

Introduction

- Wrapping up this series “Love God with All Your Mind.”
 - Donnie in New York – PNW Movement (Training and Reproducing Churches)

“Which commandment is the most important of all?”

Mark 12:29 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**.’

The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

 - ❖ Echoing Duet 6 & 10
- What we looked at the last three weeks
 - Take thoughts captive (inner dialog) – *make it obedient to Christ* (2 Cor 12:5)
 - Set your mind on things of the Kingdom (Col 3)
 - Take your worries to the house of the Lord (Pray over them – surrender them) (Isa 36)
 - ❖ Surrender the worries to Jesus, our mediator
- Very good practical lessons,
- To be honest these concepts listed in Mark (‘heart’, ‘mind,’ ‘soul’/ ‘spirit’) are not entirely simple and clear. They are not well understood even today, let-alone in ancient middle east.
 - Obviously, there is much to learn from bible, even if we don’t fully understand how the mind, spirit, soul and ‘heart’ all work together.
 - We label a category to better think through these elements of humanity. It is a good way to understand things, but understand it is really mixed an intermingled soup of human venture
- Two of these concepts that are sometimes interchanged and blended in the bible (mind & heart)
 - ❖ **Gen 6:5-6 / Ps 33:10-11**; “...the thoughts of the human heart...continually evil”
 - ❖ Pharaoh’s heart was hardened – meaning his decision to oppose God
 - ❖ **Rom 8:27**; “The one who searches hearts, knows the mind of the spirit...”
 - ❖ **Proverbs 23:7a**; For *as he thinks in his heart, so he is* – [NKJV]*
- An indication that the mind is influenced by emotions.
 - **Mind** (Nous)(Yester): Reasoning, intellect. Thoughts, World view.
 - ❖ Think of the mind is a tool
 - **Heart** (Kardia)(Labab): Emotion, affections. Desires, Motives.
 - ❖ Scripture indicates that the ‘heart’ is an emotive mechanism of influence.

- That is kind of the focus today. The mechanism of influence to our thinking
- And (as that translation of Proverbs states) that thinking influences our identity
- The idea of identity lands solidly in our Spirit or Soul
 - **Spirit** (Pneuma)(Ruah): Ethereal, incorporeal. Psychological influence.
 - ❖ The primary influences are the ‘spirit’ of the world or the ‘spirit’ of God. (**1 Cor 2:12**)
 - **Soul** (Psuche) *psoo-khay'* (Nephesh): Inner-Being, Seat of ‘self.’ Essence of life
- Right at the core of these talks about our mind is identity.
 - ❖ Our culture is in an identity crisis, maybe it always has been. [10]
 - ❖ Jordan Peterson describes a person’s psychological identity as an extension of every aspect of one’s life, friends, family, groups; even fictional characters and inanimate objects. He states that, “This identification manifests itself deeply – even biochemically and neurologically... Our capacity for identification is something that manifests itself at every level of our Being.” --- 12 rules for life (*epigenetics, mental health*)
- I think we can use Romans 12:1-2 as structure to guide us in this subject.

Rom 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **2** Do not be **conformed** to this world, but be **transformed** by the **renewal** of your mind, that by **testing** you may discern what is the **will of God**, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

 - Five points [Five Points]

CONFORM (sus [joined to] **schema**) – TRANSFORM (**metamorphosis**)

- There are many influences to the way we think.
 - Genetic, physical, Psychological, friends/family, environment, culture, **worldview** ...
- Brain always being trained by something.
 - Addiction studies really show this well. Dopamine release as a reward.
 - Now psychological studies are finding similarities in habit forming.
 - ❖ Procrastination training, distraction training. Phone training you. Movies training you. News sources, echo-chamber ... reinforcing our bias
 - You could look at it in three categories of influence: **Self** / World / **Spiritual**
 - ❖ Kantian curtain of Noumenal/Phenomenal (Thing in itself/as appears) – *WV & spiritual*
 - ❖ **1 Cor 13:12**; For now, we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.
 - ❖ I picture it as satan weaving his “conspiracy” into this sheet, skewing spiritual vision
 - But God fully knows the noumenal – Jesus fully knows you

- **Image** of the thinking. Auguste Rodin (1904) [THINKER]
 - What is he contemplating?
- Commission never completed – modeled after Dante’s “inferno” (1880) [GATES]
 - Like much of our experience an idea has spiritual origins, which are later downplayed or removed entirely.
- **Karl Bart:** Theology around Participation in Christ
 - Participate=become like Christ or more like creation (animal instinct – trained by world)
 - Conformed to the world (trained) – or be Transformed by the renewal of your **mind**

RENEWAL (2nd)

- That idea of **metamorphosis** is a powerful one.
 - Butterfly, moths, many insects (animals)... Hormones and enzymes turn to soup in cocoon.
 - Out comes something entirely different – but same material
- Renewal of the mind is the enzyme of transformation
 - That power of transformation is the **Holy Spirit**
 - Same material, totally different ‘being’
 - Same person – metamorphosis of ‘identity’
- The **angst of identity**. Rosaria Butterfield’s deep personal investigation around gender identity brings her to write, (Phenomenal: **real**) (Noumenal: **true**)
 - “I felt, my **real** identity. But what is my **true** identity? The Bible makes clear that the real and the true have a troubled relationship on this side of eternity.” -- Openness Unhindered
 - Great example of heart and mind wrestling and the Holy Spirit transforming one’s identity through the truth of scripture.
 - Clarity of our true identity is a process, on this earth we need to be continually asking God to search our hearts, test us, refine us and lead
- Be constantly improving – Don’t worry about the rate for now, just don’t give up (run the race)
 - “A Long Obedience in the Same Direction” – Eugene Peterson
 - One of the biggest downfalls of prosperity is spiritual stagnation. We fall prey to the world.
 - We rely on resources instead of Jesus. We (self) become the god of hope and provision

Prov 30:7 Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die:
8 Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, **9** lest I be full and deny you and say, “Who is the LORD?” or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.
 - Frustration is mind building – refined by fire (**Isa 48:10, Zech 13:9, 1 Peter 1:7**) [20]

The learning of patience on a march. – God goes before me. Trust that, but pay attention.

TEST (3rd)

- How is this done? How are the effects (metamorphic soup) of the Holy Spirit activated?

Rom 12:2 ... by **testing** you may discern what is the will of God...

- All sorts of spiritual practices available. “How to Grow” series.
 - Church fathers on asceticism (self-discipline) (meditations)
 - ❖ Rules (of St. Benedict, St. Gregory, Ignatius rules of leadership ...)
 - ❖ Self-reflection ... Journaling, Mantras as a training tool – *internal conversations*
- Awareness / Bias – identify them, challenge them. [cultural / worldview]
 - Jesus’ parables, to open one’s eyes. – *one sheep, lost coin, shrewd manager* ...
 - *Story of first going to church with Mara.*
- Personal Rules of Testing (The heart gets in the way sometimes)
 - Ask – “Could I be wrong?” Play that out ...
 - ❖ Do you want to be right, or do you want to know the truth?
 - Pray – **Ps 139:23-24** “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” (*Prayer: Where our soul converses with God*) – what does Gods voice sound like?
 - Compare to scripture – Does this match the truth you in scripture?
 - ❖ Know Jesus (abide) – the bible is the record of God’s relationship humanity

THE WILL (4th)

- The last component of Romans 12:2, why are we testing?

Rom 12:2 ... you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect!

- There is a critical component in the way one thinks.
 - What do you **desire**? What owns your heart? What do you worship?

John 6:38 For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own **will**, but the **will** of him that sent me.

- Gods Will **image** [SUN]
 - Giver and sustainer of life. Power beyond understanding.
 - The very definition of Good. Perfect!
- Human Will [BOMB]
 - Beautiful. Immensely creative, and powerful ... and destructive.
 - ❖ Joseph Stalin – “I believe in one thing only, the power of human will.”
 - ❖ Arthur Schopenhauer – Called recognized the **will** as blind, irrational, ceaselessly striving. The will constitutes the dynamic essence of the world.

- In other words, the will forms the world and, in a sense, is the entire world (human, animal, all nature) *instinct, force directed*
 - ❖ Nietzsche – Will to power (a force driving progress. Evolutionary concept, channeled)
 - Very anti-compassion, anti-weak (God died from pity) [30]

God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?
 - Out of the ashes of Nietzsche’s dead god comes the *ubermensch* (superman/human)
 - Will drives us to become gods, for there is no one to atone for us now.
 - How has that turned out?
 - Rather ...

Heb 10:5-10

5 Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; 6 in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. 7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" 8 When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), 9 then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. 10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
 - Nietzsche got half the story. God did die out of pity (not w) for us, but then he rose out of **love!**
 - God does **not remain** dead Friedrich. It is humanity that must die.
 - ❖ Die in the arms God’s grace. (*Which is actually the power you seek, not weakness*)
 - The only superman is the one who sanctifies, who forgives, who is THE sacrifice – Jesus.
 - There is a lot in this sermon about effort, about practices. And what we do is important.
 - What am I saying? “Pull yourself up by the boot straps?” “Will your way to holiness?”
 - No matter how hard you try, there will still be limitations
 - ❖ There are still the impacts of sin. (Noetic effects of sin) [35]
 - This is a most challenging subject. I am telling you ... do this, work at that ... but then in the next breath I am saying platitudes like: It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit, and you have to abide in Jesus.
 - What does that mean practically? Why put in all this effort if it is not by these efforts I change? Maybe I should just ‘Let go and let God.’ Stop trying so hard? Well – **yes & no**
- Phil 2:12** ... **work** out your own salvation with fear and trembling, **13** for it is God who works in you, both to **will** and to **work** for his good pleasure.

- Concurrence / Confluence / Synergism
 - God's sovereignty and power / Human will, desire and exercise.
 - It is no either/or. It is both/and. They work together, very purposefully.
 - Note: difference between soteriology (salvation) and sanctification (transformation).
 - ❖ The truth of salvation is obscured behind the veil of observation. Be careful about rigid rules to soteriology. The greatest of theologians don't agree.
- So then how does one **work with** God?
- *Walk with Wyatt. Taking about how people **say**, but don't **do**. The complexities of the human will. I referenced **James**— like waves being driven by the wind*
 - Wyatt's response of "**James** will wreck you without **John 15**"

ABIDE

- Christological Practicality

[35+]

John 15:1-17 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

John 15: 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. **5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

- Another obscure concept perhaps. OH .. just abide in Christ .. ok ...
- Ya – right. At face value it is simple, stay connected to Jesus. All things Jesus. DONE
 - Yet, it is the challenge of a life time. Yet, **accessible** by all.
 - It is the journey of being a very complex creation having an intimate relationship with our creator. Being an intersection of matter and spirit, of self and surrender.
 - ❖ It is not an event, a specific works, not a measured effort.
 - ❖ It is the fluidity of relationship, an emotional wrestling, an **exercise of love**.
 - ❖ It is more poetry than a period.
- Abiding begins with contrition (humble) heart, confession, forgiveness
 - Surrender – Surrender – Surrender. It is divine.
 - Entirely the result of Christ – Entirely proportional to you.
 - Remember Jesus' sacrificial Love
 - Jn 15:9** *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.*
 - ❖ Invited into the trinitarian relationship, through Jesus THE Christ!
 - ❖ Communion is a remembrance that should wreck us every time.
 - His will be done. Covenant already met.

- Our misalignment only causes tension, hurts, sin... (garbage in – garbage out)
 - Not be moralistic. It is not a perfect science. We ebb and flow in our success.
 - Kind of like osmosis. A slow process of absorption.
 - We absorb the ‘living water’ at different rates.
 - ❖ The more we spend time in **prayer, studying** scripture, in **worship**, with spiritual **community** – the more we are saturated – the more we are transformed.
- To abide in Christ, means to live with Christ as center of ... well... everything.
 - If Christ doesn’t fit – then it may need to be rethought – trim the vine.
 - This is not to be judged in degrees. It is a practice of active continual meditation.
 - It is all the things we have talked about – surrendered to Christ.

[<45]

- Donnie’s comment about John the Baptist, “*one trick pony.*” Greatest among us feeble humans
 - Prophet (speaking Gods word), Speaking Repent – The Lamb of God (Kingdom)
 - What if, all these ‘events’ meant little to nothing
 - ❖ All the Phenomenal is false / not ‘real’
 - ❖ All the Noumenal is Christ

CONCLUDE

- To love God more – we must know Him more. We know God through Jesus by the H.S.
 - Not wishful thinking or mindless belief. It is an entire way of life.

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- Mark 12:30// Deut6:5, 10:12

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**.’

The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

PRAY

- "I do not seek understanding so that I may believe, I believe so that I may understand."
–Anselm’s (Credo ut intelligam)