

**Monday, August 8** – Yesterday in worship, we looked at **Matthew 22:34-40** through the lens of Happiness is not a what, but a Who. Verse 37 is called the Greatest Commandment. Before we look a little deeper, let's consider the context. The Scriptures says the religious leaders already were plotting His murder. You see they resented Him for several reasons. #1 - He taught contrary to their teaching and that irritated them. #2 - He was more popular than they were, had a bigger following than they did and it was hard for them to take because their egos really needed to be supreme. #3 - He demonstrated powers and abilities that they couldn't even conceive. Jesus was a threat to their position, popularity, and polity. And as long as Jesus had the ear of the people they were in a very difficult position and also the Roman government had restricted their right to take lives, to execute their own criminals, and so they really were in a difficult place. So they attempt the only thing they can attempt and that is to publicly discredit Jesus. So the question posed was supposed to give them ammunition for their case against Jesus. Do you suppose these folks heard Jesus words like we do today? How did you approach worship yesterday? How did you approach today's reading? **Read Matthew 22:34-40** again and be open and listen.

**Tuesday, August 9** – **Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9**. The religious leaders were trying to trap Jesus by getting him to contradict Moses, to supersede something that Moses had written. But he answered by quoting Moses from Deuteronomy 6:5. Jesus did exactly the opposite of what they wanted Him to do. Not only did He quote Moses, but He quoted the most familiar thing that Moses ever wrote, the *Shama* - "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one God. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might." That was the most familiar Scripture to all of those Jews. By doing this, Jesus was able to disarm his attackers and also provide us a model – The Old and the New together. As you seek to love God – remember, all of scripture is to be followed.

**Wednesday, August 10** – **Read Matthew 22:37 and Deuteronomy 6:5**. The word love in Deuteronomy 6:5, is the Hebrew word *ahab*. It is a verb that refers primarily to the love of will, the love of the mind, the love of action rather than the love of feeling, the love of emotion. It is that highest kind of love. Not the love that you just feel, but the love of dedication, the love of commitment, the love that says this is right and this is noble no matter what I feel. And that's the word, *agapeo* in Greek (the language of the New Testament). *Agapeo* is the love of intelligence, it's the love of purpose, and it's the love of will. This is the highest kind of love, the love of purpose, the love of will, the noblest, purist, highest, self-sacrificing love of that which is right and that which is worthy. Are you experiencing this when you think about loving God? Is this the kind of love you act out as you daily seek to follow Jesus?

**Thursday, August 11 – “Love the Lord your God with all your heart...”** The word heart basically in the Hebrew understanding is the core of a person's identity. Proverbs 4:23, "Guard your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life." Everything comes out of the heart. The heart in the Hebrew understanding is the intellect, which produces the thoughts, produces the words, and produces the actions. It's as a man thinks in his heart that he is. It's the intellectual part that's most often stressed. What should you do to Love God with all your heart?

**Friday, August 12 – Read Matthew 22:37.** God is not looking for people who go through religious ritual. God is not just looking for people who on the outside can go through the motions. God wants people with their whole being to love Him. When God loved us He really loved us, didn't he? When He loved us with His whole being He gave us everything He was and is and will be. He gave us Himself in death for our sin. He who gave us His wholehearted love and does not want our half-hearted love in return. I John 4:19 says, "We love Him because He first loved us." Turn it around, He first loved us; therefore, we love Him. We are those who love God?

**Saturday, August 13 – Read Matthew 22:39-40.** This flows from love for God, when you love God right you love people right. That's the idea and the Pharisees didn't do that. They bound heavy burdens on people. They used people. They abused people. They were cruel to people. So you're to love your neighbor as yourself. What does that mean? It means that love is again the love of purpose, the love of intention, the love of will, the love of action. In other words I take care of somebody else the same way I take care of me. Let's face it, we're very concerned with our own comfort, isn't it about time we think of others the way Jesus did?