



Love In Action: The 10 Commandments and The Cross

Years and years ago, in the first century to be exact, a lawyer (one of the Pharisees) asked Jesus how to get eternal life. Jesus asked him what the Law said (a good question to ask a lawyer). The man replied with a summary of the 10 Commandments:

***Luke 10** ²⁵And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" ²⁷And he answered and said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." ²⁹But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

This lawyer knew the Law (at least he could *quote* it), but missed its essence: love.

He also overlooked a few other things, like loving his neighbors. (He focused instead on judging them.) He also didn't recognize that Jesus was the God he was to love. And He had no idea that Jesus would soon display God's love for us while hanging from a cross.

Words of Love

Six hours on the cross. Seven times Jesus speaks. Six long hours and less than 50 words, but what words, for these words reveal His love. Three times Jesus' words show His love for the "neighbors" surrounding the cross; three times His words show His love for God. And the seventh time? Those words reveal His love for us.

Love in Action: Jesus Loves His Neighbors from the Cross

When I'm in pain I tend to focus on myself. Any involvement with others has more to do with how they can help me than on how I might help them. Not so with Jesus. He focuses on the welfare of those around Him – His neighbors.

- He forgives for the soldiers who pound in the nails – ***Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.***
- He brings joy to a repentant criminal – ***Today you will be with me in paradise.***
- He provides care for His mother, telling Mary ***Behold your son!*** and telling John, ***Behold your mother!***

Jesus is living out the same commandment God gives to us all: *love your neighbor as yourself*. Who are our neighbors? The people around us. Who was around Jesus? Some soldiers, two thieves, His mother, and a friend.

Love in Action: Jesus Loves God from the Cross

Love and obedience join hands. Jesus tells us so Himself:

John 14:15 *If you love Me [Jesus], you will keep My commandments.*

John 15:10 *If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.*

Three times Jesus lives out the commandment to love God; He does so through His obedience to His Father's will.

- Jesus says to the onlookers: ***I am thirsty***. And so fulfills God's prophecy in Psalm 69:21.
- He announces to all present: ***It is finished***. And so completes what He agreed to in Gethsemane.
- Then He speaks again to the Father, voicing final words of trust: ***Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit***. And before He breathes His last, Jesus trusts His life to the Father He loves.

Love in Action: Jesus Loves Us from the Cross

Jesus' single question from the cross, ***My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?***, reveals the whole purpose of the cross. He asked *His* question so that *we* never have to ask that same question. Believers never have to say "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" What happened to Jesus won't ever happen to us; it happened to Him *instead* of to us. We need have no fear of losing our connection with God.

Jesus is forsaken to ensure that we will never be forsaken.

For anyone who asks, intimacy with God is sure and unbreakable. It's purchased on the cross and vividly promised in Hebrews 13:5b. Literally translated, this verse is burns with God's love: *"...I will never, never let go of you, and I will never, never, never go away from you."*

Savor what this means. God is assuring us that He will never let us wander so far that our connection with Him disappears. He's also assuring us that nothing we do will ever make Him distance from us.

Without Jesus' *real* death on that *real* cross, we would have no such assurance. But because of the cross – because of God's love in action – we are secure in His unceasing presence.

A Few Questions

Do you ever fear that God will distance from you?

Do you ever fear that you have walked away too far for God to forgive you?

Have you ever savored the safety of belonging to a God who expressed His love for you from a cross?

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