

Lesson Title: MORE Love!

A Bible Study Lesson of  
The Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church

Written by Dr. Ken Patterson



**Introduction:** The following lesson is intended to help students realize the importance of how we show our love to God. Modern teaching on love often presents people with a false idea that love is an emotion we feel during times of the year such as Valentine's Day. Our exhibition of love is contained in cards and candy which sum up our feelings for a person. On February 15<sup>th</sup>, we return to our normal behaviors as if we have adequately expressed the totality of the meaning of love. We can all understand that love cannot be summed up in a day or a card or even an expensive meal. In fact, love is much more than the feelings we have and then may not have for a person based on what is happening in the relationship. The love we are called to in this sense is on the MORE level. We are called to love God and mankind in such a way that it overrides how we feel from day to day. In fact, how we feel becomes secondary. We are to love God and one another with an encompassing love that is exhibited in our actions rather than our feelings! Enjoy the lesson.

### **Matthew 22:34-40**

<sup>34</sup> But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

<sup>35</sup> Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

<sup>36</sup> Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

<sup>37</sup> Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

<sup>38</sup> This is the first and great commandment.

<sup>39</sup> And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Background on the current text:

In Matthew 22, Jesus is shown to be teaching about the Kingdom of Heaven. During this time, He was towards the end of His earthly ministry. It would appear that His goal was to help the disciples and others to clearly understand the scope of His ministry was about and what the effects of becoming a follower of His meant. Jesus intended for His followers to know that His kingdom included any and everyone who would accept Him as savior. The response of various Jewish religious groups was to attempt to trap Jesus in teachings that went against the scriptures. The idea of *trapping* Jesus always refers to finding Him incorrectly interpreting scripture or teaching in a way that went against scripture.

Have you ever attempted to confine or trap Jesus in order to make Him fit into your thinking?

### I. The Scope of Love

True love is an expression of believers towards God! Jesus supports this in His quoting of Deuteronomy 6: 5 in verse Matthew 22: 37. Everything we do is to be an indication of love for God. The scope of our love cannot be confined to our worship on Sundays. The scope of our expressions of love are displayed in how we evangelize, how we function in society, and how we will function in the resurrection. Matthew structures this chapter in such a way that each of these are shown BEFORE Jesus talked specifically about love.

Notice verses 1-15 indicate that Jesus calls everyone to the “Wedding banquet” even though many choose not to come. Those who chose not to come are often the ones who were invited first. The scope of the invitation to salvation shows love. The sorrowful teaching in this portion of the chapter is that our response to Jesus’ invitation has a time clock on it. Turning our back on Christ now with the thought that we have an unlimited amount of time or can simply get into the *banquet* in any fashion is incorrect. We must appreciate the one who has invited us and be *dressed* in love in order to remain in His presence.

In Matthew 22, verses 15-21 and again in verses 22-33 the different religious leader groups wanted to find fault in Jesus’ teaching on civic responsibility and familial responsibility once the resurrection occurs. In each instance, Jesus corrects their understanding and shows they were the ones with the misunderstanding not He.

Jesus does not ignore their issues of confusion even though in this instance, they were purposefully confused. Jesus corrects them and calls them to understand what God desires. Then he tells them about love. However, upon a closer inspection, Jesus had shown them what love looks like during all of the teaching recorded in chapter 22. The purpose was to reveal to them the breath and depth to which our love for God covers.

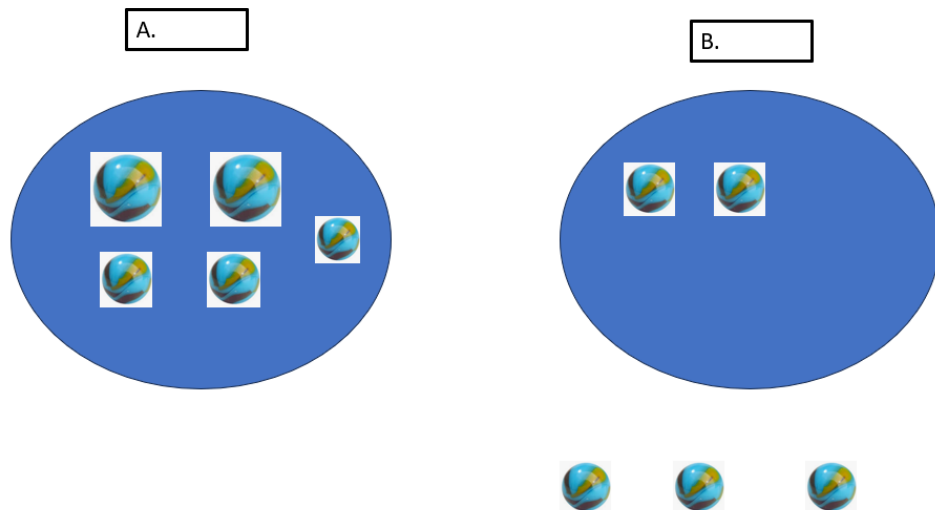
## II. MORE Love in Action

Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 4: 5-6 adds and love your neighbor as yourself which comes from Leviticus 19: 18. Why would Jesus pair these two passages together?

➤ How does loving God and loving our neighbor match?

The challenge Jesus presents to His listeners revolves around what we say and what we do. What we say is that we love God! Assuming this is true, the next thought we must have is “How does God want me to show Him love?” To answer this question requires a simple understanding of what it means to love with all heart, all soul, all mind. The best way to get this concept is shown below:

If Pastor Ken has 5 marbles, which picture shows all the marbles in the circle?



Each of us can clearly understand the concept of all! It means with nothing held back. To love God with all means we give Him all the *marbles* willingly. All is the what. Willingly is the how. I give God all that I am by choice. In other words, I put all of me at His disposal. I become His willing servant. Thus, what He chooses to do with me is His choice and I do not resist that choice.

- In what areas of your life are you resisting God using you?
  - Does He have to beg you for time?
  - Does He have to beg you to use your talent?
  - Does He have to beg you to give your treasure?

If there is any area where we are resistant to God, we are not loving Him with ALL.

- How does all relate to my treatment of my neighbor?

Activity: Let's Look for a Lack of Love!

In the following passages Jesus identifies a problem. How do these exemplify Jesus' point on loving our neighbors as ourselves? Look for how the *neighbor* is treated in each set of verses. Underline the neighbor. How should we treat them?

Matthew 6: 1-2

**6** "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

<sup>2</sup>"So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

Matthew 23: 1-5

**23** <sup>1</sup>Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: <sup>2</sup>"The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. <sup>3</sup>So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. <sup>4</sup>They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

<sup>5</sup>"Everything they do is done for people to see:

Matthew 23:23

<sup>23</sup> "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill, and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

This issue of ALL to God as shown through my display of love to my neighbor is really the crux of Jesus' condemnation of the religious leaders. They claimed religious fervor and commitment however the evidence of that love towards God was empty due to the way they treated people.

MORE love is a quality of love where we meet Jesus' mandate to show love to God by committing all of ourselves to worshipping Him and then serving people. One goes with the other. As Jesus stated:

“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Question to ponder: How can you give more of yourself to God and show more love to your neighbor this week?