



## Sermon Series:

"What The World Needs Now Is Love"

## Sermon 1:

"Loving God, Loving People"  
(THE DUTY OF LOVE)

Matthew 22:34-40

**INTRO** Turn your Bibles or turn them on to Matthew 22. We'll start our reading at v 34. This is our third and final sermon in the series, WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW IS LOVE. I hope you have enjoyed the series, and taken something from it that will change the way you live life as an ambassador of Christ.

The first week of the series, I preached on "That Crazy Little Thing Called Love", and we established THE DEFINITION OF LOVE. Last Sunday's sermon was titled, "Love Isn't Just A Four Letter Word", and we talked about THE DOCTRINE OF LOVE. Today, I want to share with you the sermon, "Loving God, Loving People", as we look at THE DUTY OF LOVE.

Some of you have been here all three weeks of this series. Let me express my warmest gratitude for your faithfulness. Others of you may have missed due to sickness or obligations. Let me encourage you to go to our NEW WEBSITE at [ChristFirstGA.org](http://ChristFirstGA.org) and watch all the sermons in this series. All our worship services are archived on our website and listed by sermon title and date. And if you would like to follow along, my personal sermon notes are available there in pdf form as well.

If you have ever looked in our church brochure, you have seen, in large print, the words, LOVING GOD, LOVING PEOPLE. This has been the heart of our community since the inception. It is this phrase, or better, this action that scripture declares as our greatest responsibility. So look with me at Matthew 22: 34-40 for just a few minutes and let's see what we can take home with us today.

**Matthew 22: 34-40** "Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. 35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

37 Jesus replied: "Love (agapaō) the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. [Deut. 6:5] 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love (agapaō) your neighbor as yourself. [Lev. 19:18] 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Last week we looked at some different words the Greeks used to describe LOVE. The word used in our passage today is the word agapaō. It is the verb form, the action word, if you will, of the noun agapē.

You will remember that agapē love is a heavenly love, meaning it comes from God. It is the highest form of love known and shown. It is a self-sacrificing love...even to the point of death! And here, in these verses, we are told, quiet simply, to LOVE GOD and LOVE PEOPLE. That is AGAPAŌ God and AGAPAŌ People.

Let's look at this AGAPE Love, or GOD'S Love for a moment. NOTICE...

**I) GOD'S LOVE IS RADICAL:** vv 37-38 "Jesus replied: "'Love (agapaō) the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment."

Let's face it, most of us don't love, or even know how to love, the way agapē love is spoken of in scripture. Our understanding of love has been so skewed by our culture that the LOVE OF GOD is foreign to us.

V 37 says "LOVE the Lord your God with ALL your HEART, and with ALL your SOUL, and with ALL your MIND". And when you read Mark's account of this same interaction with Jesus, he adds the words, "and with ALL your STRENGTH".

What does it mean to love with ALL your heart, soul, mind, and strength?

Heart - (Gr. Kardia, pronounced kār-dē'-ä) Regarded as the seat of feeling, impulse, and affection.

Soul - (Gr. Psychē, pronounced psū-khā') Breath, Spirit and Life

Mind - (Gr. Dianoia, pronounced dē-ä'-noi-ä) Thought, intention; intellect, deep thought and understanding.

Strength - (Gr. Ischus, pronounced ēs-hū's) Force, forcefulness, ability, and might.

Then there's the emphasis to LOVE God with ALL, or the WHOLE, of your Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength. Can you honestly say you do that? Most can't.

V 39 "... 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Okay, is it not enough to just say, LOVE you neighbor"? NO, the Spirit adds, "AS YOURSELF"! WHAT? I love me more than anyone! How am I suppose to love someone as I love me. I'm number 1 in my eyes. I take good care of me. I bath me, feed me, comb my hair, do my nails, buy me nice clothes, and things... I LOVE ME! And God knows that! That's why this is such a radical command. COMMAND. I did say command.

This AGAPE love is one RADICAL LOVE! Oh, you haven't heard anything yet!

Luke 6: 27 "But to you who are listening I say: Love (agapaō) your enemies, do good to those who hate you,"

Okay, here God is just freaking us out! But listen, He means what He says.

He says LOVE YOUR ENEMIES! And He's not just talking about the girl who stole your boyfriend, enemy. He's talking about your mortal enemy! It's the Greek word, echthros. And it means...hated, actively hostile, one opposing, an adversary. THAT'S RADICAL!

**II) GOD'S LOVE IS REDEEMING:** v 40 "All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Listen, this is a big, big statement that almost always gets overlooked.

## I) GOD'S LOVE IS RADICAL: vv 37-38

**II) GOD'S LOVE IS REDEEMING: v 40** CONTINUED The LAW is that which condemns! No one could ever be saved by the Law. The Law condemned us to death. Not because the Law was flawed in any way. Just the opposite, the Law was perfect! The problem was that the Law required perfection in order to be a means of salvation. And no human could boast of such flawlessness.

And the PROPHETS, they declared the truths of God. It was the Prophets that pronounced the judgements of God upon Israel when they had broken the Law.

Now get this...

Jesus is saying, the Law and the Prophets, HANG on these two commands, to LOVE GOD and LOVE PEOPLE.

HANG (It's the Greek word, Kremannymi, pronounced Kre-mä'n-nü-mē - meaning, to hang up, suspend, or to be suspended, to hang, and it's used of one hanging on a cross.)

This is a really unique statement, like nothing else in scripture. Here we have, that which had condemned so many, the Law and the Prophets, and we see them HANGING on that which brings life to all, that is the REDEEMING LOVE OF GOD!

Listen, the LAW condemned you and me. We should have died in our sins. It should have been me that hung from the cross, not Jesus. But the redeeming love of God did something for me. It took that which was nailing me to the cross, (The Law) and hung it in my place (Jesus being the fulfillment of the Law) and I went free.

WOW, the REDEEMING LOVE OF GOD! And it works. Not only in our relationship with God, but also in our relationship with our neighbors and our enemies.

Think about this, why would God command us to LOVE OUR ENEMIES? Let's analyze this a moment. GOD KNOWS MORE THAN WE DO! HE SEES WHAT WE CAN'T. God also wants good for His children. And is always in process of working all things together for our good. NOW, when He says LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, He knows the result of that effort. When you love your enemies and pray for them that hate you and use you as the Bible says in Matthew 5:44, there's always a chance that the Spirit of God will bring them to a place of real repentance and conversion. That one thing changes your circumstances. A real relationship with God turns an enemy into an ally! And God knows that, so He says, do the best thing you can do for yourself, pray for your enemies!

**CONCLUSION:** The question now is, are you willing to love the way God commands you to? Do you love God the way He deserves? Or, are you holding a grudge against Him because something didn't go as you hoped and you blame Him?

Think of that one person you dislike more than anyone else. Are you willing to love them and pray for them consistently until the Spirit breaks their heart and moves them toward repentance. Or, will you not change your feelings toward them no matter what God desires of you? What choice will you make?