

**EVERYTIME WE SEE GOD'S LOVE DEMONSTRATED by OTHER PEOPLE, IT  
MELTS OUR HEARTS.**

- **THERE'S a TRUE LIFE STORY of a FATHER'S LOVE FOR a SON that we PUT INTO a VIDEO.**

**VIDEO – “HOYT – FATHER & SON” – 4 MINS.**

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:28

One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the discussion. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, “*Of all the commandments, which is the most important?*”

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:29

Jesus replied, “*The most important commandment is this: ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord.*”

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:30

“*And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.*”

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:31

*The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.”*

- Some people **MISINTERPRET this COMMANDMENT**
- **They think JESUS said, “LOVE YOUR NAVEL as you LOVE YOURSELF.”**
- **I’ve SPENT ENOUGH TIME: “LOVING MY NAVEL”**
- **In JESUS’ RESPONSE we see that WHAT GOD REALLY WANTS FROM US IS . . . “LOVE.”**
- **WE CAN “OBEY GOD”...WITHOUT “LOVING HIM”...  
... but IF we do LOVE HIM, OBEDIENCE will FOLLOW**
- **Before Adam & Eve HAD ANY OTHER COMMAND . . . . they WERE COMMANDED to “LOVE the LORD THEIR GOD WHO CREATED THEM”**
- **Every other ACT OF OBEDIENCE is EMPTY . . . IF WE “DO NOT LOVE GOD FIRST”**
- **WIO “OUR HEARTS GROWING IN LOVE,” BEING a CHRISTIAN, will become a “BORING, TEDIOUS, LIFELESS RITUAL”...**

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:32

So the scribe said to Him, “*Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He.*”

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:33

“*And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.*”

- Reta Sharp was a poor, somewhat illiterate girl; a plain looking girl with uncombed hair.
- One winter day, when she was 14 years old, she was playing with her 16 year-old friend Tony on a FROZEN POND.
- Somehow her friend fell through the ice.
- Reta TRIED TO PULL HIM OUT FROM THE EDGE OF THE ICE, BUT IT GAVE WAY.
- Now they were BOTH IN THE WATER.
- As they UNSUCCESSFULLY TRIED IN GET OUT OF THE WATER . . .
- SHE DID THE MOST AMAZING THING.
- HE COULD FEEL HER PUSH HER WAY FURTHER DOWN INTO THE WATER, with HER HANDS GOING DOWN HIS BODY.
- He DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT SHE WAS DOING.
- Then he FELT THE SURGE OF HER PUSHING HIM UP with HER ARMS UNDERNEATH HIS FEET.
- She had GONE DOWN TO THE BOTTOM OF THE POND, & PUSHED OFF.
- With HER FINAL SURGE OF STRENGTH, she PROPELLED HER FRIEND OUT OF THE WATER.
- A SHORT WHILE LATER, HER HEAD CAME TO THE SURFACE.
- Her FACE WAS BLUE.
- Her STRENGTH WAS GONE.
- UNABLE TO HELP, TONY WATCHED HER SINK BENEATH THE WATER.
- He BARELY MADE IT HOME ALIVE.
- HIS FRIEND RETA HAD GIVEN HER LIFE, so that TONY could live.

- GRAHAM COOKE tells the story of ANOTHER 14-YEAR OLD GIRL who was RAPED BY 4 MEN.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> man, who RAPED HER, had SCARS on his face, & as he FINISHED ABUSING HER, she REACHED OUT HER HAND & TOUCHED & PRAYED FOR HIS FACE & he was INSTANTLY HEALED.
- Graham found out about it because HE MET THE 4<sup>TH</sup> MAN who had become a DEDICATED CHRISTIAN.

SLIDE - Interactive Question #1

Q. Has someone deeply touched your own life with selfless, unconditional love?

A. Yes, a number of people have

B. Yes, one person has

- C. No, no one ever has  
D. I'm not sure this kind of person even exists

- In LIFE . . . WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU MAY NOT BE YOUR FAULT.
- But, HOW YOU RESPOND is always your CHOICE.
- The TEACHER of RELIGIOUS LAW STRUCK a "LOVE CORD" in the HEART of JESUS.
- MOST of the LOVE OUR CULTURE TALKS ABOUT & SINGS ABOUT ISN'T TRUE LOVE at ALL.
- IT'S a FALSE LOVE THAT USES & THEN DISCARDS
- "DISPOSABLE LOVE" is NOT LOVE.
- "SELF-GRATIFYING LOVE" is NOT LOVE.

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:34

Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "*You are not far from the kingdom of God.*" **But after that no one dared question Him.**

- UNCONDITIONAL LOVE is ALWAYS CONVICTING...
- . . . BECAUSE IT GIVES US the CLOSEST GLIMPSE of WHO GOD IS.
- WHEN WE SEE GOD'S LOVE, IT ALWAYS LEAVES US SPEECHLESS & EXCUSELESS . . .

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:35

Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "*How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David?*"

- Jesus will be DEAD in a FEW DAYS.
- HE KNOWS IT . . . HE HAS "NOTHING to LOSE" & "A POINT TO MAKE"

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:36

For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: "*The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'*"

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:37

Therefore David himself calls Him "*Lord*"; *how is He then his Son?*" And the common people heard Him gladly.

- Jesus is NOT ONLY the "SON" OF DAVID He is ALSO the "LORD" OF DAVID.
- As Revelation 22:16 says, HE is BOTH the "ROOT" & "OFFSPRING" of DAVID.
- JESUS is NOT JUST the "SON of GOD", HE is "GOD the SON".

Jesus wants them to know, once & for all, WHO HE IS

- ONCE we SEE WHO HE IS, HE CHALLENGES US TO SEE WHO WE ARE CALLED TO BE . . .

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:38

Then He said to them in His teaching, *“Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces,*

- **OUR “PUBLIC LIFE” can be “NO MORE” IMPACTING than OUR “PRIVATE LIFE.”**
- **IF I’M a “HYPOCRITE in PRIVATE,” SOMETHING WILL “STINK IN PUBLIC”**
- **MY FATHER, BEING A CONGRESSMAN & NY State SUPREME COURT JUDGE, had MANY PRIVILEGES**
- **I REMEMBER once, he GOT IRATE, when I INTRODUCED HIM to a TEENAGE FRIEND of mine as “MR. ANFUSO” & NOT “JUDGE ANFUSO.”**
- **Another time, LAW in NYC – NO ALCOHOL SERVED in RESTAURANTS UNTIL AFTER 2PM on SUNDAYS.**
- **HE ONCE WENT out of a RESTAURANT YELLING because it was 1PM & they WOULDN’T SERVE HIM.**

I’ve seen some of those “SELFISH TRAITS” in me as well

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:39-40 – Jesus continues,  
(*Beware of the scribes, who...*) “...*take the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts...*”

**NEW BUILDING – DECIDED MONTHS AGO, that I’M going to Keep One of these OLD CHAIRS for MY SEAT**

- **I DON’T WANT a PRIVILEGED PARKING SPACE.**
- **I’M really TRYING to DECREASE as MUCH as I KNOW HOW.**
- **WE ARE MUCH SAFER “GOING LOW” than “HIGH”**
- **OUR OPENING WEEKEND, we’re going to RENT OUTHOUSES with SIGNS READING: “LET’S NOT FORGET WHERE WE CAME FROM.”**

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:39-40 – Jesus continues,  
(*Beware of the scribes*) “...*who devour widows’ houses...*”

- **In THAT DAY, a JEWISH TEACHER COULD NOT BE PAID for TEACHING, but he could receive “GIFTS”**

Apparently, **MANY SCRIBES USED FLATTERY & MANI-PULATION to GET BIG GIFTS from those who COULD LEAST AFFORD TO GIVE THEM – EVEN WIDOWS.**

- **The JEWS OF JESUS’ DAY taught that TEACHERS were to be RESPECTED ALMOST as MUCH as GOD**

**These TEACHERS TAUGHT that they DESERVED more HONOR & RESPECT than any OTHER PEOPLE in life.**

- **They TAUGHT THAT THE GREATEST ACT someone could do is GIVE MONEY TO A TEACHER.**

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:39-40 – Jesus continues,

*(Beware of the scribes, who...) "...for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."*

- They were MORE "SHOW" than "SUBSTANCE"
- MY GREATEST CONCERN about the FUTURE is LOSING the HUMILITY CULTIVATED from ALL I'VE GONE THROUGH in MY PAST.
- IT'S TAKEN me DECADES to GET MY HEAD SCREWED on RIGHT...
- I DON'T WANT to BLOW it for a BOWL OF BEANS.
- NEVER LOSE SIGHT of HOW MUCH you have to LOSE
- The BIBLE TEACHES that LEADERS WILL RECEIVE a MUCH GREATER JUDGMENT... as well we should.

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:41

Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many *who were* rich put in much.

- JESUS LOOKS AT US WHEN WE GIVE
- He ALSO notices HOW MUCH WE GIVE.
- But, HE'S FAR MORE INTERESTED in "HOW" WE GIVE THAN in "HOW MUCH" WE GIVE.
- WE WILL NOT BE PRIMARILY JUDGED for WHAT we DO, but for the MOTIVE BEHIND our GIVING.
- ...for the THOUGHTS & INTENTS OF OUR HEART.
- "WHY" WE DO "WHAT WE DO" . . .
- IS "FAR MORE" than "WHAT WE DO"

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:42

Then one poor (Gr. "*poverty stricken*") widow came and threw in two mites (Gr. "*a tiny thing, comes from the word for a "crumb" or "very small morsel"*") which make a quadrans. (It would be the equivalent of \$1 today.)

- She had TWO MITES...she could have KEPT ONE.

**SLIDE** - Interactive Question #2

Q. Would you pick up a discarded penny off of the ground?

A. Yes

B. No

C. No. I throw pennies away.

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:43

So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "*Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury;*

- Jesus DID NOT SAY that SHE PUT IN "MORE THAN ANY ONE OF THEM" . . .
- He said that SHE PUT IN "MORE THAN ALL OF THEM" - ALL OF THEM PUT TOGETHER!

- I AM REGULARLY CONVICTED by the “GIVING / SACRIFICIAL” LIVES of PEOPLE AROUND ME.

- **I.E. – MARYSVILLE RESCUE MISSION – 1973**

- Though I was INITIALLY DISCOURAGED by him NOT ACCEPTING ME, he was right.
- It wasn't God's will then . . .
- Within 3 yrs, my wife & I would be PASTORING A LIVE-IN COMMUNITY with MANY PEOPLE WITH ADDICTIONS.
- We SPENT OVER 4 YEARS doing that in God's will.
- Ironically, BY THE TIME GOD CALLED ME to DO IT, I DIDN'T really WANT to DO IT.

**SLIDE** – Mark 12:44

*“for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.”*

- Q. Was she ONE OF THE WIDOWS who HAD HER HOUSE DEVoured by a DISHONEST SCRIBE?
- All of the RICH PEOPLE GAVE OUT OF THEIR ABUNDANCE...but SHE GAVE SACRIFICIALLY.
- A “GIFT'S VALUE” is DETERMINED BY the SPIRIT IN WHICH IT IS GIVEN;
- God DOESN'T WANT “GUILT MONEY”
- God LOVES the “CHEERFUL GIVER”
- The VALUE OF A GIFT is DETERMINED BY WHAT IT COST the GIVER
- In the O.T., DAVID REFUSED TO GIVE GOD THAT WHICH COST HIM NOTHING (2 Samuel 24:24)
- AS JESUS was ABOUT to “GIVE EVERYTHING HE HAD,” HE WAS INSPIRED BY HER LIFE as well.
- Jesus' PRINCIPLE HERE shows us that GOD DOES NOT NEED OUR MONEY.
- **IF GOD NEEDED OUR MONEY,** then HOW MUCH WE GIVE WOULD BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUR HEART IN GIVING.
- Instead, IT IS OUR PRIVILEGE TO GIVE TO GOD,
- **WE NEED TO GIVE** BECAUSE IT IS **GOOD FOR US,** **NOT** BECAUSE IT IS **GOOD FOR GOD.**
- The QUESTION I ASK MYSELF ALL THE TIME IS: “HOW MUCH SEED DO I HAVE IN the GROUND?”
- The widow CHALLENGES THE MINDSET that says, “*I'LL GIVE WHEN I HAVE MORE.*”

- The WIDOW had VIRTUALLY NOTHING, yet SHE WAS A GIVER
- This means that WE CAN ALL PLEASE GOD WITH OUR GIVING just AS MUCH AS THE RICHEST MAN CAN PLEASE GOD WITH HIS GIVING.
- WHATEVER WE GIVE SACRIFICIALLY TO GOD, HE SEES IT & IS PLEASED.
- IN A FEW DAYS, JESUS was about to GIVE EVERYTHING HE HAD, by DYING on a CROSS.
- What the WIDOW HAD DONE . . . INSPIRED the SON of GOD.
- WHAT WE DO TODAY . . . CAN INSPIRE GOD.
- LET'S PRAY!