

### Introduction

1. Begin with video *Journey*. (Show)<sup>1</sup> That presentation is helpful. Life is a journey.
  - a. Read Mark 12:34. (Show)<sup>2</sup> Jesus compares entering God's kingdom to a journey.
  - b. In fact, all history on journey – moving to great, final day God's kingdom come to earth.
  - c. Jesus said we are to pray *Thy Kingdom come*, Matthew 6:10.
2. Just as must take physical steps on earthly journey, so spiritual steps to God's kingdom.
3. What are those spiritual steps? (Show Title/Text)

## **I. STEP 1 IS ABOUT JESUS, VV. 28, (32): HE HAS THE ANSWERS**

### A. The Scribe's Openness

1. Scribes were experts in Mosaic Law. Contrast his openness w/closed minds of others.
  - a. Sanhedrin – insincere question because they rejected Jesus' authority, 11:27-33.
  - b. Pharisees/Herodians – trick question to alienate Jesus' followers, 12:13-17.
  - c. Sadducees – foolish question to make Jesus look ridiculous, 12:18-27.
2. All of these had several things in common.
  - a. Minds made up about Jesus. Not interested in the facts.
  - b. More interested in holding onto power/position than finding truth.
  - c. Unwilling to humble themselves and accept the superior wisdom of Jesus.
3. Scribe saw Jesus' answers for what were – brilliant responses that were truth, v. 32.
4. Teachable. Open mind. Humble enough concede Jesus right. (Rare in a debate)

### B. This = 1<sup>st</sup> Step Toward Kingdom: Jesus Has the Answers.

1. Demands humility; willingness set aside preconceived notions, let Jesus speak.
2. Peter recognized this, John 6:68. Answers to the ultimate questions are from Jesus.

## **II. STEP 2 IS ABOUT GOD, VV. 29-31: HE DESIRES A RELATIONSHIP.**

### A. Scribe's Question

1. Scribes counted 613 commands in the Mosaic Law – 365 negative, 248 positive.<sup>3</sup>
  - a. Impossible for anyone keep track so tried to distinguish between weightier/lighter.
  - b. Since salvation depended upon keeping Law, debated which commands most critical.
2. Jesus cut thru all of that. God's Law was not a way to gain merit, like a grocery list.
  - a. When we go to the store w/grocery list, we want to get everything on the list.
  - b. Check off one by one until got everything. We feel really good didn't miss anything.
  - c. God's Law is not like that. Jesus said it's not about gaining merit, but showing love.

### B. Jesus' Answer

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sermoncentral.com/church-media-preaching-sermons/sermon-video-illustrations/journey-6504-detail?ref=MediaSerps>. Accessed 8/17/17.

<sup>2</sup> [http://biblepic.com/44/mark\\_12-34.htm#.WZXdRIGGOM8](http://biblepic.com/44/mark_12-34.htm#.WZXdRIGGOM8). Accessed 8/17/17.

<sup>3</sup> Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Vol. 2, p. 163. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

1. Vv. 29-30 quotes Deut. 6:4-5. (**Show**)<sup>4</sup> **Shema = hear (Hebrew).**<sup>5</sup> Major creed of Israel.
  - a. Still in synagogues today. **Lord is one = unique, only true God who is above all else.**
  - b. **Lord our God = covenant God who had given himself in love to His people, Israel.**
  - c. Because of who is & what done, is to be loved wholeheartedly by His people.
2. V. 31 quotes Lev. 19:18. (**Show**)<sup>6</sup> Since people made in God's image, must love 'em too.
3. Law boils down to 2 things: Loving God and loving people.
4. No Rabbi had ever summarized the 10 Commandments in this way.<sup>7</sup> Jesus the first.
  - a. In 100 BC an unknown writer linked them together **Love Lord & love your neighbor.**
  - b. But no one had put the two together & linked them as one until Jesus.
  - c. No one had said what we now understand is the meaning of the 10 Commandments.
  - d. **God is love** diagram of 10 Commands. (**Show**)<sup>8</sup> God is love & wants love relationship.
    - i. 1<sup>st</sup> four commands = Godward, they are how we love God.
    - ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> six commands = human ward, they are how we love people.
  - e. **The Ten Commandments = laws of love and liberty.** (**Show**)<sup>9</sup>
    - i. They are the way we show love & they liberate us from selfishness to love.
    - ii. Properly understood, they don't restrict us but liberate us.
    - iii. This is taught in the whole Bible. 1 John 5:3. (**Show**)<sup>10</sup>
    - iv. Loving God & keeping His commandments are synonymous.
    - v. And they're not a burden to anyone who understands the blessing bring to us.

### C. Truth about the Law of God

1. **The Law is about relationships.**
  - a. God desires a relationship with us. But He is a holy God. Can only enjoy if we holy.
  - b. Necessity of 1<sup>st</sup> command. If we have other gods, we'll miss loving the one true God.
  - c. Necessity of 2<sup>nd</sup> command. All images of God make Him like the image makers.
  - d. To have an image of God corrupts Him and corrupts our relationship with Him.
2. **The right relationship w/God leads to a right relationship w/people.**
  - a. If we love God then the natural outcome is to love people made in His image.
  - b. If we love people we will not sin against them.
    - i. Stealing – 64% customers admitted eating food in stores don't pay for.<sup>11</sup>
    - ii. Murder – If really loved children not 3000 abortions per day in America.
    - iii. Lying – If told truth courts not be chocked w/trials trying to discover the truth.

<sup>4</sup> <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/OXuyUDpubMk/hqdefault.jpg>. Accessed 8/17/17.

<sup>5</sup> Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship. #8085.

<sup>6</sup> [https://i.ytimg.com/vi/hL\\_d\\_jNQjtg/hqdefault.jpg](https://i.ytimg.com/vi/hL_d_jNQjtg/hqdefault.jpg). Accessed 8/17/17.

<sup>7</sup> Barclay, W. (Ed.). (1976). *The Gospel of Mark* (p. 296). Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster John Knox Press.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.jesus-resurrection.info/image-files/hang-1.jpg>. Accessed 8/17/17.

<sup>9</sup> <http://manna.amazingfacts.org/amazingfacts/website/medialibrary/images/collections/ten-commandments-large-663622822.jpg>. Accessed 8/17/17.

<sup>10</sup> [https://lifehopeandtruth.com/uploads/images/LifeHopeandTruth\\_1\\_John\\_5\\_3\\_10\\_Commandments\\_List.jpg](https://lifehopeandtruth.com/uploads/images/LifeHopeandTruth_1_John_5_3_10_Commandments_List.jpg). 8/17/17.

<sup>11</sup> Personal Illustrations. Ethics, eating without paying.

3. ***The Law is impossible to obtain.***

- a. Jesus says our love for God must involve a total commitment.
  - i. **All = 4xs.** Total. Complete. Holding nothing back. 110%. God deserves all.
  - ii. **Heart = control center; soul = inner life; mind = thots/decisions; strength = actions.**
  - iii. Comprehensive giving of ourselves in obedience to God in every way.
- b. How many of us do this? None of us do. If honest, we fail many times.
- c. This is why we need Jesus. ***I always do those things that please My Father, Jn.8:29.***

**III. STEP 3 ABOUT RELIGION, 32-34: *IT SHOULD LEAD US TO JESUS, NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR HIM.***

A. **Scribe's Response**

1. The scribe was impressed w/Jesus; said He was right; repeated Jesus' answer.
  - a. Then he added something that revealed he was tracking right with Jesus.
  - b. ***Love to God & neighbor is much more than all whole burnt offerings & sacrifices, v. 33.***
  - c. O.T. got this right in places like 1 Sam. 15:22 and Hosea 6:6.
2. 1<sup>st</sup> century Judaism got it wrong. Jewish religious ritual was their way of entering heaven.
  - a. ***Religious ritual more important than attitude; ceremony more important than morality.***<sup>12</sup>
  - b. Scribe said no. Right relationship w/God more important than religious rituals.

B. **Application**

1. What scribe understood was God gave sacrifices to lead to Him, not replace Him.
  - a. Jews had substituted their religion for God Himself. That happens today.
    - i. Some Nazi supporters still went to church while Jews sent to the death camps.
    - ii. Terrorists at Guantanamo Bay read Quran, have daily prayer, won't eat pork.
    - iii. Slaveowners attended church and prayed while buying and selling slaves.
  - b. If our religious practice does not lead us to love God & people, it has become substitute.
  - c. That's what this scribe understood.
2. But what did Jesus mean when said, ***You are not far from the kingdom of God, v. 34?***
  - a. This man needed to understand that Jesus was the fulfillment of O.T. religion.
  - b. It all pointed to Him and found its meaning and goal in Him. He had one more step.
  - c. He needed to trust Jesus as His Lord and Savior.

C. **Old Buddha by the Imperials (with some slight edits in wording w/o meaning change)**<sup>13</sup>

1. ***You can call yourself a [Presbyterian] and not be born again; a [Episcopal] or a Methodist and still die in your sin. You can even be [a Baptist with Amens! And Praise the Lords!], but if you hate your brother you won't be part of the chosen ones.***
2. ***Well, I don't hate anybody so please don't take me wrong; but there really is a message to this simple song. You see there's only one way, Jesus, if eternal life is your goal; and meditation of the mind won't save your soul.***

<sup>12</sup> Constable, T. (2003). *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible*. Galaxie Software.

<sup>13</sup> [http://lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/The\\_Imperials:Oh\\_Buddha](http://lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/The_Imperials:Oh_Buddha). Song by on album *Heed The Call (1979)*. Accessed 8/18/17.