

TRUMPET CALL

WELCOME TO THE UPTOWN CHURCH!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please check your bulletin for more information.

PASSING THE PEACE

Unity & Reconciliation

*Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:11-12;
1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14; Matthew 5:23-24, 18:15*

INVOCATION

A pastoral prayer of invocation, adoration, thanksgiving, and illumination.

Psalm 67:1-2, 105:4

LORD'S PRAYER

Corporate prayer of our covenantal commitment with our Heavenly Father through the Son of God, which encourages the confession of sin together.

Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father,

Who is in heaven,

Holy is Your name.

Your kingdom come,

Your will be done,



LORD'S PRAYER

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our sins,

As we forgive those who sin against us.



LORD'S PRAYER

And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil:
For Yours is the kingdom,
The power and the glory,
Forever and ever — *amen!*



PSALMS, HYMNS & SPIRITUAL SONGS

Worshipping and praising the Lord in song together.

Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The Mystery of Godliness

1 Timothy 3:14-16, 4:9-11

PASTOR

I write to you so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:



MEN

God was manifested in the flesh,

WOMEN

Justified in the Spirit,



MEN

Seen by angels,

WOMEN

Proclaimed among the nations,



MEN

Believed on in the world,

WOMEN

Received up in glory.



PASTOR

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.



INTERCESSION

Pastoral & Congregational Prayer

1 Timothy 2:1-6

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-4

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.



DISMISSAL

Call children to the altar for prayer and blessing.

Matthew 18:1-14, 19:13-14

PSALMS, HYMNS & SPIRITUAL SONGS

Worshipping and praising the Lord in song together.

Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16

DECLARATION OF THE LAW

The Greatest Commandment with a supplementary passage.

*Mark 12:29-31; Matthew 22:35-40; Luke 10:25-28;
John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:7-8,21; Romans 13:9-10; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8
Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18*

DECLARATION OF THE LAW

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

This is the first and great commandment.

Mark 12.29-30



DECLARATION OF THE LAW

And the second is like it:

‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew 22:39-40



DECLARATION OF THE LAW

For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word:

Romans 13:9-10



DECLARATION OF THE LAW

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Love does no wrong to a neighbor;
therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 13:9-10



A dramatic painting depicting the Resurrection. In the upper left, an angel in white robes carries a large wooden cross. The scene is set in a dark, cavernous space with a large, glowing opening in the background. A large crowd of people, including men, women, and children, are gathered in various states of distress and confusion. Some are looking up at the angel, while others are embracing or holding their heads in their hands. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a sense of awe and mystery.

YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

Understanding the Greatest Commandment, Part 3



GREATEST COMMANDMENT: THE LAW OF LOVE & LIBERTY

Distinct Laws in the Old Testament

- Shema — **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**
- Priestly Law — **Leviticus 19:18**

Christ Harmonizes these Laws in the NT

- Greatest Commandment (Royal Law) — **Mark 12.29-31; Matthew 22:35-40; Luke 10:25-28; John 13:34-35; Rom.13:9-10; Gal.5:14; James 2:8; 1 John 4:7-8,21**





GREATEST COMMANDMENT: EXPOSITION

Continue to break down its meaning line-by-line, word-by-word:

1. Hear, O Israel:
The Kingdom
2. The Lord our God, the Lord is one!
The Trinity
3. And you shall love the Lord your God...
The Law of Love



YOU SHALL LOVE

- The Lord our God... > You shall love the Lord your God
- **Plural Pronoun “our”** is used in a factual context about God and acts as a communal statement of faith that applies to all Israel, regardless if they believe it or not—it is a fact.
- **Singular Pronoun “you/your”** is used in a law-abiding context to love God and acts as a personal and individual command—in other words, it does not depend on other people for it to apply—you love God regardless of what other people think.
 - Hebrew and Greek, it is not the plural form of “you” (i.e., “yous” or “y’all”)



YOU SHALL LOVE

- **Loving God is not outsourced to the community/culture:**
- God is not commanding us to follow some vague collective vibe, “hivemind” or “groupthink” — it is not based on “we the people” (majority rule).
- Therefore, loving God cannot be lost between a lack of other people not loving.... “Well, he’s not doing it, so why should I?”
- **Each person is directly addressed:**
You—personally, individually—must love God with your whole self. Then, you must love your neighbor as yourself.



YOU SHALL LOVE

- Loving God demands total, personal commitment from every single person.
- You are being held accountable by the standard of love—the law.
- **Therefore, the Law demands a personal relationship with God.**



YOU SHALL LOVE

- **Shall, ought, must, will** (not “should”) implies law.
- God is love. Therefore, you shall love.
- You cannot fulfill the law of love out of order. **This is critical.**
- **John 14:15** — “If you love me, you will keep [obey] my commandments.”



YOU SHALL LOVE

John 14:15 — “If you love me, you will keep [obey] my commandments.”

Due to our cultural sensitivities, certain questions spring up:

- 1. Why is love commanded? *Why not just do it?***
- 2. Why is obeying God’s commandments considered love?**



YOU SHALL LOVE

- It is normal today to think that love and law are incompatible, and, therefore, at odds with each other.
- There is this tension in some Christian circles that obligation is a bad thing. That obedience is legalism, as if following rules is hardness of heart and having no rules is somehow more loving and authentic.
- My friends, this is false...
Law keep things together—in their right place and in proper order.



YOU SHALL LOVE

- **Civil/Cultural Laws** (i.e., traffic, etiquette, unwritten rules, etc.)
- **Moral Laws** (i.e., do not murder, lie, cheat; love God, etc.)
- **Laws of Nature** (i.e., hydrological cycle, goldilocks zone, etc.)

- We need law for life to exist.
- For life to keep existing, we need love.
- **Love completes law. Without love, law is an empty vessel.**



YOU SHALL LOVE

LAW



YOU SHALL LOVE

LAW



LAW



YOU SHALL LOVE

- **Galatians 5:14** — For the whole law is fulfilled [completed] in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
- **Romans 13:9-10** reiterates this with examples from the 10 Commandments that are fulfilled in keeping the royal law.
- The 10 Commandments (**Exodus 20:1-21**) reverses the greatest commandment (“You shall” > “You shall not”) — *when there is no love!*
- **Galatians 5:19-21** dives even deeper than the 10 Commandments with a detailed list of underpinning ‘shall not’ commands — “the works of the flesh... will not inherit the kingdom of God.”



YOU SHALL LOVE: WHY IS LOVE LAW?

Love holds law together and fulfills the purpose of law:

- **Galatians 5:22-23** — “But the fruit of the Spirit is love... against such things there is no law.”

Okay—but why?

1. Why is love commanded? *Why not just do it?*
2. Why is obeying God’s commandments considered love?



YOU SHALL LOVE: WHY IS LOVE LAW?

Why is love commanded? *Why not just do it?*

- Sin is separation from God — and God is love.
- You and I do not love as we ought—you are a sinner, and so am I.
- **1 John 3:4** — Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; **sin is lawlessness.**



YOU SHALL LOVE

LAW



LAW



YOU SHALL LOVE: WHY IS LOVE LAW?

Why is love commanded? *Why not just do it?*

- In our fallen condition, our sense of love and desire to love has been tainted and twisted by sin, death, and spiritual darkness
- We need true law to hold us accountable, to remind us how to love when we stumble (or have been stumbled upon), to keep us from falling apart.
- When we do not love, we sin! We're following empty rules.



YOU SHALL LOVE: WHY IS LOVE LAW?

Why is obeying God's commandments considered love?

- If God is love, then obeying God is obeying love. It is loving Love—God.
- **Obedience to God is faith in God working through the love of God.**
- **Galatians 5:5-6** — For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision [Mosaic Law] nor uncircumcision [No Law] counts for anything [in itself], **but only faith working through love.**



YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

- Obedience is trusting in God's character — who He is.
- Disobedience or rejection of God's commandments is to not love—
—it is to lack faithfulness... yet...
- **2 Timothy 2:13** — “if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.”
- **The letter of the Law is empty without the Spirit of the Law.**



YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

- **Ezekiel 36:26-27** — And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.
- **John 14:15-17** — “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”



YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

- **2 Corinthians 3:2-3** — You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.
- **Galatians 5:22-23** — “But the fruit of the Spirit is love... against such things there is no law.”



YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

- **The Law of Christ, which is the true law of love and liberty, can only be kept through the Spirit of the living God.**
- **God is remolding your heart of stone into the heart of flesh it was supposed to be. He is renewing your will! He is restoring the laws of human nature within you.**



WHY IS ALL THIS IMPORTANT?

Critical Thinking.

ADMONITION: DO YOU KNOW GOD?

- Do you know the rules?
- Or do you know the Person?

- Rich young ruler followed all the rules... ([Matthew 19:16-26](#))
- Pharisees knew their Bibles *very* well... ([John 5:39-40](#))
- Consider Jesus' response when He boils down the greatest commandment to one of the scribes:



GREATEST COMMANDMENT: MARK 12:28-34

vv.28-31 — And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **And you shall love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”



GREATEST COMMANDMENT: MARK 12:28-34

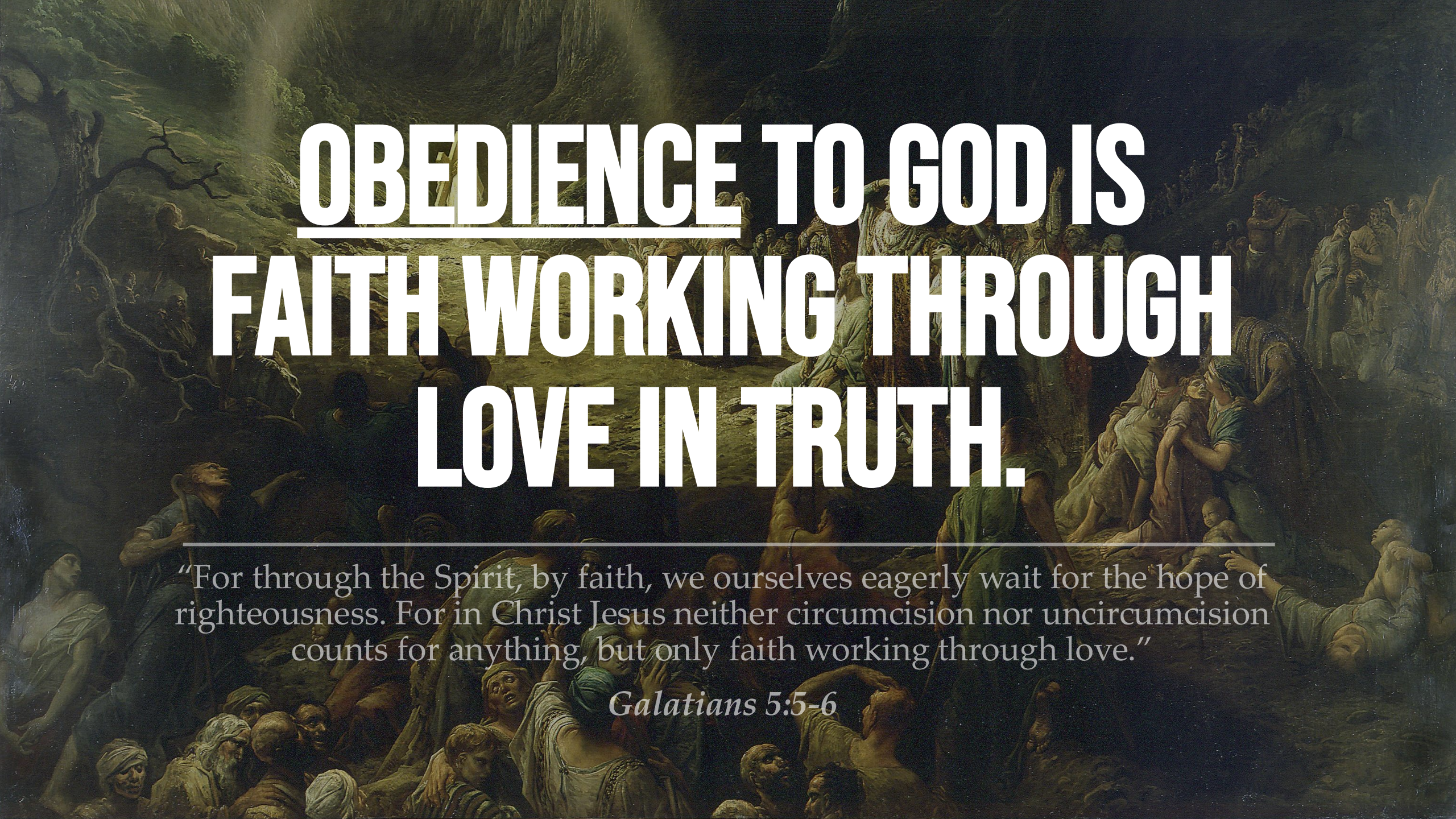
vv.32-34 — And the scribe said to him, “**You are right, Teacher.** You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “**You are not far from the kingdom of God.**”



ADMONITION: DO YOU KNOW GOD?

- Take a moment to think about that — the scribe knew the rule, but he was not in the door yet — “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” (v.34)
- **This is critical.** People can claim they love God — with their lips and labour — because they follow a set of rules, and yet focus so intensely on the rules, rituals, systems, ideas, and traditions that they never come to realize if they actually love God as a Person.
- **The order is critical:**
God is love. Therefore, you shall love.
You must know God first to be like Him. Then, love others like Him.





**OBEDIENCE TO GOD IS
FAITH WORKING THROUGH
LOVE IN TRUTH.**

“For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.”

Galatians 5:5-6

ADMONITION: DO YOU KNOW GOD?

- **Matthew 7:22-23** — On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you **workers of lawlessness.**’
- The line of logic is simple:
“If you love me [God], you will keep my commandments.” (**John 14:15**)
- It is not: “I keep the commandments, therefore I love God”.
- **Do you know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour?**





DO YOU KNOW HIM?

“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

1 John 4:9-10



DO YOU KNOW HIM PERSONALLY?

“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

1 John 4:9-10



HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU KNOW HIM?

“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

1 John 4:9-10



TO KNOW GOD IS TO LOVE GOD.

“God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God,
and God abides in him.”

1 John 4:16

**HOW DO YOU
APPLY THIS?**

Critical Application

EXHORTATION: FIRST ORDER THINGS

How do we keep the love of God first in our lives?

1. Pray first

- Have you spoken with your heavenly Father this morning?
- Do you have a dedicated time set apart for devotional, intimate prayer with your Lord and Saviour?
- **Prayer is our way of loving God.** When you pray, praise and worship Him for who He is — His goodness, faithfulness, love, patience, sovereignty, glory, mercy, life, etc. — and then praise Him for all He has (and has not) given you.



REFLECTION: FIRST ORDER THINGS

How do we keep the love of God first in our lives?

2. Church life

- Are you here to worship God –or– to be entertained?
- Are you here to give to others –or– are others here to give to you?!
- **Is there anything in your way impeding you from being closer with God?**



SUPPLICATION

Pastoral Prayer of Application.

CALL THE ELDERS

Prayer in the Isles — altar call, confession of sin, anointing of the sick, pastoral intercession, along with prayer, praise, and worship.

James 5:13-16; Psalm 103:2-5

JAMES 5:13-16

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.



PSALMS, HYMNS & SPIRITUAL SONGS

Worshipping and praising the Lord in song together.

Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16

BENEDICTION

Priestly Blessing

BENEDICTION

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
And the love of God the Father,
And the communion of the Holy Spirit,
Be with you all this week.
Go in the peace that surpasses all understanding.
Amen.

2 Corinthians 13:14







