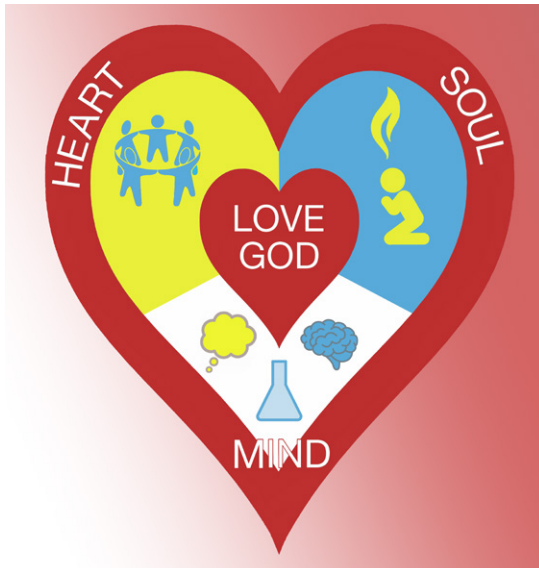


Bible reading: Matthew 22:34-46

How loving God compels us to love others

A lawyer asks Jesus which is the greatest of God's commandments. Jesus, quoting the Old Testament, says: 'love God, and love your neighbour as yourself'. Jesus asks a question of his audience: What sort of person might God's Messiah be?



Draw heart shapes on some biscuits with red icing. Add marshmallows or sprinkles. Share them with someone you love.

ACT

What can you do to show love to a neighbour this week? Can you offer a lift, help with a chore, send a card, invite them over, litter pick in your neighbourhood, be a good listener?

WATCH



Enjoy this romantic movie montage (warning: It does show kissing!). How many films can you name?

www.youtube.com/watch?v=mU_AKOrhGHc

What does it mean to love somebody completely? What is the difference between the love God requires and the love we see expressed in movies today?

Now watch the clip from ODB films:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=gykmvCAh24g and think about the message. What differences would it make to our lives if we loved God and people with all our heart, soul and mind?

Bible notes



The question asked of Jesus was not a complicated one. Verse 37 is the Shema, the central prayer of Judaism, found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. Verse 39 is a summary, taken from Leviticus 19:18, of the law of Moses. Together, they are all that God's people need to remember: love God; love your neighbour as yourself. The other laws, of which there are traditionally 613, unpack how to do this – but these two are the essence. Not complicated, but Jesus' answer does, however, clarify to his hearers that he understands the written law to be important, more important than the later oral tradition. He is orthodox in his faith. As the people of God, loved by God, we are to love God, and to let this love overflow to others and ourselves. This is the choice we are to make.

Jesus' return question is a little more complicated. Living in occupied territory, the people looked forward to the time when God would send a leader, a second Moses, to set them free once again. This leader, the Messiah, would be a descendant of King David. Jesus demonstrates here that this understanding of the Messiah is too limited. Fathers were lords to their sons, not vice versa, so for David to refer to the Messiah as 'Lord' in this quote from Psalm 110 shows that there must be something more to the Messiah than Jesus' hearers have realised. In several places elsewhere in his Gospel, Matthew has the title 'Son of God' attributed to Jesus (4:3, 6; 8:29; 14:33). This demonstrates the Messiah to be one who receives authority directly from God and not simply through the family line. Jesus is orthodox in his faith – but this does not mean holding to traditional ways of understanding.

First impressions

- How might the command to love others be compared to a domino effect?
- What does loving others look like in practice?
- What challenges does that present in daily life?



Pray



I will choose to love God.
I will choose to love my neighbours.
I will choose to love the people it's hard to love.
Help me, God, to love others the way that you love me.
Amen.

TRANSFORM

On a dinner plate, place sweets in a heart shape. Gently pour warm water onto the plate and watch as the colour of the sweets spread across the plate, transforming into a rainbow. As you watch, pray: Loving God, help me to remember that because you love me, I can let that love flow out from me to others. Amen.