

Introduction: Financial advisors say people should have enough money saved to cover at least three months of living expenses. In their opinion this is the minimum margin all people need. *** In this season of Lent, when we devote time each day to contemplate what Jesus did for all people on The Cross, it is fair to ask ourselves: How do we feel about margins? What would I do if a family or person in the church suddenly had no income or assets, and the family or person came to me asking me for help? *** I would not even have to pray before I answered, though I admit I would pray. Jesus made it clear what to do in His Kingdom of God Inaugural Address, what we call the Sermon on the Mount, when He commanded: ‘Give to the one who asks of you’. He goes on to say His people will love even their enemies who ask for help (Matthew 5:42-47; c.f. Luke 6:30-35). God’s children will give in this way until there is nothing left to give. *** This is how we show our love to God in gratitude for who He IS, His amazing LOVE; and, for all He does. *** Our passages this morning give four examples of how people show love to God: three are positive and one is negative. *** The most important thing is that we show our love to God when we give all we are and all we have for the sake of His Glory demonstrated by Jesus’ sacrificial LOVE for us. *** Let’s now look into the details.

I. A scribe interacts with Jesus concerning the first commandment; then, Jesus teaches in the Temple court that although He is David’s ‘son’, David called Him ‘Lord’! (Mark 12:28-37)

- A. Jesus tells a scribe that the first commandment is: Thou will love Yahweh with thy whole being; when the scribe agrees, Jesus says he is not far from God’s Kingdom. (Verses 28-34)
1. Having come, one of the scribes having heard them discussing, having heard that well He answered them, he asked which is being the first commandment of all? (Verse 28)
One scribe: Many Jewish leaders had just questioned Jesus about paying taxes. A late arriving scribe wants to know from Jesus the number one commandment of all God’s commandments.
 2. Jesus answered, ‘The first is being, ‘Thou must be hearing, Israel, Lord our God, Lord one is being; thou will love Lord thy God from thy whole heart, thy whole soul, thy whole mind, thy whole strength; second (is) this: Thou will love thy neighbor as thyself; greater than these, other commandment not is being’. (Verses 29-31)
Hear: He starts with hearing, ‘shě-mă’ in Hebrew, that God is one.
Thou will love: Next is the *promise* they *will* love God with their whole being (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).
Neighbor: Since Pentecost, we should want our neighbors to enjoy the same relationship we have with God IN Jesus. We love others, by helping them know The Savior as their one Lord.
 3. The scribe said to Him, ‘Well (beautifully), Teacher, from truth Thou spoke, for one He is being and not other is being besides Him; and, to love Him from thy whole heart, thy whole understanding, and thy whole strength, and to love neighbor as himself, more is being than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. (Verses 32-33)
Teacher-truth: He calls Jesus Teacher of Truth. He is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6).
Love: And, he agrees the first commandment is people will love God with the whole being; and, to love God surpasses all sacrifices in the Temple. Soon, Jesus will offer Himself as the ‘whole burnt offering’ on The Cross so people may be fully forgiven. (John 15:13; Romans 5:8)
 4. Jesus, having seen wisely he had answered, said to him, ‘Not far thou are being from the Kingdom of God’; no man, no longer, was daring to question Him’. (Verse 34)
Wise answer: This scribe was wiser than those constantly testing Jesus. He understood God wills people to love Him with their whole being.
Close to Kingdom: Jesus says his understanding that he must hold back no part of his whole being from God, almost puts him in right relationship to God.

Love to God is measured by how little is retained

- B. While teaching in the Temple courts, Jesus says Messiah is more than David’s son; but rather, David’s Adonai, and many people hear gladly. (Verses 35-37)
1. Jesus, having answered, was saying teaching in the Temple, ‘How the scribes are saying: The Messiah, son of David is being? David himself said in The Holy Spirit, “Lord to my Lord, thou must be sitting from My right hand until I might make thine enemies under the feet of thee”’. (Verses 35-36)
Teaching in temple: Throughout Holy Week, Jesus was teaching in the courts of the Temple.
Question: He wants to make the scribes realize God’s eternal King is more than David’s human son, by quoting David’s inspired song which calls his ‘son’ Adonai, one of God’s names (Psalm 110:1).
 2. David himself is calling Him ‘Lord’; how can it be son He (Lord) is being of him (David)?
Many common people were hearing from Him gladly. (Verse 37)
Both-and: Jesus is BOTH Son of Man (Daniel 7:13; Mark 13:26) AND Son of God (Luke 3:23-37). In humility, David made himself nothing before his Son because of his heart (of love) for God (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22).
People glad: People who followed Jesus for three years gladly gave all of themselves to be with Him.

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II. Jesus commands people to be wary of proud, oppressive scribes; He commends a poor widow’s offering because she gave all; Yahweh’s LOVE and faithfulness are eternal, and so is the throne of David’s descendant.

(Mark 12:38-44; Psalm 89:1-4)

- A. Jesus commands people to be wary of scribes exalting themselves and consuming houses of widows, and praying long for appearances; they will receive greater judgment. (Mark 12:38-40)
1. In His instruction, He was saying, ‘You all must be wary of the scribes, of those desiring in long robes to walk, and (desiring) greetings in the marketplaces’. (Verse 38)

Teaching: Jesus commands His followers to watch out for the majority of scribes because they have set their hearts on expensive clothes and ego boosting greetings in common marketplaces.

2. 'And first places of honor in the synagogues and first reclining at table places in the feasts'. (Verse 39)
First: Their hearts are set on having first honor in synagogues, and being served first at the annual religious festivals (Leviticus 23), rather than leading God's people in whole-hearted worship to Him.
3. 'Those consuming houses of widows, and posture (in) long praying'. (Verse 40a)
Oppress widows: While they are greedily devouring widow's houses for themselves they pretend piety.
4. These will receive greater judgment. (Verse 40b)
Greater judgment: They will be condemned because they kept all their ill-gotten possessions and position, and gave nothing of themselves, what they did, or what they had, to God. They are a negative example of how to love God by holding on to nothing for themselves.

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- B. Jesus says a widow putting a sixty-fourth of a day's wage in the Temple treasury put in the most because it was her whole possession. (Mark 12:41-44)
 1. Having sat opposite of the Temple treasury, He was observing how the people are casting copper into the Temple treasury, and many well-to-do were casting in much. (Verse 41)
Temple treasury: In this context, it is an offering box for voluntary offerings for the upkeep of the Temple, for those serving in the Temple, and for the poor.
Jesus observes: Jesus is carefully watching wealthy people throwing in large quantities of coins, jewels and other valuables.
 2. Having come, one poor widow, she cast in twice one-hundred-twenty-eighth of a denarius. (Verse 42)
Poor widow: She gave in total one-sixty-fourth of a day's wages for a man. Using a twelve hour day (Matthew 20:6-9), it was wages for under twelve minutes of work. Using the current minimum wage and an eight hour day it was \$1.88.
 3. Having summoned His disciples, He said to them, 'Truly, I am saying to you all, this poor widow, more she cast in than all of those casting into the Temple treasury; because all, from their more than enough abundance, they cast in. (Verses 43-44a)
Summons disciples: Jesus calls His disciples to Himself because this is an important teaching moment.
Widow: He says, 'In truth (truly), she has cast in more than all the wealthy people'.
Others from abundance: The others only gave God what they did not need. It cost them nothing. This was not David's heart when he told Araunah he would make no offering to God that did not cost him (2 Samuel 24:24). He paid three thousand talents (225,000 pounds) of gold!
 4. But she, from her poverty (need), all, as much as she was having, she cast in – the whole living of her. (Verses 44b-c)
All-whole: Out of her extreme poverty, she gave to God all she had, the whole of her life possessions. God is more impressed with those whose love for, and devotion to, Him motivates them to give to Him so nothing remains to them. She kept zero 'margin'.

Love to God is measured by how little is retained

- C. Ethan says Yahweh's strong LOVE and faithfulness are eternal; and, Yahweh swears to His chosen servant to build up the Throne of David's descendant forever. (Psalm 89:1-4)
 1. The strong LOVE of Yahweh forever I will sing / to generation and generation I will make known Thy faithfulness in my mouth. (Verse 1)
Strong LOVE and faithfulness: Ethan (enduring), almost as wise as Solomon (1 Kings 4:31) and appointed worship singer by David (1 Chronicles 15:17-19), declares he will always sing of The Covenant God's very strong LOVE and faithfulness (truth). We can now fully love God, because He first loved us IN His Son (1 John 4:10).
 2. Because I said, forever strong LOVE will be built / heavens, Thou will establish Thy faithfulness in them. (Verse 2)
Built and established: Again, now because of what Jesus did, God's amazing LOVE will continue to be built as His Church is built in the world; and, Jesus, who is faithful (2 Thessalonians 3:1-3; Hebrews 2:17; 3:6; Revelation 19:11), is established in people's hearts.
 3. 'I have made a covenant with My chosen one / I have sworn to David My servant // Until eternity I will establish thy descendant / and I have built to generation and generation thy Throne'. (Verses 3-4)
David covenant: Now Yahweh reaffirms His word to David that one descendant of him will be eternally established (2 Samuel 7:8-16).
Eternal King: Jesus, The Messiah, will rule as King over all the kingdoms of the world forever (Revelation 11:15). And those who receive Him will know and experience The LOVE of God.

Yahweh's faithful LOVE is shown in the eternal King from David

Conclusion: A scribe interacted with Jesus concerning the first commandment to love God with our whole being. Then Jesus taught in the Temple courts that Israel's greatest king spoke of Him as Lord God. Next, Jesus commanded people to be wary of proud scribes who oppress widows. He finished His teaching by commending a widow who gave all she had of her life's possessions to God. This extreme love to God comes to all who experience God's strong LOVE and faithfulness.

Love to God is measured by how little is retained