

If you have been here the last couple of weeks you know that we are in a series on loving God... What it means to love God, what it looks like to love God, how we can better love God. The verse we've been looking at the last couple of weeks and will look at again this week and next is Mark 12: 28-30. Please stand with me if you're able for the reading of that verse.

"One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'"

Today our specific focus is to "Love the Lord with all our mind." This focus brings us back to an issue I mentioned briefly in the first sermon.

In **Mark 12:30** Jesus is quoting from **Deuteronomy 6:5**, which says “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”

You can see the difference can't you. I mentioned this last week - Deuteronomy calls us to love with heart, soul and strength. Mark calls us to love with heart, soul, MIND and strength.

Why the difference?

Mainly, the difference is because Jesus is quoting from the Old Testament, which was written in Hebrew, and Mark is written in Greek. Two different languages.

Often a word in one language needs several words in another language to get the full range of meaning.

Heart, Soul, Strength in Hebrew.

Heart. Soul, Mind, Strength in Greek.

Jesus is using the extra word in this situation to convey the full meaning of **Deuteronomy 6:5**.

Which words from Deuteronomy are being further expanded?

Both the Hebrew for “heart” and “soul”, but primarily “heart”.

Previously we have seen that the heart is the vital center of who we are.

The heart drives you, and takes your focus, and gives you your identity.

The heart forms your worldview and governs your character. It is the essence of who you are.

That is why the command to love God “with all your heart” is first on the list.

That is what we learned in the first message of this series.

But there is more to it. The difficulty is that we can hear the word “heart” and we think ...

... emotion or being emotional.

... following our heart.

... going beyond or outside of logic – or not being logical at all.

... being true to our heart.

“The heart wants, what the heart wants,” is a common saying.

All these descriptions of the heart are true. But, from a scriptural perspective the “heart” is not just emotion, or lack of logic.

This is where it gets really interesting for a word nerd like me... and hopefully not too boring for everyone else.

In the second century BC, in order to help the wider community read the Old Testament, the Jewish Bible, which we call the Old Testament, was translated into Greek. That translation is called the Septuagint.

Today we have access to three full manuscripts of the Septuagint, all which date back to the 4th and 5th century AD. These manuscripts are pretty much the same but, sometimes, they use slightly different words. In one version

they use the Greek word “kardias” which we translate as heart, in another they use the Greek word “dianoia”, which we translate as mind, and Mark 12:30 uses both of those words to emphasize the complete range of the love we are to have for God.

Why is this important?

Apart from anything else we are being reminded here about the difficulties of translation. The Septuagint was translated at a time when Biblical Hebrew and Biblical Greek were active and living languages. Much like English is a living language and many words have appeared, disappeared, or changed between the King James version and modern versions of the Bible, but the true meaning of God’s Word remains unchanged.

Many people in first century Judea were able to fluently speak both Hebrew and Greek. That is why it really helps at times to have a close look at that original language of Bible, and see what is happening in the original language.

But what is also significant here is that the Hebrew word leb – heart- could be translated with the Greek word kardia or the Greek word dianoia... Heart or mind. Jesus wasn't the only one who did this. In Luke 10:27, Jesus asks a teacher of the law what he thinks is the first commandment, and the teacher of the law replies, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart (kardia) and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind (dianoia)."

Jesus and the teachers of the law both recognized that translating [Deuteronomy 6:5](#) into the first century Roman context required using both the words, "heart" and "mind".

The heart and mind are intricately connected to each other.

This connection was recognized by Thomas Crammer – the 16th Century Archbishop of Canterbury and a leader of the English Reformation

He said, "What the heart loves, the will chooses and the mind justifies."

If the heart loves the truth... the will seeks the truth... and the mind justifies the truth.

If the heart loves to gossip... the will seeks gossip... and the mind justifies gossiping.

If the heart loves being a servant... The will seeks ways to be a servant... and the mind justifies a life of servanthood.

If the heart loves being selfish... the will lives selfishly... and the mind justifies a self-centered life.

Heart to mind. It is an intricate connection.

So, if you find yourself in a place that is not loving God with all your heart, then you need to find a way to stop allowing your mind to justify what your heart is doing.

Which is where the meaning of the word mind (dianoia) comes into play.

Jeremiah 31:33 says, "This is the covenant that I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. 'I will put my law in their minds (dianoia) and write it on their

hearts (kardia). I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

We call this the new covenant. That time when the Lord will take much more direct action in the lives of those who will be called into His kingdom. This same covenant is spoken about in Hebrews 8:10, in virtually identical words, where the writer to the Hebrews describes how God is acting after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Putting Scripture into the mind, so that Scripture can be written on the heart.

God is putting the Scripture into that specific point where the justifying thoughts are brought into focus. By putting Scripture here God is building accountability into the expression of our love for God.

Colossians 1:21-22 says, “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds (dianoia) because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.”

That reconciling process causes the mind to think about the spiritual implications of what is going on in your life. You do this by having your mind focused on and thinking about the things that challenge your heart to live in accountability – not accountability to itself – but accountability to a holy standard.

2 Peter 3:1-2 says, “Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking (dianoia). I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.”

Think about that holy standard

... where your mind isn’t allowed to justify the actions of your heart and will which don’t meet the holy standard ...

... when that happens, the direction of your life is completely changed. Instead of being an enemy in our mind, we have a completely new and different mindset.

1 Peter 1:13 says, “Therefore, with minds (dianoia) that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.”

Given all that, from a scriptural perspective the definition of “mind” would be something like – “The “mind” is the spiritual barometer that assesses what the heart loves and the will chooses.”

So, if we apply this to the great commandment, we see that to love the Lord with all of our mind means making sure that the “mind” doesn’t simply justify what the heart loves and the will chooses, instead the mind makes the heart and will accountable to the written word.

When we love God with all our mind we step into this space where we refuse to allow our heart to just follow its emotions. We refuse to blindly follow our heart... to just let the heart want what the heart wants. We don’t allow our heart to just throw away all logic.

So, when Thomas Crammer says, “What the heart loves, the will chooses and the mind justifies.” He is only correct to

the extent that we are NOT loving the Lord with all our minds... When we love the Lord with all our minds the process changes.

“What the heart loves, the will chooses and the mind assesses.”

The heart loves the truth.

The will seeks the truth.

The mind ... doesn't just justify ... the mind assesses – assess it against Scripture.

Ephesians 6:14 - Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place.

John 8:31-32 - Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

When the heart seeks the truth, and the will loves the truth the mind assess and confirms ... I am loving God with my all.

The heart loves to gossip.

The will encourages gossip.

**The mind ... doesn't just justify ... the mind assesses –
assess against Scripture.**

**Proverbs 16:28 - A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a
gossip separates close friends.**

**2 Corinthians 12:20 - I am afraid that when I come I may not
find you as I want you to be ...I fear that there may be
discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander,
gossip, arrogance and disorder.**

**When the heart loves gossip, and the will encourages
gossip, the mind assesses ... I am NOT loving God with my
all.**

Then you have a choice.

**Do I hold my heart and will accountable to the Word ... and
repent.**

Or do I let my heart and will rule ... even though I know I am not loving God with my all ... and just force my mind to justify... “Gossip is just words... Gossip doesn’t hurt anyone... Everyone gossips.”

Justifying by ignoring the mind ... the spiritual barometer ... and just becoming more and more like the world.

It is a choice, but it could be an eternally dangerous choice.

Ephesians 4:18 says, “They are darkened in their understanding (dianoia) and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.”

When you keep choosing to ignore the mind...

When the spiritual barometer that God has given to you is not allowed to keep you accountable...

When you don’t love God with all your mind...

You can get to a place where your heart is hardened. A heartened heart is one that just stops listening to God.

You don't want to be there. You don't want anyone you know to be there.

So here now is a question for today that definitely has eternal implications.

Am I allowing my mind to be the spiritual barometer that keeps me accountable to the Word.

Or do I just keep justifying all the loves of my heart and the choices of my will – even when those loves and choices are against God's Word?

If you're not loving God with all your mind, then I will guarantee you that you won't be loving Him with all your heart, soul, and strength for long. If you need to commit or recommit to that all-in love for God today, the altar is open. Come and pray during this closing song.