

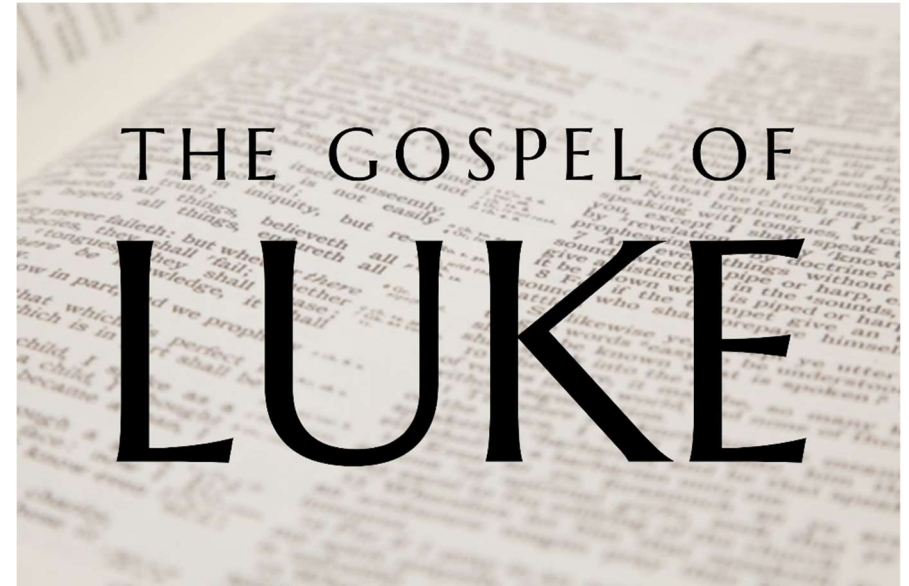
doctrines nor having a particular view of the world. It is about giving oneself, without reservation, to a person, a Person of unspeakable being, magnitude, power, and majesty.

The requirement to love our neighbour as ourselves is important because it is what God would have us do. The type of Love we are to have for them is no different to how we are to Love God, except for the degree with which we are to exercise it. In respect of God, nothing less than 'all' is acceptable, but with man this Love is to a level commensurate with how we love ourselves. So, it is a matter of gauging the scale of our self-love and then attributing it to others in the same measure.

Q1. How are we to love God?

Q2. How are we to love our neighbour?

FAMILY WORSHIP BOOKLET



God tells us that Ezra read from the book of the Law,
day after day, and that the people of God
were filled with joy!

Friday - Luke 10:25-28 - Love God and your fellow man.

Yesterday, we saw that Jesus responded to a question from a lawyer by asking him the question, "What is written in the Law?" The man responds by citing Deuteronomy 6:4,5, and Leviticus 19:18. This tells us that the man knows the Law of God. But more than that, it indicates that he thought about these commands and their importance to eternal life. Now whether he knew this through instruction or by personal deduction doesn't matter; the fact is, he had come to an understanding of the two commandments that lie at the heart of what God requires of man. I am going to digress and take the opportunity to consider what it means to love God and our fellow man.

The first thing to note is that this 'Love' we must have for God and for our neighbour, is not merely an emotional affection; it is the Love of intelligent purpose, **with the mind**. It is Love that does respond to God's love for us, but not just with feelings. This Love is borne out of, and carried along by, a knowledge and understanding of the one we are to love - God who is the infinite, eternal and unchanging Covenant Lord. The God of omnipotent power, wisdom, holiness, justice, and truth. Laziness in the pursuit of this knowledge of the one true God is not an option. Yes, it will take a lifetime, and even then, what will we know; but the point is that we will know more than we do today. And because of that knowledge we will love Him more.

We are to love God with all our heart. The Biblical conception of the heart is that it is the very epicentre of who we are, our being. We are to love God with everything we have in our inner most being. Nothing should occupy this place of love within us more than this love for God.

We are to love God with all our soul. The soul is our life; it is who we are. It is that which gives life to us, that which animates our body. Without our soul, we are but mere flesh and blood. Death tells us that. Our life, our very existence, should be consumed with a pursuit after God. This pursuit is what this intelligent, purposeful Love is.

We are to love God with all our strength. We are to give ourselves to loving God with every sinew and fibre of who we are. We should hold nothing back in our desire to know the Lord God. Nothing should come between us and this pursuit after God, and we should be spent in our doing so. The worship of God should be a refreshing joy to us, but it should also take something out of us, as we give ourselves to declaring our love for God. God desires the entirety of our being, mind, personality, strength, and understanding. No part of us is to be given to loving another as god in our life. And note the 'owning' of this Love for God is not about learning a system of

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Thursday - Luke 10:25-28 – What must I do to inherit eternal life?

This parable is only found in Luke's gospel. It seems to have happened shortly after Jesus had spoken with the seventy-two about rejoicing that their names are written in heaven. What initiates the dialogue is a question from a lawyer, one whose profession it was to know the Law of God, and the Jewish traditions surrounding it.

On first reading of the question, we might think it is a wonderful one – “what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Wouldn't it be marvellous if someone we know, whether in our family or at work, were to say to us, 'what do I need to do to get into heaven?' Now there would be an open door that you would want to walk through, and with joy. But this man isn't asking the question because he wants to know the answer; he already knows the answer – it's about what you do. So, why ask the question? Because he is testing Jesus. He wants to hear what Jesus is going to say, probably so that he could challenge him, even possibly to bring a charge against him.

Jesus responds to the question posed to him by asking two questions of the lawyer. They are straightforward and simple so that the lawyer can't do anything other than answer them. Not to do so would make him look foolish. In the question, "What is written in the Law?" Jesus is saying to the man, 'you're a Lawyer, tell us what the Law says'. How could the man refuse to answer? And by quickly following it up with, "How do you read it?" Jesus invites the man to state what he thinks. In a few simple words, Jesus has removed himself from the spotlight and placed the man under it.

When confronted with a question, Jesus frequently responded with a question. Doing so did two things. It helped to reveal what the other person was really thinking, and it put them in the position of having to think about the implications of their question. It's an approach that would serve us well, too. People frequently say things to test us, and we should never feel threatened when they do. Rather we should see it as an opportunity to challenge them about their thinking. A good way to do that is to ask them a question as Jesus often did. Sometimes we are too keen just to give an answer. Sometimes the best answer is a question.

Q1. What is the question posed to Jesus and by whom?

Q2. How does Jesus respond?

Q3. Is there anything you could learn from Jesus' approach to people?

Monday – Luke 10:21-24 - Jesus exuberant with joy!

V21. Having just told the seventy-two that they should rejoice that their names are written in heaven, rather than in their being able to cast out demons, Jesus now expresses his joy in the work of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing calm nor collected about how he does so. The word 'rejoiced' doesn't capture the sense of the word in Greek. This is an exclamation marked by exuberance. Jesus is thrilled with joy. The *cause* of this exultant joy – the work of God the Father in both hiding and revealing the Truth. The *nature and focus* of this exultant joy – thanksgiving to God the Father through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus speaks/prays to his Father in the hearing of the disciples and others (we find him speaking privately with his disciples in v23, so he must be speaking at this point with others as well). He addresses the Father as the "Lord of heaven and earth", the Creator and Ruler of the universe. In doing so, Jesus contrasts the limitlessness of the Father's wisdom and power with the limited wisdom and understanding of men, who, despite all their ability, cannot see what must be seen, because the Father has hidden it from those who trust in their intellect. The fact that the same Truth is seen and understood by children, when the Father graciously chooses to reveal it to them, merely underscores the fact. The verbs used are in the aorist form, which indicates that this a fixed and unalterable thing, something that was determined by God before creation. God decreed, before the foundation of the world, that the good news of the gospel, although wholly reasonable, would not be discernable by human intellect. He purposed according to his will, for his good pleasure and glory, that Jesus can only be believed in, in a saving way, through a gracious work of the Holy Spirit in a person's mind, heart, and soul. Ephesians 1:5,9; Philippians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Peter 1:17. You and I only know and accept by faith the Jesus is our Saviour because of the gracious will of God the Father and the working of God the Holy Spirit. What hope would you and I have if it were not for the gracious will of the Father? None. We are solely the fruit of God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which he has prepared for us (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Jesus was thrilled by this. The fact that men could and would know the Truth of the gospel through God's grace sent him into a state of ecstatic joy. Isn't it wonderful that God has shared with us that it was this that caused Jesus, in the Holy Spirit, to be so joyous? It says so much about his delight in God's eternal decrees and their implications for men. Here is something we could profit much from dwelling on, and then seek to emulate. The purpose of God is the salvation of men. And as you do so, look back to verse 20 and the call to "rejoice that your names are written in heaven". What daily adoration, praise, and obedience to God this knowledge should elicit from us.

Q1. Why is Jesus so exuberantly happy?

Q2. How do men and women come to know the truth of their need of salvation and the only way of salvation?

Tuesday – Luke 10:21-24 - The Son's knowledge of the Father and vice versa.

V22. Jesus speaks here of his relationship with the Father and begins by saying what he has *received from* the Father, namely 'all things'. But what are the 'all things'? One commentator writes, "All things: earth, heaven, and hell; men, angels, and devils; time, death, and eternity; all things: salvation and damnation; grace and judgement; life and death; all things: truth, righteousness, glory, peace and joy, consolation and refreshing, rest and hope, deliverance from sin, victory in temptation, overcoming the world, communion with God, the life in God – all things have been delivered to him. He is the almighty Lord, the Giver of divine gifts of grace, the Executor of all divine works, the Prince of life and, therefore, the Captain of our salvation." These and more are included in the 'all things'.

The question is, when did the Father give these "all things" to the Son? The answer – at his incarnation, on his becoming the God-man. Yes, Jesus would be anointed the Mediator King over all at his exaltation, but that was a coronation, the manifestation in heaven of what he had been given. These 'all things' were already his, e.g., Matthew 28:18.

Jesus then addresses the *peculiarity* of the relationship between the Father and the Son. It's interesting to note that this and the parallel passages in Matthew 11:27, and in Mark 13:32 are the only places in the Synoptic gospels where Jesus calls himself 'the Son'. It is, of course, a common phrase in John's gospel. The basis of this peculiarity is that the Father and the Son alone 'know' each other. No one else is party to their respective knowledge of each other, in terms of their mind and will, as it relates to man's salvation.

However, and this is important, it is because of this relationship, based on shared knowledge, that man can know God the Father, through Jesus. If Jesus were not to reveal the Father, mankind could never know him. The idea that people can know God apart from knowing Jesus is not true. It is impossible. Those who do not know, love, and have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ cannot know God, other than the fact that he exists, and that is revealed in Creation (Romans 1:20). People can talk all they want about 'believing' in God, 'praying' to God, they can even 'worship' God, but if they do not know Christ, their believing is not in the one true God, their praying is not to the one true God in Jesus' name, and their worshipping is not worship of the God of Creation and Salvation. On the night he was betrayed, Jesus said, "for apart from me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

We need to be clear about this because there are people we know who think they have a relationship with God, because they believe He exists – they don't. We must graciously seek to help them understand that. It is only in and through Jesus that they can know and have a relationship with God the Father. No one can come to the Father except through Jesus (John 14:6-11).

Q1. What has Jesus received from the Father?

Q2. How do we come to know what we do about God?

Q3. Is it possible to know anything about God apart from Jesus?

Wednesday – Luke 10:21-24 - See and hear how blessed you are!

V23. Jesus speaks to the disciples privately, and what he has to say is wonderful. He tells them that they are blessed because they can see and hear the Truth that has been hidden from many, including prophets and kings. Given what Jesus says in v21 and 22, they will understand that this is solely because of God's work in their lives. Peter would later speak of this hiding of the truth. He writes, "Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look." (1 Peter 1:12-14).

This surely speaks to the measure of blessing that you and I have received, given that we can know even more than those who were listening to Jesus on the day he was actually speaking. These men and women could, and did, know what Jesus had and was telling them up to this point in his life, providing that he had not concealed the meaning from them; but we have the full revelation of God's Word, complete and final for all time. A revelation, through which the Holy Spirit has worked, to open our eyes and ears so that we can now hear the voice of the Lord Jesus as he reveals the Father to us. As Paul wrote to Titus, "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:4-7).

If Jesus regarded his hearers as "Blessed", how must he regard us? Each day of our lives we have the opportunity to expose ourselves, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to the Truth of God's Word by reading and meditating upon it. Just as the Lord delighted himself, see Psalm 1. We can come together in our families to be blessed through our reading and considering of it, again with the help of the Holy Spirit. We have the blessing of joining with others in the church in the Fellowship Groups to consider and share what the Lord has opened up to us in our personal and family study of his Word. And on the Lord's Day, we have the privilege of coming together to sing God's Word in the Psalms, hear it read in our presence, participate in prayers framed by it, and to sit under the preaching of it. And what does the Lord say about that? It is the sole means chosen by God to provide faith, for "faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17).

Q1. How did Jesus view those who see and hear the Truth?

Q2. How do we view the privileges we have to receive the Truth? Are we taking every opportunity he gives us to do so?