

20251207 Four Inheritances – LOVE – IT'S SOMETHING YOU DO! IT'S GIVING.

Last week we were introduced to the idea that as believers we have access to inheritances which belong to us when we come to Christ in faith. Upon putting our faith in Him, we immediately receive the Holy Spirit. We don't need to request Him to enter us. He does at the moment that we put our faith and trust in Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the deposit on our inheritance.

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14, NIV).

However, there are other benefits such as hope, love, joy, and peace which are available to every believer, but they must be claimed. We learned that they are triggered by faith. You may renounce these gifts or you might even use them for a while and then put them on a shelf and not benefit from them, but they are yours for the taking whenever you choose. However, to benefit from them, we must claim and receive them.

Last week we looked at hope. We realized that we as believers have the inheritance of an “expectant hope.” This benefit and the other benefits are born out of our faith, which is the *hypostasis* (bedrock, foundation, platform, undergirding, support) upon which we stand and from which our hope springs. Today, we will look at love as a benefit as well. It's easy to understand how receiving God's love is part of our inheritance, but you might wonder how it can be a spiritual inheritance for us to love God back and to love others as we love ourselves. As we experience God's love; we in turn love Him. So not only is His love for us part of our inheritance, but **acquiring the ability** to love self and others is part of our inheritance. Scripture tells us that “we love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19, NKJV). Out of this God originated love, and we are able to love our neighbor as ourselves.

The centerpiece of the Christian life is love. Without love there is no Christian faith. Scripture tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8). We are told that perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). Paul tells us: now abide faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:13). The concept of love is found 311 times in the King James Version of the Bible. The more modern translations cite love about twice as many times as that. The Bible contains information on about every use of the word love in human relationships and in the interaction between God and man. Jesus summarizes ALL of this business about love, giving us the BIG IDEA in Matthew chapter 22.

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” (Matthew 22:34-36, NKJV).

Jesus responded by quoting the most sacred passage in Judaism called the ***Shemah Y'israel*** from Deuteronomy chapter 6. He further expanded its application by quoting another verse from the Torah found in Leviticus 19.

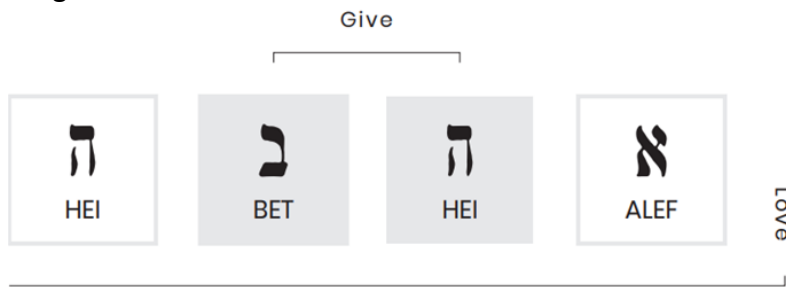
³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40, NKJV).

So, what is love exactly? How did God love us, how do we love Him, and how do we love our neighbors as ourselves?

LOVE – THE FUNDAMENTAL PREMISE – GIVING – IT’S SOMETHING YOU DO

Believe it or not, defining love is illusive. It’s like an illusion. You think you see it and then you don’t. Or you think it is real, and it is not. The concept of love in English is even more complicated because we only use one word for every kind of love imaginable. Hence, love can mean many different things and it becomes a jumbled mess in our minds when we try to sort it all out. When I say that I love salmon versus when I say that I love my wife above all others versus when I say that I love my little granddaughters, the word means three different things. Words can give us clues as to the meaning of all human thoughts and ideas. In fact, words are combinations of syllables that humans have put together to convey thoughts and ideas. I think the secret to the word “love” itself is found in the ancient Hebrew root within the word. There is much evidence that Hebrew is God’s language. The earliest names recorded in the Bible are all Hebraic. When Adam (red clay) named Eve (mother of all) he named her in Hebrew. Most certainly when Adam named the animals, he gave them Hebrew names. So if we dig deep we must look at the Hebrew roots of the word meaning love.

The Hebrew word for love is **ahavah**, which according to Hasidic tradition is rooted in a three-letter root **hav**, which means **giving**. This possibly reveals that **GIVING** is at the root of true love. This is a radical thought to us as we have so many misconceptions about love. The word itself gets confounded in all kinds of ideas. What do I mean by “confounded?” I mean it gets jumbled up and confused to mean many different things and most of them have nothing to do with giving. What does this etymological insight teach us both about the function of love and about how love functions?



The Chabad website summarizes these thoughts concerning love as follows:

“First, love is not all about you, the lover, but about the other, the beloved. Love calls us out of the confines of ourselves and into the wilderness of relationship. It is a transformative

experience that dethrones the ego and puts it to work in the fulfillment of the needs and desires of another.”¹

In Loving us, what Does God Give Us?

As I write what God gives us I am overwhelmed. The Bible gives an exhaustive list of the gifts that God gives us.

HE GIVES THESE TO ALL MEN: (Universal Gifts)

- 1 **He gives us our very existence.** He gives to all life, breath, and all things (Acts 17:25, Psalm 139:13-16). *For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb.¹⁴ I will praise You, for [a] I am fearfully and wonderfully made ... my frame wasn’t hidden from you when I was made in secret... Your eyes saw my substance being yet unformed and in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me when as yet there were none of them. (Psalm 139:13-16, select portions of NKJV)*
- 2 **He gives us our breath and daily bread** (Acts 17:25).
- 3 **He gives us our conscience and the moral law written in our hearts** (Romans 2).
- 4 **He gives us the beauty and goodness in creation** (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:20).

HE GIVES TO THE BELIEVER: (Specific Gifts) [This compels you to love yourself as God loves you.]

- 1 **Salvation and eternal life** (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9).
- 2 **Forgiveness of our sins** (Ephesians 1:7).
- 3 **Adoption as children** (Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:4-7).
- 4 **The Holy Spirit** Who lives inside of us (Acts 2:38; Ephesians 1:13-14).
- 5 **Peace with God and inner peace** (Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:7).
- 6 **Direct access** to the throne room of God (Hebrews 4:16).
- 7 **A new heart** that is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- 8 **All other gifts** as every good gift and every perfect gift is from above (James 1:17).
- 9 God gives **Himself** to every believer.
- 10 Overall, the believer gets the Holy Spirit, life, breath, daily bread, our abilities and talents, eternal life, spiritual gifts and EVERY OTHER GIFT.

How Can We Love God? – What Can We Possibly Give Him?

If loving is giving, what can we give God? Let’s go back for a minute to the **Shemah** which Jesus quoted and break it down into pieces. He commanded, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and

¹ https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/5783136/jewish/Love-Ahavah.htm Chabad is a Hasidic movement within Orthodox Judaism, emphasizing Jewish mysticism and philosophy. The name is an acronym for the Hebrew words meaning wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.

with all your soul and with all your mind (the Hebrew word is might).” We’ve now thoroughly covered the idea of love being connected with giving. So what do each of these elements mean?

First, don’t spend a lot of time trying to figure out the difference between the heart and the soul, and the mind. Hebrew sometimes uses a construct of repetition for emphasis. There are indeed nuanced differences between these terms, as explained below.

Loving God with all of Your Heart – Giving God your Thoughts and Emotions

I once asked a rabbi, “What exactly is the meaning of ‘heart’ in the Bible?” He simply answered, “The heart is where your mind and your emotions meet.” As you ponder this for a minute just think about the differences in those two things. Your mind is what you think and your emotions are what you feel. I might know that there are no tigers out roaming around at night in Whitehall, but sometimes when I’m outside working in the dark I feel like something is out there and it can get me. One thing is what I know, and the other is how I feel. Jesus is saying, “Give God all of your knowledge and all of your feelings.” This is lived out when I pray, “Lord, I know there aren’t any tigers around here, but I am afraid and I feel like I’m going to be eaten by one.” He wants us to give Him what’s going on inside of our minds and emotions.

Giving God my thoughts means letting Him have access and control to what goes on in my mind. In Romans 12 Paul exhorts that we should renew our minds by being transformed, not conformed to the world. This includes what I am focused on. Am I focused on things that are pure, good, noble, and of good report (Philippians 4)? Or, is my mind in that horrible pit of pity, shame, filth, and negativity? I think loving God with my intellect includes thanking Him for my brain and asking Him to direct my thoughts. And so much of this includes the knowledge that we acquire from memorizing or knowing God’s word. This provides a reservoir from which the Holy Spirit can bring God’s truth to your mind. King David said, *Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee. (Psalm 119:11, KJV)*. I think we love God when our minds dwell on the things that He wants us to dwell upon. *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:” (Philippians 2:5, KJV)*. We are loving God when we keep our thoughts on Him.

Loving God with All of Your Soul – Giving God All of What Makes you You.

Loving God with all of our soul entails loving Him with all that makes you who you are. Maybe we should think of this as the collective of who we are beyond our mind and emotions. The Hebrew word נפש (nephesh, **Strong's #5315**) is literally **the whole of the person**. First, we are told to love Yahweh with our minds, now with all of our bodies.² This soul-loving includes all of our personality, quirks, behaviors, desires, ideas, and perhaps even with the physical self. It is loving Him with all that makes you and me who we are. It’s a step beyond loving Him with our hearts. It not only includes the mind and the emotions, but anything and everything else that makes us who we are. **IT IS LOVING HIM WITH OUR ALL. All means all. It means nothing less.**

Loving God with All of Your Might – This TELLS **HOW MUCH** you are to love (give) God.

² Jeff Benner - <https://www.ancient-hebrew.org> – An interpretation of the Sh’ma

Loving God with “all of your might” really is an adverbial statement (how, what, where, why, when). It is accentuating how much we’re to love God. It might even be read better as “loving God with all of your “very.” Maybe your “moistest,” your “muchness” and in the “very most” way you can. Benner³ phrases this idea in saying that we’re to love God with all of our “muchness.” Again, we must keep in mind that we can’t really love God this way until we ourselves understand just how much He loves us. That’s the part that takes us into the gift of being able to love our neighbors as ourselves. When we get a glimpse of how God sees us, we are compelled to see ourselves in some way as God sees us, and to love ourselves as God loves us.

What Can We Love/Give our Neighbor? – Romans 5:5 – God pours into us. We pour into others.

*⁵ Now hope does not disappoint, because the **love of God has been poured out in our hearts** by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:5, KJV).*



As we’ve learned, the second greatest commandment is to “love our neighbors as ourselves.” True love is not ego-centric. We should start with our closest neighbor. That’s our husband or our wife. Loving him or her is the exact opposite of infatuation. Do you know what I mean by infatuation? It’s when that person is in your presence and your heart races and you can hardly breathe. They are all you can think about BECAUSE THEY MAKE YOU FEEL SO VERY GOOD. That really isn’t love. That’s transactional. THEY’RE GIVING YOU SOMETHING YOU WANT AND THAT MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD. You are getting something from them in exchange for something you’re giving them. Please don’t get me wrong on this. In many ways our marital relationships look very transactional. But if they’re based on score keeping (transactional), they cannot survive. They survive when both participants are loving selflessly.

In my marriage counseling and pre-marital counseling, I teach a concept called the love bank. That is not transactional loving. It is, in fact, other-centric. Generally, a woman has God given needs for affection and security, and a man has God given needs for respect and safe sexual satisfaction. They sort of go hand in hand. And that’s okay. However, they’ll soon fizzle out if both partners are not intent on GIVING SELFLESSLY into the need of the other. As they work at meeting their spouse’s needs they are making deposits in an account with their name on it in their spouse’s heart.

If either the man or the woman is just giving to get; the relationship won’t last. It cannot last. It will all fall apart. It is not based on true love. I might add that it will all fall apart if one person is doing all of the giving. There is a mutuality that is required. Each must give to their husband or wife because LOVE IS SOMETHING YOU DO. LOVE IS NOT SOMETHING YOU FEEL. It is not butterflies in your stomach. It is not being able to stop thinking about someone. That is infatuation. That is artificial. It is a facade. It isn’t doing something for the other person because they make you feel like you’re on top of the world. All of that is transactional. TRUE LOVE IS GIVING TO THE OTHER PERSON BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT IT MEANS

³ Ibid

TO LOVE. At the bottom of it all, love is giving. It is GIVING OUT OF THE OVERFLOW of what God has poured into your heart. Jesus asserts this when He says, "It is more blessed to give than receive."

True love is other-centric and it lasts. It lasts in a marriage, and it lasts in how we treat others. The biblical idea of loving our neighbors is not based on something you feel. How can we be commanded by Jesus and the Torah to feel something for those "neighbors" for whom we have no feelings? Jesus' command is not focused on internal feelings at all, but on external actions. LOVE IS SOMETHING YOU DO. Love of others is characterized in doing for them. Jesus doesn't say that we are to FEEL something for our neighbors, but rather we are to do something for our neighbors. Love is an action. It is not a feeling. Love does, regardless of feelings.

As you interact with your neighbors there is no room for score-keeping in the heart of a believer. This applies to your marital partner, family member, fellow church member, or the "neighbor" whom you don't know. Score keeping is when you do something for someone and then think to yourself "they owe me one." That is not selfLESSness. That is selfISHness. It is sick and it comes from a root of pride and self and has nothing to do with love. God hates a "score-keeping" attitude. Doing for others in order to get something back (including loyalty) is not love at all. It is transactional. It is doing a business deal.

Summary:

Jesus was clear that the major directive of our lives should be loving God with all our being. In getting a good understanding of how much God loves us, we are able to love others. None of this is possible without the power of the Holy Spirit. Another gift to every believer is the gift or the inheritance of love. HE LOVED US, SO NOW WE BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO LOVE HIM AND LOVE OTHERS.

The Apostle Paul explains clearly what true love looks like. This is a description of love lived out.

***13** 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,^[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing.*

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:1-13, NKJV).

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese-Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.

HANDOUT - DEUTERONOMY 6:4-5 A DEEP DIVE INTO THE MEANINGS OF THE WORDS

Ancient Hebrew Text

Septuagint – Hebrew translated into Greek circa 300 BC

New King James Version

The purpose of this is to get to the deepest meanings of what God is saying about Himself and what our response is to be.

Ancient Hebrew (Approximately 3,000 years ago) - Moses

430 [e]	3068 [e]	853 [e]	157 [e]	259 [e]	3068 [e]	430 [e]	3068 [e]	3478 [e]	8085 [e]
'ē-lō-he-kā;	Yah-weh	'ēl	wə-'ā-hab-tā,	'e-ḥād	Yah-weh	'ē-lō-hē-nū	Yah-weh	yis-rā-'ēl;	šə-ma'
אלהיך	יהוה	את	ואהבתך	אחד	יהוה	אלהינו	יהוה	ישׂראל	שמע
your God	Yahweh	-	And You shall love	[is] one	Yahweh	our God	Yahweh	Israel	Hear
N-mpc 2ms	N-proper-ms	DirObjM	Conj-w V-Qal-ConjPerf-2ms	Number-ms	N-proper-ms	N-mpc 1cp	N-proper-ms	N-proper-ms	V-Qal-Imp-ms

3966 [e]	3605 [e]	5315 [e]	3605 [e]	3824 [e]	3605 [e]
mə-'ō-de-kā.	ū-bə-kāl	nap-šə-kā	ū-bə-kāl	le-bə-bə-kā	bə-kāl
מאדך	ובכל	נפשך	ובכל	לבבך	בכל
your strength	and with all	your soul	and with all	your heart	with all
Adv 2ms	Conj-w, Prep-b N-msc	N-fsc 2ms	Conj-w, Prep-b N-msc	N-msc 2ms	Prep-b N-msc

Greek Translation of the Hebrew by 70 Jewish scholars (250-100 BC)

4 Ἄκουε, Ἰσραὴλ· Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν Κύριος εἷς ἐστὶ· 5 καὶ ἀγαπήσεις Κύριον τὸν Θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς δυνάμεώς σου. 6 καὶ ἔσται τὰ ρήματα ταῦτα, ὅσα ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαί σοι σήμερον, ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν ψυχῇ σου·

New King James Version (Full Bible 1982)

4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. (Deut 6:4-5 NKJV)

ahava – agape – love
 Levav – cardias – heart
 nephesh – psyche – soul

me’od (very) – dunameos – strength
 ahav (root hav= give) – agape – love

Deuteronomy 6:4 | A Hebrew interpretation of the Sh'ma - By **Jeff A. Benner**⁴

As a verb, the Hebrew word אהב *ahav* ^[H:157] means "to provide and protect what is given as a privileged gift." We are to love God, neighbors, and family, not in an emotional sense, but in the sense of our actions.

Heart - The heart, לבב (levav, **Strong's #3824**) in Hebrew, is the thoughts of the mind, not an emotion as the word is generally understood in western minds. In this passage, we are informed how to "love" Yahweh—by keeping all of our thoughts focused on him.

Soul - The Hebrew word נפש (nephesh, **Strong's #5315**) is literally **the whole of the person**. First, we are told to love Yahweh with our minds, now with all of our bodies.

Might - The Hebrew word used here is מאד (me'od, **Strong's #3966**) and is a very interesting word, especially in the way that it is used in this context. This word is used throughout the Hebrew text as an adverb, intensifying a verb, and is usually translated as **very, greatly, or much**. This is the only time this word appears as a noun and is best translated as **"muchness."** This idea of muchness is expanding on the previous two ways we are to love Yahweh, first with our mind, then with our body, and now with everything we have.

A Re-Translation - Now that we have examined each word in this passage, to uncover their original meanings in the Hebrew culture, let's translate it with a more Hebraic flavor.

Israel, pay careful attention and respond: Yahweh works in unity with himself: and you shall act upon your love to YHWH with your thoughts and mind, with your entire body and with everything that you possess.

The phrase "heart, mind and soul," as it is translated in the RSV, is generally interpreted to mean that we are to love YHWH with "three" things, but the reality is that this phrase is a form of poetry that is using three synonyms to show that our love for YHWH is to be all encompassing, beginning with our thoughts, then our bodies, then everything we possess.

The Masoretic Text - In modern day Hebrew Bibles, this passage is written as follows.

שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד

Notice that the ayin (ע), the last letter in the first word is written oversized, as is the dalet, the last letter in the last word. When these two letters are placed together, they form the word עד (eyd, **Strong's #5707**) meaning "witness." In Judaism, the sh'ma (the name given to this verse as it is the first word in this verse) is Israel's witness, their statement of faith if you will.

However, the oversizing of these letters is not found in any ancient scroll such as found in the **Dead Sea Caves**. The oversizing first appears in the **Masoretic Hebrew texts** from 1,000 A.D. Whether the Masorites added them or not we don't know, in fact the origins of these oversized letters are a mystery.

⁴ <https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/studies-verses/deuteronomy-6-4-a-hebrew-interpretation-of-the-sh%27ma.htm>