

Recap of 2/25/24 message by Pastor Chris (Mark 12:28-34):

- A Biblical Definition of Love

- **Love is** volitional, that is it is an act of the will, that has an inward response seen in affection and an outward response seen in action which seeks the highest good for the object which is loved. The command to love God with your heart soul, mind, and strength and to love your neighbor as yourself implies a willful aspect to love. There is choice involved, decision to love someone. This is not to say feeling or emotion doesn't exist, it certainly does, but the feeling often comes after the decision to love. The worldly idea that love is a loosely defined feeling that can't be resisted, in fact shouldn't be resisted, is patently false. Love is an act of the will.
- **Love is** accompanied by both an inward and outward response. The inward response is seen in affection for the beloved. The outward response is seen in action toward the highest good for the beloved. Both of these should be present. If one lags behind the other, we should consider why that is and seek to raise both affection and action. It is logically inconsistent to say you love God or your neighbor and yet do nothing in obedience, service or self-sacrifice for either. Conversely if obedience, service, or self-sacrifice is done in a begrudging way, then we must consider that our affections are not placed appropriately, and we should prayerfully seek to grow our affection for God and neighbor while continuing our acts of service.
- **Love is** always directed toward an object. If our love is directed toward something that is against what God calls good, then it is sinful. We are commanded not to love the world or the things in the world (1 John 2:15-17). The world in this context is the system, which is antithetical to God, standing in opposition to Him. The world often uses subtle ways to twist our understanding of love. Campaigns like "Love is Love" and moves toward accepting all forms of love (homosexuality, polygamy, polyamory) muddy the clear truth of God's word. God defines marriage between one man and one woman. We need to remember this when the world tries to twist and redefine love and marriage. We also need to watch for ways our love can become disordered. When we move even good things in God's eyes (things like spouse, children, or work) to a place above God, then we follow a disordered love and in effect move God off the throne of our hearts and move into idolatry. We must always remember the commands as Jesus said: The foremost is to love God with everything we are, all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. And the second is to love our neighbor as ourselves.