



CHRISTCHURCH, Ilkley

Sunday 26 October 2008

'The Law of Love'

Leviticus 19 vv1-2 and 15-18 – Laws of Holiness and Justice

The LORD told Moses to say to the community of Israel, "Be holy, because I, the LORD your God, am holy."

"Be honest and just when you make decisions in legal cases; do not show favouritism to the poor or fear the rich. Do not spread lies about anyone, and when someone is on trial for his life, speak out if your testimony can help him. I am the LORD." "Do not bear a grudge against anyone, but settle your differences with him, so that you will not commit a sin because of him. Do not take revenge on anyone or continue to hate him, but love your neighbour as you love yourself. I am the LORD."

1. In these verses, Moses speaks for God in laying down the law concerning love for neighbours in a very practical, down to earth fashion. Why do we need laws or rules? What would happen if they were not there? Is there a point where laws or rules can be taken too far and miss the point?
2. Do we sometimes care more for the rules than for the people caught up in them?

Matthew 22 vv34–40 - The Great Commandment

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they came together, and one of them, a teacher of the Law, tried to trap him with a question. "Teacher," he asked, "which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus answered, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and the most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like it: 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself.' The whole Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets depend on these two commandments."

Was it an over-emphasis on the letter of the law by the Pharisees and Sadducees that Jesus tried to cut through when he was asked which was the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus replied 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind'.(v.37) and 'Love your neighbour as yourself'.(v.39)

1. If we accept that loving God with all our heart means making sure that we are always trying to do the right thing, even when it is hard, then what sort of things are hard to do, but are part of loving God?
2. Should we love people even if they don't love us? Why?
3. What does it mean to love our neighbour as ourselves?
4. Is there more than one sort of love? Do you love your friends differently to the way you love your parents or other family members?

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