

The Law #5 Law & Love Go Hand-in-Hand

Michael Heiss—December 21, 2024

If you will recall over the last several weeks I have been giving a series of four on Torah, the Law of God and all its component parts, be they statutes, commandments, precepts, judgments, etc.

Today in a fifth message I would like to, if I can do it properly, tie it all together, because Torah, or the Law, actually is the manifestation of God's love.

- loving God
- keeping His Commandments

truly are two sides of the same coin! We will see that amply stated by the Apostle John:

1-John 5:3: "For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments..."

Go back to v 2: "By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments."

Loving God and keeping His Commandments go hand-in-hand; you can't have one without the other. ***Keeping the Law of God is simply a manifestation of God's love!*** It is interesting, because we tend to think of love is the most important and it is. But remember ***we are commanded*** to love God. That's why I say you can't separate them.

Matthew 22:33: "And when the multitudes heard *this*, they were amazed at His [Christ's] teaching. ...But after the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they came together *before* Him. And one of them, a doctor of the Law, questioned *Him*, tempting Him, and saying, 'Master, which Commandment *is the* great Commandment in the Law?' And Jesus said to him, 'You shall love *the* Lord your God **with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind**'—[with everything you have] ...This is *the* first and greatest commandment; and *the* second *one is* like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets' (vs 33-40).

So, we are commanded to love God. But this, of course, comes from Deut. 6:5 where it says the same thoughts about the same thing: *You should love the Lord your God!* There the Hebrew word for love is broken down into"

- faithfulness
- loyalty
- fidelity

It's not just emotion. Oh, yes, there's emotion, but it's abject loyalty and obedience to God. ***If we don't obey God, we don't love Him!***

I don't know how many of you have had pets. In my house, we've had a menagerie at one time or another.

- we had frogs
- we had tarantulas
- we had the traditional dogs and cats
- we even had a what you would call an alligator, a caiman

In my younger days, I had a dog. Now dogs and cats are different. There's a dog, and you say, 'Hey, Fido, come on.' Fido is all over you slobbering; the dog loves you. On the other hand, you have a cat. Cat sits there and you say, 'Hey, kitty, kitty, kitty, kitty.' The cat just sits there licking his paws saying, 'If I want to come, I will; if not, I won't.' *That's a cat!*

Now, please, I love cats. I've had cats, but they're different. God put a certain quality in a dog without measure that He did with no other creature. That quality is *unconditional love*.

You really have to beat a dog to get it to turn on you. That's what a dog is. Now, my dog, I was the caretaker. My job was to go walk the dog every night. One night I happened to be sick. I had a sore throat, whatever it was, and someone else was going to walk the dog.

The dog wouldn't go. The dog kept whining and coming to me. He knew me; I was his shepherd; he knew my voice. It's as though someone had commanded him, 'Thou shalt have no other dog walkers besides me.'

John 10:4—*talking about Christ the Shepherd*: "When He brings the sheep out, He goes before them; and the sheep follow Him because they know His voice. But they will never follow a stranger... [never follow a false god, a false shepherd, because the sheep know Him] ...for they will flee from him because **they do not know the voice of strangers**" (vs 4-5)—*so, they will not follow a stranger!*

Well, it's the same way with us. We have to be loyal to God. ***Christ is our Shepherd!*** When we follow Him, we love Him. This is the love of God:

- we keep His Commandments

- we follow Him
 - ✓ loving God
 - ✓ obeying the Law

They are two sides of the same coin!

Now also that dog, like any dog I suppose, but it was my dog. When I would come home from school and I would be maybe a half a block away, he would see me, and the dog would come tearing down the block to meet me. He would overshoot me, run two or three times around me, and we would walk home.

Dogs do these things instinctively. God put that love in them. We have to learn it; we have to be invited through God's Spirit.

Well, that dog was so happy to greet me! Are we as happy, enthusiastic, and desirous of meeting God on God's Festival times as that dog was happy to see me?

I remember some years ago when Fred called me up and was wondering about something as to how he was going to translate a word in Gen. 1:14.

Genesis 1:14: "And God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide between the day and the night, and let them be for signs, and for **appointed seasons**...'—*the Holy Days!*

I said, 'Fred, yeah, I think you're right.' And then when I started studying into the Hebrew, I realized Fred, you were more right than you ever knew. It's exactly what it is.

Lev. 23--*we're all here because of this; where God declares His set times!*

Leviticus 23:1: "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, "*Concerning the appointed Feasts...* [Hebrew: *moadim*; same word as in Gen. 1:14—'moadim'—God's set times] **...which you shall proclaim to be Holy convocations, even these are My appointed Feasts**" (vs 1-2).

God has a calendar; He has a big one! For example: every seventh day, it's on His calendar, 'meet with My people!' And on the Holy days, 'meet with My people.'

So, FDR—Franklin Delano Roosevelt—in one of his speeches, had the following phrase: 'We have a rendezvous with destiny.' To put it more colloquially for us, ***we have a rendezvous with God, an appointment!*** It's on God's calendar, God says, 'I'm going to be there.'

- Are you?

- Are you going to be with Me?
- Do you care to be with Me?
- Am I important to you?

Well, sooner or later, the answer better be *yes!* Of course, it's going to be ***yes, because His Spirit's is going to lead us to do it!*** But you see, by being there, we show:

- our loyalty
- our fidelity
- our commitment

to Him, which is the whole point! Obedience to Him/loving Him; again, one and the same, one is the extension of the other.

Now let's take a look and see how Jesus loved God, John 14:31. I've read this section of John many, many times, but it didn't strike me as much as it has these last few weeks. We read this every Passover night; but look what Jesus said:

John 14:31: "Yet, *he comes* so that the world may know that **I love the Father, and that I do exactly as the Father has commanded Me...**"

How did Jesus love His Father? *By doing what His Father commanded!* Once again, love and commandments. Therefore, how do we love Jesus?

Verse 21: "The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me, and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him." ***How do you love Christ?***

- keep His Commandments
- do what He says to do
 - the Law and love, the same
 - one is a manifestation of the other
 - can't have one without the other

God loves us so much!

Let's consider this. I've read Titus this many times, but again, not till the last couple of weeks has it really struck home to me. I knew part of it:

Titus 1:2—*this is Paul talking about Christ and the Father:* "In **the hope of eternal life, which God, Who cannot lie, promised before the ages of time.**"

God cannot lie! That is true because that's His nature. That's what He is:

- He's honesty
- He's integrity
- He's love

Which we will see more specifically a little later on.

But notice “In *the hope of eternal life... promised before the ages of time.*” How long ago is that?

Remember the third-grader when he was asked what eternity was, how long eternity was? Now, mind you, this is a third-grader. He was a pretty smart third-grader.

He thought and said, ‘*Forever and ever—then came pause—and maybe even longer.*’

Well, I like the ‘and longer’ part; that aspect I love, because *before the ages of time!*

- What’s time?
- How do you measure time? *The heavenly bodies!*

God is beyond time and space!

- He doesn’t need heavenly bodies
- He doesn’t need anything
- He is what He is
- He is all glory, all powerful

He doesn’t need heavenly bodies to tell time, but we do!

And he said that “...*the hope of eternal life...*”; *that’s for us!* The thought of our heavenly eternal life was in the mind of God way back when.

Now, I remember seeing several videos of astronomers and they’re trying to tell us how/when the universe began. And he said, ‘Now we think we have it by measuring the light, the red shift and so forth, and they came up with ***13.842 billion years!***’

Now, the 842, I don’t know how they do that, but they say it is, and I’m not gonna argue with them because they’re probably right. *Let’s think a minute:*

God’s Plan has been ***13-billion years*** or so in the making. Now, you want to talk about long range plan, that is it. it says “In *the hope of eternal life...*” God was promising us even though He didn’t know us yet, He hadn’t created us yet, but:

- He knew we would exist
- He knew He was going to do it
- He knew He was going to give these people, these humans, a chance to be part of His Kingdom
 - ✓ that’s how much He wanted us
 - ✓ that’s love
 - ✓ that’s outgoing concern
 - ✓ that’s for the betterment

So finally, days came, Earth was created. We know what happened in the garden, God made good His promise. He promised His people: He talked to:

- Abraham

- Isaac
- Jacob
- Moses
- David
- Elijah
- all the prophets
- all the apostles

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have **everlasting life**”—*eternal life!*

What is that? *That is love, meaning faithful!* God was faithful to His Plan. He was faithful to us, ***loyalty to us!*** It’s a two way street. God doesn’t ask of us anything He has not already done Himself or is not willing to do. It’s all for one and one for all! And ***IF*** it takes the death of the One Who would be His Son in order for Him to fulfill His promise, ***THEN*** come the preverbal ‘come hell or high water,’ God was going to do it! He’s that faithful! That’s almost unbelievable! But that’s how faithful and steadfast He really is!

1-John 4:8: “**The one who does not love does not know God** because God is love.”

When I first came into the Worldwide Church of God, learned about it, went to Ambassador College. I’ve heard Herbert W. Armstrong talk about love. He didn’t always talk about love. Love was almost secondary. But nevertheless, he did define love as ***an outgoing concern!*** That was okay as far as it went.

But God is more than outward concern. I use the term ‘betterment’ because:

- God’s whole concept
- His whole essence
- His whole thought

is for the betterment of others! Always for the betterment!

- God is pure
- God is righteous

He wants everyone and everybody to be righteous and pure. That’s why He gave His Torah, which would lead to our betterment. Obey those Laws, good things happen. That’s how He loves us. He gave of Himself. ***So God is love.***

Let’s look at a description of that God, our God, in the book of Exodus. This is where Moses had been up on the mountain with God, and now he’s coming down.

Exodus 34:5: “And the LORD came down in the cloud, and stood with him there, and

proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy to the thousandth generation, **forgiving iniquity** and *transgression* and **sin**....’” (vs 5-7).

Here we have the triage; oftentimes you have the triad, the threes. In this particular case it’s forgiving:

- iniquity
- transgression
- sin

“...but Who will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, to the third and to the fourth generation” (v 7).

That is because no repentance, because the people won’t change! **IF** you don’t change, **IF** you don’t obey Him, He is going to (inaudible) that sin! That’s what He is.

Do we want a God that way? Believe me, He does not! There’s another Scripture that said, ‘God doesn’t really treat us the way we deserve.’ **We don’t deserve His mercy, but He does it anyway!**

Now let’s take a look at what we call the ‘love’ chapter: 1-Cor. 13. Look what Paul has to say.

1-Corinthians 13:4: “Love is patient *and* is kind; love envies not, does not brag about itself, is not puffed up. *Love* does not behave disgracefully, does not seek its own things, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth. *Love* bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **Love never fails**....” (vs 4-8).

But remember, **God is love!** So, where it talks about love, put God in there, **because that’s what He is!**

I have commented to others, when I was first coming out of Judaism into the Worldwide Church of God, a good Greek friend... Why I knew him as a friend, I don’t know. He said, ‘Why don’t you come to the Greek Orthodox Church? I don’t know why, but he said it. It was a Plato church in Chicago, the biggest Greek Orthodox Church. He brought me to it, I looked around and it was a sight to see. The icons and so on.

He talked to the priest, and the priest came to me: here was a nice Jewish boy coming to Christ. He was grinning from ear to ear. He put his hands on my shoulders and looked at me, and he gave me one piece of advice, which I think I mentioned before. But it’s the best advice anybody ever gave:

Whatever you do in your virtue, do not look to a man, because he’s just a man. He may be well-intentioned. He may have the best of intentions, but he’s just a man. He will fail. **Always look to Christ, He will never fail!**

Verse 8: “Love never fails....”—**Christ/God never fails!**

- He will never forsake us
- He is always there
- He is love

To show us how to love Him, He has given His Torah:

- His Laws
- His statutes
- His commandments
- His judgments
- His precepts

IF we keep them, they lead to betterment. They lead to a productive and happy life. One proceeds from the other. One is not greater than the other because they express the same thing. God is love and His Commandments demonstrate that love.

Isaiah 55:7—*God was talking to the people of Israel*: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him **return** to the LORD...”

Hebrew ‘shub,’ which means *repent*. Every time you say *repent*, that’s the word that’s always used, which means **turn to God!** So that’s really what repentance means, *you’re turning*.

“...and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (v 7).

What a gracious God. No matter how bad we fall, He says, come on, get up, I’ll give you My Spirit, I want you in My Kingdom. I see you there. So come on, keep going!

Verse 8: “‘For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (vs 8-9).

That is true! But you see, God is programmed, and He programs Himself. Nobody did it, no outside power did it. But He is programming us with His Spirit, by His Spirit.

So that, at the end of days, **our thoughts will become as God’s thoughts are!** And **our ways will become as God’s ways are!** So that indeed, **we will become all in one!**

I enjoy reading, Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*, "All for one and one for all!"

In God's Kingdom, in God's Family, it's going to be one for all and all for one. We are going to be glorious beings as God Himself. It comes with authority. The Father will always be the Grand Patriarch of the Plan. Nobody's going to displace Him.

His Grand Vizier, His Supreme Commander under Him is going to be ***the Christ!*** Nobody's going to challenge Him!

We're going to have the same sustenance, because Paul did say, '***we are joint heirs with Christ.***' I know what a joint heir is. A joint heir means what one inherits, the other inherits. So, if we are going to inherit what Christ inherits, that means we truly are as God is:

- our substance
- our power
- our glory

Except we will always be subservient to the Father! At all times, we will always carry out. We will be programmed by His Spirit to do that. It'll be second nature to us. No, second thought, it won't be second nature. ***It'll be our nature, the only nature, always loyal to Him!***

Yes, my Father, what do you want me to do?
What shall I do?

He'll tell us what He would like us to do. But He may not talk to us directly all the time; Christ may do it. It doesn't matter. *All for one, one for all!*

So, we ought to become as God is, and the commandments and statutes for those on earth, lead us that way.

- that's His mind
- that's how He thinks

So once again, in conclusion:

- ***the Law of God***
- ***the Commandments of God***
- ***loving God***

The same: ***two sides of the same coin!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1-John 5:3, 2
- 2) Matthew 22:33-40
- 3) John 10:4-5
- 4) Genesis 1:14
- 5) Leviticus 23:1-2
- 6) John 14:31; 21
- 7) Titus 1:2

- 8) John 3:16
- 9) 1-John 4:8
- 10) Exodus 34:5-7
- 11) 1-Corinthians 13:4-8
- 12) Isaiah 55:7-9

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Deuteronomy 6:5

Also referenced: Book:

The Three Musketeers by Alexandre Dumas'

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