



March 4, 2018

What is Forever? Keeping First Things First!

Matthew 22:34-40

Matthew says in an economy of words what the other two Synoptic Gospels elaborate on ... Mark 12:28-34 and Luke 10:25-37.

- When you add up the 3 accounts, you realize this was a rather lengthy exchange. But, that said, this was a test, and by the time Jesus is done answering, His opponents are left “speechless”, “muzzled”, and by the time the parable of the Good Samaritan is over, their hypocritical, loveless religion is fully exposed!
- We are to be lovers! Why? 1 John 4:19
- This passage and verbal exchange raises 2 questions in my mind – What is forever? And, how do we keep first things first?

1) What is forever? Vs. 34-39 (also vs. 40)

- Silenced, vs. 34 – Gr. *phimoō* – to muzzle, to forcefully restrict the opening of the mouth (1 Corinthians 9:9; Mark 1:25, 4:39) ... Jesus had rendered the Sadducees totally speechless!
- This was a test! And the test was to have Jesus come up with something CONTRARY to Moses ... but Jesus loved the law (Matthew 5:17).
- But they were convinced He would come up with something new and novel and heretical, because He so often came against their corrupt interpretations of Moses’ Pentateuch!
- They taught – 613 separate letters in the Decalogue Hebrew text, and 613 separate laws in the Pentateuch – letterism was a popular form of interpretation at the time.
- 248 affirmative ... 365 negative ... also divided into “heavy” (important) and “light” (not as important) ... no real agreement.
- It was doubtless this SUPERFICIAL attitude that led to the hope they could catch Jesus in a heretical, anti-Moses moment.
- But His response is vs.37-39.
- The great *Shema*, or “hear” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21; Numbers 15:37-41).
- And then He adds, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18).
- Jesus condenses the Decalogue, the 613 laws and the whole Old Testament – the law and the prophets (vs. 40) – into 2 commands ... love God, love your neighbor.
- So, what’s forever? Love God with all ... love your neighbor as yourself!
- Tell me, what do we see as forever? Loving God? Loving others? How?

- With all my heart – the core of my being – Proverbs 4:23.
- With all my soul – emotions, desires.
- With all my mind – intellect, will, determination (strength).
- John 14:15
- Romans 13:8-10
- Loving God and loving others, that's what is FOREVER in this world! That's what is eternally true! Love God (1 John 2:15-17) ... love others (John 13:34-35).
- 1 John 4:20-5:4

2) How do we keep first things first? Vs. 40

- Keep your eye on the donut – because we spend so much time contemplating the hole!
The superficial, the temporary!
- Look at what people sacrifice for the temporary.
- Marriage, family, relationships, friendships, relationships in the church, serving others, loving others.

But God's world is a world of relationship ... and will be so for all eternity! Love God, love one another (neighbor) – by this, all men will know we are Christ's disciples!

Suggested Devotional Reading

- Monday:** Read the other accounts – Luke 10:25-37
- Tuesday:** The essence of love – 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- Wednesday:** The practicality of love – Romans 12
- Thursday:** The attitude of love – Philippians 2:1-11
- Friday:** Love your brother – 1 John 4:19-5:4; Hebrews 10:23-25
- Saturday:** Memorize John 13:34-35

TABLE TALK

Read Mark 12:28-34 and list 10 practical ways I can love God, and 10 practical ways I can love my neighbor.