that loving someone means full-acceptance and agreement. However, as we see in Proverbs 3:12, to truly love someone demands they be corrected when going astray from what is good for them, when they stray from holiness, from what God has said is good. How that correction occurs should be appropriate, gentle, timely, and seeking their best interest, but avoiding it is actually unloving.