

Much of this tract is commentary - don't take it as Gospel. It is here to encourage meditation and study. Use your gift of discernment, to find the truth.



Glen Miller

WAESHAEI

Commentary on “Love Thy Neighbour...”

‘tempting him’

If by this phrase was meant ‘testing him’, it wasn’t much of a challenge. The commandment was well known to Jews through readings from Torah ^A. Perhaps it was written here in Matthew for the benefit of Gentile readers, who in AD 70 - 90 were probably not exposed to the Jewish scriptures. (Matthew was written c. 70-90 CE).

What **is** actually written *in the law* ?

Deuteronomy 6:5 BLXX (Brenton translation of Greek Septuagint) ^A

“5 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and all thy strength.”

Deuteronomy 6:5 KJV

And thou shalt **love** (0157 *ahab*)^B the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might

Deuteronomy 30:6 KJV

“6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to **love** (0157 *ahab*) the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that **thou mayest live.**”

Deuteronomy 30:16 KJV

In that I command thee this day to **love** (0157 *ahab*) the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that **thou mayest live** and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

^A The NT Evangelists who were Greek speakers, used the LXX when referring to the OT scripture.

The LXX is in agreement with the Samaritan Pentateuch (in c. 30 CE it was called by the Samaritans “The Law”). But Jesus and the Apostles did not read this Greek LXX, they knew only the Aramaic/Hebrew text. A later Jewish Torah was rewritten after AD 100, and was adopted by the Western Rite Catholic Church, and it has entered most Western Bibles that we use today. It differs in more than 2000 places with the LXX .

^B see later for explanation



Where We Got the Bible

Graham, Henry G.

Catholic Answers

1-888992-04-2

Proper 25 A Rev A
Gospel

ARTICLE NO.
2005.908
Mt 22:34-46

Two great commandments

Commentary on “Love Thy Neighbour...”

Matthew 22:34-46

Collect



But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

36 Master, which is the great commandment **in the law?**

37 Jesus said unto him, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God** with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy **mind.**

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David.

43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies

thy footstool? ^{Ps 110:1}

45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

46 And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.”

Psalms 110:1

“1 <<A Psalm of David.>> The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.”

Rev 3/11/06

Additional Comments

It appears in Mr. 12:30^{KJV} as

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy **mind**, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

In Luke as:

LU 10:27 And he answering said, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God** with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy **strength**, and with all thy **mind**; and thy neighbour as thyself.

To love God means to keep his commandments.

¹ John 5:2, 3

“2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

What does “with all thine heart, and with all thy soul...” imply?

With all thy heart must include both the good and the evil that is in your heart, otherwise it is not all thy heart.

With all thy soul - even if it takes away thy soul.

With all thy mind must require your attention be 100 percent on God.

With all thy strength (or might) must include power, and money, and other substance that God has given you.

Here, in these verses, man in his entirety must keep the commandments. .

Additional Comments

The second ‘commandment’ to love thy neighbour... is from the Greek Septuagint (LXX)

Le XIX:18^A

*and thy hand shall not avenge thee; and thou shalt not be angry with the children of thy people; **and thou shalt love thy neighbour***

(πλησιον) as thyself; I am the Lord.

And from later translations.

Le 19:18^{KJV}

*Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, **but thou shalt love thy neighbour** (לך) as thyself: I am the LORD.*^B

^A References to Septuagint verses use Roman numerals for the chapters because that is how they appear in the translations of the Septuagint. LXX means 70, and is a reminder that the Septuagint was translated from Hebrew into Greek by 72 Jews (or so the story goes). Written 3rd c. BC in Alexandria, Egypt, the Greek scriptures were also translated into local languages such as Aramaic, Syriac, and Coptic, and used by the Semitic families outside of Judea (“Gentiles”). In the temple and in the Palestinian synagogues, the readings would have been in Aramaic, translated in real time from the Hebrew as it was read. In the Diaspora (Jews had been forced out of Judea), most spoke Aramaic, as did all the Apostles, and never learnt Greek because the rabbis of Judea had forbidden the teaching of Greek to a Jew. But in Alexandria, in Egypt, Greek was spoken by the Jews. The Septuagint, LXX, was never accepted by the Jewish rabbis in Judea. Jesus spoke Aramaic to the Apostles (there are still thousands of Aramaic phrases in our Bible). The Evangelists, who wrote in Greek much later (between 60 CE and 120 CE) converted Jesus’s Aramaic words to the nearest Greek equivalent, often creating Greek words to represent Jewish ideas for which there was no equivalent, sometimes applying Greek ideas where none had been intended (“love” for instance). The Torah was translated into Latin from the Hebrew in the 4th c. AD by Jerome (Roman Catholic Priest - lived in Rome and Bethlehem). This translation was used by The Catholic Church until 19th c. During the 1800’s Greek mss. which included almost all of the Bible, were discovered in the Vatican archives, and from a monastery at Mt Sinai, and these 4th. and 5th. c. mss. were used for new translations (many differences) of the OT and NT which now appear in many Corporate Bibles.

^B Quotations here from the KJV are based on the 1769 printing of the 1611 original, so are different than quotations from Bibles created during the 20th c. such as ASV, RSV, NIV, etc. I use the KJV because the best commentaries, and Lexicons refer to KJV verses.

Rev 3/11/06

The Views expressed here are strictly those of the author and probably disagree with what you have previously thought. Read other commentaries - meditate on the original KJV.

ISBN			
The Son of Man or contributions to the study of the	Abbot, Edwin A.	Cambridge	
The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English	Brenton, Lancelot C.L.	Hendrickson	0-913573-44-2
Everyman’s Talmud	Cohen, Abraham	Schocken Books	0-8052-1032-6

What does the original scripture mean by the word *love* in *love they God* and *love thy neighbour*?

In the Torah, the word translated as *love* is the Hebrew

0157. אָהַב 'ahab aw-hab'; or אָהַב 'ahab aw-habe'; a primitive root; to have affection for (sexually or otherwise):-- (be-)love(-d, -ly, -r), like, friend.

Which includes all the expressions of love from friendship to sex. It is used in almost every place where the KJV OT has *love*. But when the Greek disciples translated this into Greek, they used three words to specify what type of *love* was intended. They had one word for sexual love another for love of God, and a third for brotherly love.. In English we have only the one word - *love*, and in modern usage we add an adjective to define the specific love we mean. But in the scriptures, this was not done. In the original KJV, the word charity was used for the Greek agapao, but in most Protestant Bibles the word *love* is used for all three Greek words. This has caused a lot of confusion. changed 2/16/06

The Greeks three words for love are: agape, agapao, and Philadelphia.

Here in the NT verse, the lawyer is using the Greek word agapao which to the Greeks meant **to love in a social or moral sense** and indicates a direction of the will and includes the love for God, and the joy found in treating a needy person as you would treat yourself. i.e.

The action of neighborliness should bring you both joy.

But the word does not mean for example: doing something to someone against his will, but for his "own good". Jesus uses agapao in the command "love your neighbour", "Love the Lord" and "Love God".

The Greek words agape means the sort of love you have for you family: both sexual and doing things for their own good. Agape was the word used for the 'love feasts' of the Apostles and Disciples.

Philadelphia is a brotherly love.

(more on this other writings)

See also the parable of the good Samaritan

In Aramaic - according to Victor Alexander who has translated the original Aramaic Targums, the meaning of *love* and *neighbour* in these verses are as follows: (<http://www.v-a.com/bible/luke.html>).

27. He replied and said, "That you should love (Aramaic *be merciful*) your Lord God with all your heart and with all your soul (Ar. *breath*) and with all your strength and with all your cognition, and your neighbor (Ar. *In-law*) as yourself."

Love thy neighbour

Pharisees called one another Chaberim, that is, neighbours. The greatest difference between a Chaber or Neighbour and one of the People of the Land (as the Pharisees called people who did not obey the same strictness) was that the Pharisees obeyed the ceremonial traditions about cleanness.

Note that *neighbours* in Torah implies people to interact with, people who's name was known, or soon would be. Neighbours were not strangers, or people who were outside the community.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself"

It does not say: love your neighbour as you do God - with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind - but only **as much as you love yourself, and yet you must be willing to sacrifice everything in your life, and not love yourself, in order to be a disciple.** For it is written

*If any man come to me, and **hate not** his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and **his own life** also, he cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:26*

"Hate" means a "willingness to give up" - not necessarily actualized, but disciples would be prepared to make such a statement before taking on the way of the cross (which might mean, later, being crucified for Jesus). So, Jesus expected a man to be willing to sacrifice his own life for the "way". If a man must not "love his life", **what does love your neighbour as yourself mean in this light?**

My guess is that, if you have dedicated **your** own life to becoming a disciple, and your neighbor wants to do the same, then you must encourage and support him/her to live the life of the cross, and help sacrifice some of the interests, and relationships (if they are a road block to his salvation), and make the necessary changes in life.

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Doing Theology

What should you do for such a neighbour?

You should help them behave more like a disciple of Jesus, because you will be helping the person become more righteous.

When you are considering what activity to focus on this week, evaluate the activity against the Discipleship Virtues (page 9). If the activity is on the list; then good. Otherwise think how you can change the planned activity to reflect one or more of these virtues.

For example: Your neighbor wants you to dine out with him. Dining out is not on our list, but “Eat bread with neighbors” is. So, why not suggest a simple meal that you will prepare, with a discussion on poverty in your town, and agree to make a donation to the poor of the money you will save by not eating out.

Do you think Jesus would agree?

Examples of what to do with a neighbor.

1. Invite them to Church, and go to breakfast afterwards.
2. Discuss the Sunday lessons with them.
3. Study the scriptures, traditions, and ancient writers together.
4. Explain a NT parable to them in a way that they can understand the spiritual truth that is in the story. Be excited when they get the point.
5. Steer them away from materialism, e.g. convince them that their “whatever” doesn’t need to be updated. (*love not the World...*).

Amori Christi et Ecclesiae –
Glen C. Miller OSV

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Doing Theology

More examples of what to do with a neighbor.

6. When they ask a question that has some spiritual significance, be especially sincere in your advice.
7. If they can’t repay a loan - forgive them the debt, and never mention it again. Stay friends.
8. If the couple is having a disagreement in your presence, help to bring peace to the house through kind words, and prayer.
9. If one of them is sick at home, help around the house, read scriptures or commentary to them, prepare a meal and eat together, pray together, and ask the vicar to bless him/her.
10. When you are visiting, don’t watch bad TV, and don’t stay late - perhaps no more than an hour after dinner.
11. If you have a friend who is tempted to stray from his/her marriage, arrange to do some activity together as couples and make a fuss over their marriage - look at their wedding photos, remind them of good memories.
12. Don’t gossip.
13. Don’t drink much in any celebration.

Do all these things with your neighbor before you think about: Mowing the lawn for them, repairing the fence, baby-sitting, or going to a movie.

Recommended Books

			ISBN
Where We Got the Bible	Graham, Henry G.	Catholic	1-888992-04-2
The Son of Man or contributions to the study of the	Abbot, Edwin A.	Cambridge	
The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English	Brenton, Lancelot	Hendrickson	0-913573-44-2
Everyman’s Talmud	Cohen, Abraham	Schocken Books	0-8052-1032-6

Doing Theology

Jesus said be like this and and your neighbours too.

Discipleship Virtues

be poor in spirit;	be kind to brothers;
be patient;	be forgiving;
hold no grudges;	be knowledgeable of God;
be wise in teaching;	be humble;
be modest;	be gentle;
be discrete;	be mournful;
be meek; (no anger)	be merciful;
be pure in heart;	be peacemakers;
be not rich;	be sober;
be moderate;	be not rude;
be not proud;	be not pompous;
be not irritable;	be godly;
be charitable;	have faith;
have hope of all things;	believe all things;
do the will of God;	persevere to the end;
be sincere;	be grave;
be obedient;	

And disciples should:

Obey the commandments
 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.
 Heal neighbors sickness and disease
 Cast out neighbors unclean spirits (who can do this today?)
 Exhort them to continue in the faith - (go to church, and study)
 Help neighbors endure temptation
 Eat bread with neighbors, give them something to drink.
 Understand the mysteries
 Rejoice with neighbors when they discover the truth
 Don't overstay your welcome with a neighbor
 Make Supplication Prayer
 Make Intercessory prayer for a neighbor
 If you are a woman - raise children
 Preach from housetops
 Be a peculiar people
 Welcome strangers, women should "lodge" strangers.
 Nurse the sick brethren
 Clothe the naked brethren, visit brothers in prison
 Feed the Hungry brethren. Give the thirsty brethren drink.

These admonitions are commands taken from the KJV New Testament.

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Doing Theology

What about people in your life who don't want to become disciples? Well, I think, that if they are good friends already you should keep on being friends, unless the relationship begins to create roadblocks for your own spiritual development, in which case it would be time to move away from the relationship.

New acquaintances, or someone that, perhaps, you meet at work, who has expressly denied the saving grace of Christ, (a Buddhist, or a Moslem, etc.) should be treated with respect, and common courtesy. I have such friends and I like to spend time with them discussing God, and drinking coffee.

Save your *love* for the brethren (people who share the same beliefs - 'neighbours' in the classical sense). There are more than enough people amongst the congregation, your friends, family, and relatives to absorb all the *love* that you have to offer.

DOING THEOLOGY

Why not go over the list of virtues, highlight those that you have, and put together a prayer that addresses those virtues you lack. Then pray it whenever you are going to meet your neighbor. Put a copy on your desk, one on the dashboard, and one in your wallet/purse. Here's mine for an example:

My love for a 'neighbour'

I will
 Be not proud, nor rude nor impatient.
 Be generous with my treasures
 Be not jealous.
 Always be kind,
 Judge not their frailties.
 Have patience and smile at their immaturity.
 Forgive them their trespasses.
 Show no anger, nor hold a grudge.
 Be wise without being pompous or irritable,
 Rejoice with them when they discover the truth.
 Believe all things are possible, hope all things.
 Persevere no matter the inconveniences.
 And do God's will.
 Then will I have obeyed
 the two great commandments.

Doing Theology

Let's consider a few objections to this theology. People have told me:

"I consider everyone in the World to be my neighbor."

This is a common statement from people of all ages. It has no basis in scripture. It could lead to hypocrisy if the speaker does nothing for these people he/she considers to be neighbors. Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites because in their hearts they knew what was right, but they didn't do it.

"I consider everyone I meet to be a neighbor."

Well that is a nice thing to say, and most of the time the people you meet may justify your love, but you must be able to detect enemies of God; those who love evil; and those that deny Christ.

Philippians 3:18

"18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that **they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:**" [Paul was referring to Jews]

James 4:4

"4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be **a friend of the world is the enemy of God.**"

John 17:15

"15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest **keep them from the evil.**"

Romans 12:9

"9 Let love be without dissimulation. **Abhor that which is evil;** cleave to that which is good."

Philippians 3:2

"2 **Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers,** beware of the concision."

1 Timothy 6:10

"10 For **the love of money is the root of all evil:** which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

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"Beware of dogs"
Aramaic idiom which means "beware of gossipers and troublemakers"

References

"If someone needs my help, I will give it to them, regardless of what they believe"

It is almost always a good thing to help others. It is common courtesy to respond to requests for help, and to offer help when you can see it is needed. Just be discriminating. What is being asked for? If it is something God would consider evil - then don't get involved. Is the request legitimate? Is the person being honest?

Finally when you have to decide who to help first, consider whether this help will be spiritually beneficial to the person - will it lift them up towards God, and if it will, then help this person first - you may have made a new neighbor.

Remember this: according to scriptures - you always know the name of your neighbor either beforehand or after you meet them. People who are unknown to you by name, and people that you never come into contact with are not your neighbors.

For a listing of all scriptural references to neighbors see the tract "**On Neighbors**", or search your On-Line Bible for **neighbours** (note KJV spelling).

"Neighbour" 07453. רע rea' ray'-ah; or ריע reya' ray'-ah; from 07462; an associate (more or less close):-- brother, companion, fellow, husband, lover, neighbour, X (an-)other.

New Testament references to neighbour

Mt 5:43 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt **love thy neighbour**, and hate thine enemy.*

Mt 19:19 *Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt **love thy neighbour** as thyself.*

Mt 22:39 *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt **love thy neighbour** as thyself.*

Mr. 12:31 *And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt **love thy neighbour** as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

Ro 13:9 *For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt **love thy neighbour** as thyself.*

Ga. 5:14 *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt **love thy neighbour** as thyself.*

Jas. 2:8 *If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt **love thy neighbour** as thyself, ye do well:*

