

# Loving Others Before Loving Jesus, Mark 12.28-31, 12.4.16

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## Introduction

1. We need a balance of loving ourselves, loving others and loving Jesus.
2. This message influenced by Darren Hibbs blog post; Mike Bickle's teaching on Loving God

## Big Idea: To love God wholly means I love His truth totally.

1. "2 Thes.2.3, 9-12". People are refusing to love and accept the truth. This is partially happening as people love others before loving Jesus first.

## The Consequences of Loving Others First

1. **Burn Out** – if you put ministering to the needs of others first before love Jesus it will drain you. You will come to the place where you give up b/c you have nothing to give. (**HOT WATER TANK analogy**)
  - a. People will always be demanding of you; they will always need more
  - b. People will let you down – they won't follow through, fulfill their commitments, won't have permanent change, - and this will create a loss of trust or a sense of betrayal. You might grow cynical and completely isolate yourself from others.
    - i. CPS workers who quickly get burn out and jaded.
  - c. Jesus had to get away with just his disciples or by himself to reconnect with the Father – 20 Scriptures
2. **A Cooling of My Relationship With Him** – when I love others first
  - a. It is automatic. Whatever you put ahead of Jesus will dim His presence in your life. These could be great, necessary and critical things, but if not balanced correctly they become a wedge in our love for God. Things like lots of travel, taking care of ailing parents or children, holiday season, etc. WATCH THE HOLIDAY SEASON b/c it's a time we drift.
    - i. The more quality time that I spend with my wife, the more intense my love is for her; the opposite is also true. When life gets busy and we are each doing our own thing we drift and I don't realize how much I miss her until I reengage in the relationship.
    - ii. What is true with Stephanie is also true of my relationship with Him. The going and pushing of life puts me further out of orbit from Him.
3. **Accepting Beliefs That Are Contrary To God's Truth**
  - a. There is so much pressure today to accept or embrace other's beliefs that are contrary to God's truth. I can love the Muslim, Jew, or the communist atheist leader, or whomever but I don't have to embrace their beliefs or behaviors in order to love them.

It's the same with me. I can love myself unconditionally as God loves me, but it doesn't mean I am saying all my beliefs and actions are right.

- b. We are buying the cultural lie that says: love = acceptance of who I am. That's not how God plays ball. He loves us unconditionally while calling us to conform to His truth.
    - i. One of the greatest ways God loves us is that he speaks the truth to us; otherwise, he would just be hugging us all the way to hell.
  - c. Darren Hibb's blog "loving people to hell."
4. When we love other's first (especially those closest to us) or ourselves first, we tend to lean towards their position rather than God's.
    - a. 1 Cor 5 is an example
    - b. We see their struggle, conviction or longing. We begin seeing things through their eyes rather than God's eyes. As Darren points out, "we are making them twice the son of hell."
    - c. This is also exactly what I do with the sin in my life. When I love myself first, I begin to justify my sin – freedom in Christ;
  5. Our call is to love God FIRST with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and then love our neighbor as ourselves.

## Loving Jesus = Loving His Truth

1. If I love Jesus, I love Him for who He is and **He is the truth**. We can't say, "I like Him, but I just don't like what He stands for" like we can with Donald Trump or Hillary. Loving Him for who He is embraces both His character and teachings. They are one and the same. No slicing.
2. The most complete picture of Jesus in Scripture is in Revelation. It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ (Rev.1.1). Rev.1, 4 – 6, 19.11-21. These revelations challenge our preconceived notions of who Jesus is from our understanding of the Gospels.
3. There is not a contradiction in the "Jesus of Christmas" who brings peace to everyone who receives him and the "Jesus of Armageddon" who openly confronts all resistance to His love.
4. Many are embarrassed by the Jesus of Revelation, but just as He is the Savior of the world, He is also a King with a Kingdom and the Judge of all mankind. This truth is politically incorrect. It exposes our fear of men. We cannot love Jesus piecemeal but fully for who He is.
5. Jesus spoke without regard to the criticism he would receive then and now. He believed in a literal Adam & Eve, Noah, Jonah and Hell; He preached love, grace, forgiveness, salvation, truth, righteousness, holiness, judgment, heaven and hell.
6. The dilemma is will we love Jesus first and on His terms?

## The Falling Away From the Faith

1. Jesus prophesied it also in Matt.24.<sup>9</sup> "Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers.<sup>[a]</sup><sup>10</sup> And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other...<sup>12</sup> Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold.<sup>13</sup> But the one who endures to the end will be saved.<sup>23</sup>

2. Paul prophesied of a falling away from the faith at the end of the age (2 Th.2). It is one of the greatest challenges in the Church today.
  - a. 1 Tim.4 - <sup>1</sup> Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons. <sup>2</sup> These people are hypocrites and liars, and their consciences are dead. <sup>[a]</sup> <sup>3</sup>
  - b. 2 Tim 4:<sup>3</sup> For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. <sup>4</sup> They will reject the truth and chase after myths.
  - c. To “reject” means that the people will no longer hear what God intended in various Bible passages.
  - d. If we love Jesus completely then we have to love His truth fully.

### **The Dilemma of the Hour: Loving Jesus On His Terms**

1. We must love Jesus on His own terms. Our love must be expressed in alliance with the Jesus of Scripture, not the Jesus of our own making.
  - a. We see it today as in the past. As people are redefining Jesus based on their experience and what they like about him – teacher, healer, shepherd, prophet. They don’t like completely how Jesus is presented in the Bible so they pick and choose. They spiritualize away the clear meaning of Scripture to justify their position.
  - b. There are three culturally offensive truths about Jesus that we must embrace in loving Him: First, his right as King to establish absolute standards for which everyone is held accountable. This means Jesus is NOT tolerant and accepting of everyone’s view of righteousness and truth. Second, the only way of salvation is through him. Third, that he is the only Judge who possesses the wisdom and love to judge sin.
2. Tolerance and acceptance are the main issue in the counterfeit spiritual movements of our day. We respect people of other religious orientations. But, we are not willing to compromise our beliefs just to make them feel better. We must hold forth the Jesus of the Bible with a welcoming and respectful attitude towards those we differ with.
3. Refusal to love and embrace the revelation of the Jesus of Scripture before loving others is proof that we are operating under a spirit of delusion as mentioned in 2 Thes.2. This is true of famous people who serve in our government, who host talk shows, who fill stadiums with concerts for the poor or who lead mega churches.

### **Conclusion:**

#### **Big Idea: To love God wholly means I love His truth totally.**

We are called to love Jesus first

