

Ethically Speaking

Romans 13: 1-10 and Mark 12: 28-34

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing to you. Amen.

Has anyone noticed a heightened sense of tension during this pandemic?

Maybe even a heightened sense of bad temper and hostility?

I think it's a good time to review and be reminded of Christian ethics.

With the current events in our world,

It's easy to question is there even such a thing?

I'd even argue, that this was the case before we ever heard of COVID-19 or the Corona Virus.

(pause) Now, I know it's Memorial day weekend.

And while this message doesn't specifically speak to Memorial Day,

Let me ask you a question...For those who have gone before us...

For those very souls who we remember over Memorial Day...

(pause) Do you think any of them would be pleased with the ethics displayed in today's society... in today's world?

Where do we see Christian ethics being upheld?

Where do we see Christian ethics being practiced?

Who believes in them? Who lives by them?

(pause) Who teaches them?

I think, Before that, we need to ask ourselves...

“What do we understand to be Christian ethics?”

Well, They have to do with the ideal human character. Right?

The highest good...The ideal end of human action...moral obligation

The relationship of man to the universe...and

The relationship of man to the Kingdom of Heaven.

(pause) So, where do we see any of these values today?

Where do we see human actions reflecting the highest good?

Where do we see moral obligation?

Where do we see a positive and sound relationship between

people and the world around us?

Do we see it at work? The grocery store? On social media? At home?

Our Christian ethics are based primarily on the teachings of (2) men,

(Pause) Jesus Christ & Saint Paul.

And the key concept in our ethics is love!

Christian ethics seeks the absolute good and this absolute good is

a result of absolute love!

An unrestricted love...an unshackled love...an unselfish love.

The teachings of Jesus & Paul are FILLED with illustrations of love!

They don't set forth rules or laws about love.

Rather, they give us illustrations and examples.

We are meant to act and react in love with compassion & forgiveness.

The absolute motive of our deeds is to be of love!

The absolute prime mover of our action is to be love!

Our response in any circumstance is to be of love!

We are to turn the other cheek...

We are to love those who persecute us...

We are to give the robber our cloak also...

We are to love our enemies...

We are to love our neighbors as ourselves...

We are to love one another...

We are to lay down our life for our fellow man...

We are to love those in need...

“as you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did unto me.”

We are to welcome the stranger...

We are to love God and his creation.

There can be no doubt about the importance of love!

(pause) For Paul... love is the fulfillment of the law.

It is the summation of the law (we understand but one word, love)

Love is God. It's what the Kingdom of Heaven is all about-

and if we have not love, we have NOT the Kingdom of God.

We are to love the brotherhood & sisterhood.

We are to love the church.

(pause) Our faith has roots in love!

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit is love...Galatian's chapter 5 verse 22-reads

"the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

By love we are to serve one another...Galatians Chapter 5 verse 13

"For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters;^[a] only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence,^[b] but through love become slaves to one another."

(Pause) We are to Love Christ with all our heart, soul and mind.

Clearly.... love is the basis of Christian ethics;

it's the basis for Christian moral duty.

Love is the basis of our seeking the highest good.

Love is the basis of our moral obligation.

Love is the basis of truth and honesty...

the basis of human responsibility... human compassion.

The starting point to society's relationship to society...should be love.

Love, regards all others as children of God.

It sees us as creatures of God.

(Pause) But here lies our failure.

It is not Love that is the starting point of how we treat our fellow man,

(pause) **But rather judgement.**

Somehow....we seem to believe that we have been called to judge!

Not even Jesus had the audacity to think like that!

More of our time is spent in judging, than loving.

We judge everybody...everything...every deed...every action

We have hidden agendas....hidden motives.

We judge with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength.

Judging has captured our spirit....

we are a judgmental people... aren't we?

And this preoccupation with judging has weakened our ability to love!

Judging has shackled our love.....It has put limits on our love.

The 1st and great commandment is not Judge thy neighbor!

(Pause) from our youth....we have learned that love is the

greatest commandment...the summation of all law!

(pause) But I fear this knowledge is only skin deep.

It is in word only....not in deed.

We don't take it to the streets, the market, our place of work,
social media, we don't take it to our homes.

(Pause) Is love really the prime mover behind all our actions and deeds?

Does our heart overflow with love?

Does love occupy all our understanding?....all our strength?

(Pause) and yet, we faithfully profess that love is the basis of all
the commandments; the commandment above all others!

In the lesson that Kay just read;

When Jesus and the scribe are speaking, they each refer to:

“all the heart, all the soul, all the strength, all the understanding”

This pretty much sums up our makeup.

It sums up our human facilities.

And these facilities are to be devoted to love...

Not to judgement, but to unselfish love.

We are to love with all our heart, soul, strength and understanding.

The key to mankind's relationship to mankind...is love!

The key to moral obligation is love!

The key to seeking the highest good, is love!

The ideal end of all human actions must be based on love.

It can't be skin deep.

Trena, can you help me here?

(sing) "And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love, yes they'll know we are Christians by our love."

If we can understand this, if we obey this, if we act in love,
we are not far from the kingdom of God.

Amen.