

Matthew 22:34-40

21 April 2024

SECTION	DESCRIPTION
Intro:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Prayer:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you, Lord Jesus, for the miracle of your word, we hold it with gratitude and expectation. • Holy Spirit help us come under your word and stir it in our hearts. • Do here today what you have set out to do and let your word accomplish the purpose for which it was given to us. AMEN
Context:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jerusalem in the year 33 A.C. Is a busy, vibrant city. Especially at the time of the Passover festival... • It is the last days of Jesus on earth... • Jesus was in the temple. • He was teaching the people...
The Lawyer:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust a lawyer to complicate things! • This lawyer in Matthew 22 was ruthless. • He was so set on his goal that he collaborated with his enemies to take Jesus down. The Sadducees and the Pharisees normally did not agree on doctrine but here they worked together to achieve their common goal • This lawyer must've been a smart guy because he deliberately structures a question to catch Jesus out... • And what does Jesus do? → he gives us Christianity 101 • Love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength and your neighbor as yourself! <p style="text-align: center;">CHRISTIANITY 101 = 3-WAY LOVE</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Upward - Inward - Outward</i></p>
Jesus:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus knew exactly what was going on not just in the physical but also in the spiritual. • He knew he was being tested for his purity in the same way the Passover lambs would have been tested during this time before the feast commenced. • Jesus knew the motive behind their questioning. He knew the lawyer was not being honest. • However Jesus turns the situation into the most important lesson for Christians of all time →

CHRISTIANITY 101 = 3-WAY LOVE

Upward - Inward - Outward

The Question:

- The question the lawyer asked was important.
- In those days a lawyer's primary job was to copy the Torah and also to interpret it, so they were basically religious teachers.
- These teachers would have told you that there were 613 commandments so a lot of their time was spent trying to figure out which of these they had to prioritise.
- Jesus answers them on their level because he quotes Deuteronomy 6:5 which forms the central part of the Shema prayer that is prayed by the Jewish people twice a day.
- Jesus not only gives them the basis of Christianity but he delivers it to them from one of the most well-known parts of scripture of the day.
- The measure of the love of Jesus is just amazing...
 - He loves us within our **brokenness**
 - He has grace for us within our **ignorance**
 - He has mercy for us despite our **disobedience**.
- He is the perfect example of the 3 way Love
- and he calls us to live the same way.

Upward - Inward - Outward

LIVE UPWARD:

- Jesus understood a very important thing about the human condition:
- "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)
- "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." (Psalm 51:5)
- "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5)
- All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind, our sins sweep us away. (Isaiah 64:6)
- You get the gist...
- We were born in sin, but what does that mean?
- This started right back in Genesis 3 at the Fall:
- Where Satan enticed mankind to rebel against God
- He was successful...
- And it can be argued that it takes the rest of the Bible to describe the consequences of that event.
- Lets take a look:

Genesis 3:1-6

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

⁴ "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

- I would like to point out 3 things here that highlight this condition of sin we were born into...
- Satan comes to Eve and asks: "Did God really say..."
 - He is asking for a word-for-word report of what God said.
 - "Did God really say you shall not eat of any tree in the garden..." now that part was not true and Satan knew this
 - He knew exactly what God had told them...
 - He is testing Eve...
 - This gave her the opportunity to testify about the words and commands of God. (She did a great job!)
 - No, God said we can eat of all the trees except this one tree.
- **TREE FACT: one lemon tree can provide for a whole family... orchard?**
 - Eve knew exactly what God had said, because she continued:
 - "If we eat of this or even touch it we will die"
- So what happens then...
 1. Satan says to Eve: "You will not certainly die"
 - **THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT TRUE**
 2. God knows when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like him knowing good and evil
 - God does not prohibit you because He loves you and wants to protect you, he is actually suppressing you.
 - **GOD'S CHARACTER IS NOT TRUSTWORTHY!**
 - Satan knows that the no1 character trait of God is He is Holy!
 - So he is deliberately attacking the Holiness of God.
 - Thus there is something in God that is evil, unclean and impure, and not Holy = He is not to be trusted.

3. IS AN ACTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO EAT AND BREAK FREE!

- Break free from the oppression God laid on you.
- You can be like him...
- in other words Eve... there is a God and it is you!
- Then Eve saw that the fruit was good to eat and ate.
- So we can define SIN as:
 1. My word is true
 2. I am trustworthy
 3. I am the standard of what is right and wrong and I will be my own god.
- That is why the judgment and wrath of God rests on mankind.
- That is exactly where Satan wants us...
 - Does Satan know God's word is true? = YES
 - Does Satan know God's character is trustworthy? = oh yes he banks on it!!!
 - He knows God is Holy
 - He knows that God will judge everything that is Unholy and impure
 - Does Satan know that there is only one God? YES!!!
- If this is true, why does he lie to Adam and Eve like this?
- FOR ONE REASON ONLY!!!
- He wants them to turn against God because he wants God's wrath on their lives.
- Because he knows that will destroy them in a way that he never will be able to do.
- Satan can only do what he's permitted to do BUT
- God's wrath will separate them from the presence of God for eternity.
- That is where he wants us because that is where he is heading himself.
- We are born rebelling against God.
- So we water down scripture and twist it to fit into our expectations of self-empowerment so that we can justify playing god over our lives and those of our neighbours.
- And when things do not go according to our plans we are very quick to say: "I thought he is a God of love – why is this happening to me?"
- Jesus, who is the perfect revelation of who God is, came to reveal that:
 - God's word is true
 - God's character is absolutely trustworthy (Holy, just & righteous)
 - There is a God and it is not you or !!!!
- THIS IS WHAT SALVATION IS ALL ABOUT!!
 - Not petty sins
 - I repent the fact that I am an enemy of God (Word | Character | Position)
 - WE NEED A SAVIOUR!!

- Paul writes in Colossians 1:9 to new believers:

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,

- praying that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding
- Simply put:
 - that you will obtain the **knowledge** of God's will
 - not only in **theory** but
 - also in the **wisdom** of how to put it into **practice** in various situations.
 - **Knowing** how to **apply the will of God** in your family, your marriage, your work and in relation to your neighbors and society as a whole.
- Sometimes when people say they gave their lives to Christ they did not actually do that, they only gave their crisis to Christ:
 - Broken marriage
 - Financial problems
 - BUT they did not submit to the **authority of Christ**
 - They were then told that they are now Christian
 - Part of the family of God
 - This is simply just not true
 - In scripture Jesus separates himself from people who want to associate with him for what he does and the miracles he can do for them.
 - We love the idea of a God that can just fix everything that we break through our rebellion and disobedience.
 - BUT this is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- The gospel is first and foremost the message of who Jesus is
- AND our need to surrender to him in absolute surrender and obedience in a present continuous way.
- Giving my life to Christ continuously every single day until I meet him face to face.
- Being faithful to the will of God and habitually submitting to the authority of Christ.
- **THAT IS WHAT SALVATION IS!**
- So, to experience the grace, salvation, and mercy, of God, and unity with God we need to understand **there is a cost involved.**
- So often you hear people saying that it is unconditional and limitless.
- That is simply not true!!!
- Grace, salvation, mercy, and unity with God is NOT unconditional!!
- It is extremely conditional!!
- He asks total surrender...

**LIVING
INWARD
AND
OUTWARD:**

- This means you have to come into agreement with everything Jesus stands for!
- You cannot hold a different viewpoint and think it also counts because we think in some way we are on his level.
- We are not and we will never be!
- He is the creator and we are the created beings.
- We need to die to ourselves so that he can manifest within us.

- When Jesus says “Love your neighbour as yourself” it is not a command to love yourself. It is natural and normal to love yourself—it is our default position. There is no lack of self-love in our world.
- The command to “love your neighbour as yourself” is essentially telling us to treat other people as well as we treat ourselves.
- Scripture never commands us to love ourselves; it assumes we already do. In fact, people in their unregenerate condition love themselves too much—that is our problem.
- In Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan, there was only one who showed himself to be a true neighbour to the man in need: the Samaritan (Luke 10:30–37).
- There were two others, a priest and a Levite, who refused to help the man in need.
- Their failure to show love to the injured man was not the result of loving themselves too little; it was the result of loving themselves too much and therefore putting their interests first.
- The Samaritan showed true love—he gave of his time, resources, and money with no regard for himself.
- His focus was outward, not inward.
- Jesus presented this story as an illustration of what it means to love one’s neighbour as one’s self (verse 27).
- We are to take our eyes off ourselves and care for others. Christian maturity demands it. “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others” (Philippians 2:3–4).
- According to this passage, loving others requires humility, a valuing of others, and a conscious effort to put others’ interests first. Anything less than this is selfish and vain— and falls short of the standard of Christ.
- None of this should be taken to mean that we should see ourselves as “worthless.” The Bible teaches that we are created in the image of God, and that fact alone gives us great worth (see Luke 12:7).
- The balanced, biblical view is that we are God’s unique creation, loved by God in spite of our sin, and redeemed by Christ. In His love, we can love others.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We love others based on God’s abiding love for us in Christ. In response to this love, we share it with all whom we come in contact with—our “neighbours.” • Someone who is worried that he doesn’t love himself enough has the wrong focus. His concern, biblically, should be his love for God and his love for his neighbour. “Self” is something we want out of the way so that we can love outwardly as we ought. • God wants to heal his broken world and pour out His love. • Jesus uses us to do this. <p style="text-align: center;">CHRISTIANITY 101 = 3-WAY LOVE</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Upward - Inward - Outward</i></p>
Response:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to ask Lord HOW? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HOW can I live UPWARD? ○ HOW can I live INWARD? ○ HOW can I live OUTWARD?
Moment of quiet reflection:	
Prayer	