

Why 1 and not 2?

In this brief essay, I will attempt to convey my reasoning on how and why I have chosen to write often on Jesus' one-greatest command. I hope this essay will simplify the main theme in the whole of Jesus Christ's message, and that it will also simplify salvation to the world!

In one of my previous essays, I point out that long ago a Pharisee (a teacher of Moses and the Old Testament) asked Jesus which one of the many commandments in the Old Testament was the greatest. (St. Mark 12: 28-34) I also noted that this Pharisee did not intend to hear either about a second commandment, nor that it was comparable to his, but Jesus specifically gave him two.

What the teacher of the Law (Old Testament/ Jewish Religion) wanted to hear from Jesus, in regards to which is the greatest commandment, was solely: God, who is above all, is to be loved with all of ones' heart, mind, and soul (Deut. 6: 4, 5). The Pharisee believed, as many do today, that through his vertical form of worship (going to church and singing songs that pertain to God, giving money to the church or to the poor through the church) he would love God, and thus fulfill the 1 commandment. However, is this truly the way to love God? Was Jesus satisfied with these ideals?

Also, one must note that in the Jewish religion, three main items: circumcision, laws pertaining to food, and the Sabbath, were what distinguished a Jew from the rest of the world. It has been calculated that an estimated 613 additional rules and regulations were institutions during Jesus' time. If you begin to inspect the Pharisee's ideals closer, you will see that in actuality loving God with all your heart, mind, and soul is really not 1 commandment, but many. I don't think that commandment could ever be 1 command- singular, but always commandments- plural. As do many today, the Pharisee tried to sum them up into 1.

But then again, in the Jewish Old Testament there was this 1, truly singular, commandment. This 1 commandment, love your neighbor as thyself found in (Lev. 19: 18), was added by Jesus to the Pharisee's greatest 1 commandment: Deut. 6: 4, 5. But, how does one love their neighbor as oneself? What if one does not love themselves? And what kind of love, and to what degree, could people who treat themselves badly offer others? This commandment, in Jesus' perception, was not complete but would at least bring the Pharisee closer to the God's ideal command. In time, the Pharisee could mature to the degree that Jesus wanted. Although this commandment was closer to what Jesus intended to teach, it was often neglected and lacking in the people of his generation. When the Pharisee agreed with Jesus' addition, it showed he was moving away from the old. For this, Jesus told the Pharisee he was not far from the Kingdom of Heaven or the ideal command. (Mark 12: 34).

Therefore, Jesus' ideal and mature 1 command is, as stated in the Bible: "A new command I give you. Love each other, as I have, loved you." (St. John 13: 34) As far as this essay is concerned, here are my main reasons for this assertion. First, Jesus could not reveal or preach his ideal command at the beginning of his ministry to the Pharisee or his Disciples until he had fulfilled it through his own example; reconciling the two commandments into one holistic command. It was only after 2-3 years of historically displaying his ideal treatment of humans, that Jesus could then refer to his history, and cry out on the cross, "It is finished". (St. John 19: 30) Only then, could he say, "As I have". Second, on the last day of an individual's execution, aren't they allowed last rights or last words? Wouldn't those individuals speak of things of great importance? Jesus, knowing that it was his last night alive, never spoke of two separate commandments, but of one. (St. John 13: 34 / 15: 12) Third, the Apostles did not write of the 2 commandments as being crucially bonded together, as many believe today. In 1st John 4: 19- 21, John mentions something in regards to loving God, but that is only when one has learned to love humanity, will there be evidence that one loves God! Finally, the Apostles always reminded and alluded to Jesus' new 1 command. (Romans 13: 8) (1John.2: 7/ 3: 11 & 23/ 4: 21) (2John 5, 6) (1Peter 1: 22) (2Peter 2: 21/ 3: 2) (1Thess. 4: 9) ...

In conclusion, Jesus gave the world an example to follow! (1Peter 2: 21) What the world needs to accept and duplicate is Jesus' denial of himself and his behavior towards his neighbors, not his presumably churchy behavior! Jesus always sought after the well being of the community (Kingdom of Heaven) and it's

Righteousness (love), because he knew that a healthy community would turn around and seek his well being, and that in the end, all will equally receive their daily bread. (Matt 6: 33/ Mark 10: 29 & 30) I'm not trying to glorify Jesus for what he's done, so that people will begin to love Jesus, but I'm trying to get people to love people, as Jesus did. The tax collector in St. Luke 19: 1- 9 is a good example, for he repented and displayed the fruit of the Greatest 1 Command, and he received blessings from Jesus. As a word of encouragement, "people who learn and accept the call to love people, generally, will figure out their responsibility to their community".

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