

Multiplying Love: Heaven's Key to Greatness

Jake Weatherby | The Resting Place Apostolic Family | Matthew 5:18–19; Matthew 22:36–40

ONE MONTH LEFT OF OUR SABBATH YEAR

We have one month left. One month left of our Sabbath year. I feel like we were just preparing to come into our Sabbath year. As we are entering into this last month, I really want to encourage us to take a moment to start pondering: Lord, what have you done in me this last year? The reason I am saying that is because there is real power in all of us collectively remembering what the Lord has done amongst us this year, appreciating what he has done, and then carrying that heart posture of thankfulness into the year we are coming into.

All of the things he has been stirring up amongst us in this last year are going to start to bear a greater measure of fruit in what we step into. We are going to be able to look back and say, "Seven months ago, when we were in the Sabbath year, you remember when the Lord did that thing? Look at what is sprouting here. Look at what is sprouting there."

All throughout the Bible there was this call to action from the Lord to build an altar of remembrance of mighty things that he did amongst his people. In that same spirit, I want to call us to action this next month to really start building an altar of remembrance of what the Lord has been doing amongst us in this year.

HEAVEN'S KEY TO GREATNESS — MATTHEW 5:18–19

As part of what we have been doing with our Sabbath year, we have been going through the Sermon on the Mount. We are going to revisit something I have spoken to in the past, but we are going to look at a different angle of it. So go with me to Matthew 5:18 through 19.

I grew up in the church but did not really become a believer until I was 20. There are a lot of reasons why I did not push over the finish line to become a believer. But a big contributor to what was unattractive about the church for me growing up was a great measure of hypocrisy. I believe

that hypocrisy actually stemmed from a genuine place. I believe a lot of people were thinking they were being humble and walking in the ways of God, but they were coming off as hypocritical. They were trying to be genuine, but it was just really unattractive. And the reason I am taking a moment to speak to this is because that genuine approach was marred with false humility.

False humility is this: if Jesus says something about me and I say something different about myself, and then I latch on to that different thing rather than what he says, it is kind of prideful. There is this presentation of humility that goes, "I am just a lowly worm. My life is insignificant. Lord, why did you save me?" And that is okay initially, because you do not understand when you first come into salvation. But as you mature in your walk with the Lord, you have to understand he is not a fool.

He did not come and exchange his life for nothing. He bought you at a great price because he saw a value in you that is obviously greater than what you can see in yourself. For you, after 20 years of continuing to walk with the Lord, to keep perpetuating a thought that you are nothing is actually spitting in the face of what he did to purchase you. There has been an idea that God does not want you to be great. That is false humility. God actually does want you to be great, and the best thing for you is to be great. Because to be great is to look like him. And to look like him is to be healthy and safe.

To look like heaven is actually what the earth needs. They do not need you dimming down the light of Christ. They do not need you dumbing down the power of his resurrection in your life. They need to see a display of God's power, his greatness, present upon each one of us in an individual measure and in a corporate measure. And that, my friends, is what will draw those who do not yet know him into a relationship of wanting to know him.

So if God wants us to be great, would it not be good to actually take a moment to look at what greatness is according to Jesus, according to heaven, according to the Bible? Because greatness in the eyes of the world and greatness in the eyes of the kingdom are polar opposites. They contrast. They do not mix well together. So what we want to do today is go on a journey together to look at what it means to be great in the kingdom according to heaven's perspective.

I never title my messages, but I titled it today, so you can be proud of me. Here is our sermon title: Multiplying Love: Heaven's Key to Greatness.

Let's read it all together. This is Jesus speaking, from the Amplified:

For I assure you, and most solemnly say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke of the pen will pass from the law until all things which it foreshadows are accomplished. So, whoever breaks one of the least important of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least important in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever practices and teaches them, he will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:18–19, AMP)

We have to break this down a little bit. Number one, the heavens and the earth have not passed away, so the law actually remains. We are not subject to the law because Christ fulfilled the law and we are in Christ. But we can move beyond the law and step into what the law was always pointing to, which was love.

The Lord is not speaking to unbelievers right here. He said, "If you teach others to not abide by these things, you will be least in the kingdom." We are talking to brothers and sisters here, not to those outside the family who have not yet awakened to their sonship. So there are some who are lesser in the kingdom and some who are greater in the kingdom.

WHAT THE LAW WAS ALWAYS POINTING TO

You might be wondering, what am I supposed to keep? Every little measure of the law? Am I supposed to not eat pork? No. Jesus and Paul summed up all of the law in some really simple commandments.

Let's read the words of Jesus first, because those are obviously superior. Matthew 22:36–40, Amplified:

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" And Jesus replied to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (that is, unselfishly seek the best or higher good for others). "The whole law and the writings of the prophets depend on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:36–40, AMP)

This is the heartbeat of what the law was always pointing to: loving the Lord your God with everything inside of you, and the second is like it, loving your neighbor as yourself.

Paul continues this in Romans 13:8–10, New American Standard:

Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another, for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this: "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:8–10, NASB)

And one more to really drive this point home. Galatians 5:14:

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:14)

When we recognize that the law has not passed away -- it will not pass away until the heavens and the earth are made new -- we are simply not subject to the penalty of not being able to keep the law anymore. We are now empowered to walk in what the law was always pointing to, which is perfect love. If I love God, he gives me the ability to love myself. And if I love myself, I can love my neighbor rightly. I do not need an enforcer to come and tell me what is right and wrong if I am walking in love toward myself and toward you, because it would never cross the mind of someone who has been perfected in love, matured in love.

The law is only needed where love is immature.

So let me rephrase our key passage in plain language. Going back to Matthew 5:18–19, where Jesus says that whoever practices and teaches you to either keep these things or not is either least or great -- the person who teaches you to love God and others little is the least in the kingdom, and the person who teaches you to love greatly is great in the kingdom.

I am an entrepreneur, and I see so many Christians in different spheres of the marketplace who put a little fish on their business title and are some of the most difficult individuals to work with.

Someone who does not know the Lord will most of the time treat you better than the person with that little fish right there. I have a problem with that. Those people probably do believe in Jesus, but they have not matured in love. So they are still doing things that look like the world. And what a shame, because now if someone encounters them and thinks that is who Christ is, they are turned

off. When that individual stands before the Lord, he will say, "You are the least in the kingdom." Now, the least in the kingdom is still something, but there has to be at least a measure of regret that I did not become great when I had the opportunity.

Walking in love is the key to becoming great in the kingdom. Love is our key.

WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE — LOVING GOD

Love looks like something. Love is not just words that leave my mouth. I can say, "Rachel, I love you," to my wife all the time. But if I do not have actions that validate my love for her, then my words are empty and of no benefit to her. The same is true with friends, with co-workers. If I really love you, if I honor you, that is going to look like something.

Let's think about what love looks like in two categories: loving God and loving your neighbor. They are connected, but there is a distinct difference.

What does it look like to love God? If we are commanded to love him, what does that look like? Is it just worship? Bible studies every week? Saying your prayers before bed? All of those things can touch your love for him, but they themselves are not solely your love for him.

Good thing Jesus spoke to what it looks like to love him. John 14:15:

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15)

John 14:21:

"He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and I will disclose myself to him." (John 14:21)

Meaning: those who actually love me, I will reveal more of who I am to them, because I am not going to give my heart to someone who does not want to actually see it. There is real joy in walking with the Lord because every time I am obedient, whether it is easy or hard, I actually get to see a

new measure of his love. I get to see a new side of who he is. I get to experience: "I thought I loved you before, but after going through this season of obedience -- it was hard -- I love you even more. I have seen a different side of who you are."

What is Jesus's commandment? An easy summary is just this: if Jesus spoke it and commanded it, those are his commandments. We have the written word, the logos. But we also have the ability to communicate with Jesus through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit relays to us the words of the Father and the words of the Son. So you can have an active conversation with the Lord where he can command what is needed for you to take the next step in your journey with God. And it is by following what you see written and by what he speaks to you that you actually prove you really love him.

Now hold on -- I am not saying striving. I sit in the place of letting him love me to life. And now that love empowers me to give it back to him. It is not a tit-for-tat thing. It is a response. My obedience to his commands is because it is the goodness of God that has drawn me into repentance. I have experienced his goodness. I have experienced his love, and it has so radically altered my thinking that I am like, "You are amazing. What do you want me to do? I love you." So my obedience does not come out of religious obligation or duty. It actually is a response to my affection toward him.

He also speaks a little more to what his commandment is. John 15:10–13:

"If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full. This is my commandment: that you love one another just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:10–13)

THE GREATEST EXPRESSION OF LOVE IS LAYING YOUR LIFE DOWN

The greatest expression of love is to lay your life down for your friends. Who did that? Jesus did that for us. He set the example. He did not just say, "Follow this." He went and did it himself.

Some of you may actually be called to be a martyr. Maybe some of you will have the opportunity to lay your physical body down for the benefit of others on the journey God takes you on. But whether you physically die or not is not the primary point, because we are all called to lay our lives down for each other and to love one another. Regardless of whether that leads to physical death or not, it all speaks and leads to the same thing: I lay myself down and I look at all of you and say, "How can I bless you? How can I build you up?" And the beauty is that if you do that too, then I am blessed, because now that love is being reciprocated. Everything I could ever want and everything you could ever want, we actually receive not through selfish ambition, not through narcissistic tendencies, but because we are all transferring love to each other. We are filled with love, and we are able to love our city in a greater capacity because our love needs are being met. It is the same for marriage, for friendship, for the family of God, for the body of Christ.

Loving your neighbor is a byproduct of loving God. Galatians 5:13–14 speaks to the same thing:

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh. But through love, serve one another, for the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:13–14)

Philippians 2:4–8:

Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. (Philippians 2:4–8)

I valeted for seven years -- parked cars, to clarify. I remember the first day I ever valeted. I was working on a Sunday, a pretty new Christian, and the guy I was working with started telling me how he hates Sundays. And why? Because Christians never tip. In fact, there was a particular church in Nashville that was so arrogant they would show up and say, "We do not owe you anything," and walk in with this high air, like their presence was enough. And I had to apologize to him. I said,

"Man, let me just tell you, I am a Christian. I will tell you right now, those guys -- I do not know what is going on over there, but that is not Jesus. And I am so sorry. I apologize that Sundays are bad because of that."

You see what I am saying? If those guys are really saved and the Lord evaluates their heart posture when they pulled up, what do you think he is going to say? He is not going to say, "Well done, man, you really loved that valet." No. He is going to say, "What did love look like in that situation?" Maybe it was leaving a tip. And if you did not have money to tip, maybe you should have parked yourself and walked in.

LOVE EMPOWERS US TO SERVE — MATTHEW 20:20–28

Love actually empowers us to serve each other, because there is one more key the Bible speaks to about being great in the kingdom. Let's read Matthew 20:20–28.

John and James's mother goes up to Jesus, right? Sons of Zebedee.

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of him. And he said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to him, "Command that in your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit, one on your right and one on your left." But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." He said to them, "My cup you shall drink, but to sit on my right and on my left, that is not mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." (Matthew 20:20–23)

Just a little church history: James was martyred. They attempted to martyr John, but the spirit of the Lord kept preserving him. They actually tried to boil him in a vat of oil publicly, and the spirit of the Lord came on him and he would not die -- he was just preaching the gospel. We have the book of Revelation because they had to exile him to the island of Patmos because they did not know what to do with him. He could not die. So both of them, when Jesus said, "You are going to drink the cup now," they actually did. What a joy that they matured into a place of love where they were ready and willing to lay their lives down. They asked it in naivety, but the Lord did not rebuke them. He said, "You will drink it."

And hearing this, the ten became indignant with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you. But whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:24–28)

Notice the brothers became indignant, but Jesus did not become indignant. He never threw it down. He did not say, "You arrogant, wicked servant, why would you ask that?" This is a great example: when you become great in the kingdom, your religious brothers will typically become indignant, because it looks different than their false humility.

He echoes the same thing in Matthew 23:11–12:

"But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted." (Matthew 23:11–12)

When I make myself low before him, he exalts me. That is the kind of greatness I want in my life. I did not apply for this position. I did not ask to be speaking to you right now. The Lord led us here, and it is the Lord who invited us through leadership. I have great joy in this position, not because I am lording over anyone, but because I am trusted by the Lord to empower you with whatever he has given me. That is a great joy. But it comes at a cost. I have to love you and lay my life down. And I fall short from time to time. But the joy is that you all do that for me too. I have seen you all love my family, and I have been able to love back. We now have several years of history. We are a family because the Lord has set an example of what it looks like to lay our lives down for each other.

THIS IS HOW THE WORLD WILL KNOW

So it all leads to this one focal point. How is the world going to know that Jesus was sent by the Father? Is it theological debates? Is it picketing in the street? Is it preaching from the pulpit? Those things are beneficial to the body, but they are not beneficial to those who are not yet part of the body. So how will the world know? Here is what Jesus told us.

Let me read Paul first, and then Jesus will be the cherry on top. Galatians 6:7–10:

Do not be deceived. God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:7–10)

And here is our cherry on top. This is how the world knows that Jesus was truly sent. John 17:22–23:

"The glory which you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as we are one; I in them and you in me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that you sent me, and loved them even as you have loved me." (John 17:22–23)

It is by the way that we love each other. It is by the way that we walk united in love that the world will know: what is on them is otherworldly. What is on them is supernatural. I want it.

I want to bless you with this: I feel like the Lord is saying there is an increase of love. We have sown love and we are about to reap a great harvest. And it is not just for all of us to share with each other. It is actually to pour out so that peace may reign in our city, because Jesus is Lord of all.

CLOSING PRAYER — JAKE WEATHERBY

Lord Jesus, we bless you. Thank you for this word, Lord. Thank you that it is the right time for it, because there is a harvest of love that you first sowed in us, and now through co-laboring with you, we got to plant, and now we are going to get to reap the benefits of that. So Lord, thank you that we actually get to multiply the love you have given us by walking with you in obedience. Lord, the harvest that we are about to receive is going to bless us, it is going to build us up, but it is not just for us -- it is for those who do not yet know you. So Lord, help us to sow that love rightly, so that in a future harvest season, we may have an even greater measure of your love in the earth. Because we want to see you glorified. We want to see you magnified. We want to see our city have peace reigning because your love is present within your body. So Lord, come and do inside of us what needs to be done so that a greater measure of your love might be made manifest amongst us. We bless you, Lord, and we pray these things in Jesus's name. Amen.

PASTORAL CLOSE — CALEB HYERS

When he told the valet story, all the service people in the room went, "Yes. Amen." And what I felt was: when you have been in that place -- when you have been lavished upon by someone, when you know what it is to receive love -- you then go to Outback or wherever you are going and you lavish on the servers there, because you have been in their place. You know what it is to receive, so you give.

For those of you who are wondering, "How do I love? I do not know how to do that" -- I would suggest that maybe you are not allowing the Lord's love to seep into you in the way that it becomes a natural expression. The more I let the Lord love me, and the more I believed Ephesians 2:10 that says I am a masterpiece of the Lord's creation, the more I could receive his love, and the more it was just so natural. It just flowed. I was not trying. He said it -- we are not striving. It just happens because we receive it and then it flows out.

So I would suggest to you: as you close your eyes in this moment and you ask the Lord, ask the Holy Spirit, is there any place in my life where I still struggle to let your love in? Is there any place in my life where I say it does not deserve your love? It is not good enough. It is stained. It is dirty. If I can make this part of my life better, then I can start receiving your love.

And Jesus, I would break every one of those lies right now with the power of the name of Jesus. I would break every lie that says we are not good enough to receive your love, that we have to work harder or be better or perform to receive your love.

Maybe you are here and you have never accepted Jesus as your savior, and you do not know what it is to feel that love or that freedom that he gives. I would invite you to come up to our prayer team. Our prayer team is going to come up here. I would invite you to run to these sons and daughters who can stand with you, these brothers and sisters who can help you receive the love of God. Because every single person was on the mind of Jesus when he was on the cross. You were in his mind when he said, "I am dying for you. I am redeeming you. I do not want you under the punishment of the law. I want you redeemed by my blood, and I want you to walk in the love and the freedom that I have for you." And if for no one else, he would have done it for you. If you have never been able to receive that gift, today is your day.

And maybe you have received Jesus, but you would say, "I am found, but maybe I am not free."

There is pain. There is trauma. There is grief. There is insecurity. There is people-pleasing. There is striving. There is performing. Today is your day to discover freedom. The freedom that comes from God's love.

Would you stand with me?

Jesus, you are so good and you are so loving and you are so kind. We thank you that you pour out your love lavishly with no limit, with no end. Again and again and again you pour out your love. As you send us into Tampa Bay, let us be living, walking vessels that overflow with the love of heaven into every person that we see -- the gas station attendant, the barista, the grocery store clerk, the person on the aisle that you pass by at the grocery store. Whatever love looks like in those moments, speak it to us. Let us be so turned toward your voice that we hear and we respond. We are so grateful for your love. In your powerful name we pray. Amen.