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Central Congregational Church
"For the Glory of God and the Good of our Neighbors"
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The Law of Love

Mark 12:28-44

Series: Getting In on the Good News
The Gospel of Jesus Christ According to Mark

Central Passage

Mark 12:28–34 (NIV) — 28 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?" **29** "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' **31** The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." **32** "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. **33** To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." **34** When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Central Thought: We get in on the Good News when we follow Jesus in the way of (Law of) authentic and costly love of God and neighbor, rather than the way of religious ceremony and pious posturing.

The Law of Love

- ❖ Love is essential; Religion is peripheral and deceptive.

1 Corinthians 13:1–3 (NIV) — 1 If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

A Riddle and a Rebuke

- ❖ Jesus is Lord of Love, who exceeds and upends our trusted traditions and religious expectations.

Matthew 12:6–8 (NIV) — 6 I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. **7** If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. **8** For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

- ❖ The loveless practice of religion is the gravest evil.

Amos 5:21–24 (NIV) — 21 "I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me. **22** Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. **23** Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. **24** But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

An Unexpected Heroine

- ❖ Love isn't flashy.

Matthew 6:2–4 (NIV) — 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, **4** so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

- ❖ Love gives everything and is all that matters.

Galatians 5:6 (NIV) — 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.