

Hello, My name is Jared Potter and this week, I have the honour of sharing a message with you that has been placed on my heart for a very long time. This message is not mine, this Message is taken directly from the Bible, as much as I can anyways. And with that I would like to open in Prayer.

First I would like for you to turn to your neighbour and ask each other a few questions! Take a good look, because the people who you are sitting next to are going to be the people who you will get to discuss this message with, and do a little bit of brainstorming with at the end.

1. What is your name?
2. What is your heart, and what does it represent?
3. What is Love?

A quick disclaimer. We are going through a lot of content today in a short amount of time. LOTS of these words and subjects that we will cover and go over have been covered by the Bible Project, a group that makes short animated clips on words and ideas from the bible. They have done most of the Word translations for us today, and if you end up deeply interested I would recommend you look them up. With that, let's jump into the Word!

“Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one, and as for you, you shall Love the Lord your God with all of your Heart, with all of your Soul, and with all of your Strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.” - Deuteronomy 6:4-9

These verses are a Prayer, a prayer called the Shema. The Shema was a prayer the Jewish people prayed every morning and evening. The Shema came from God, to Moses with the Ten Commandments. In chapter 5 of Deuteronomy Moses tells the Jews what the Lords 10 commandments were, what they should, and should not do. In Chapter 6 he explains what they should do, and how to do it! This prayer was prayed by Jesus, and he speaks on it as we will discuss later. This Prayer is still prayed by Jews twice a Day in present times.

Hear O Israel! The first command in the Prayer is to Listen, The word Hear is said as Shema! That's how the prayer got its name but I believe that it is Imperative that we do just that.... Ask yourself, am I listening to God. Are my Heart and ears open to hearing what he has to say? Are you paying Attention? Are you responding, with your words and actions to what he has to say?? This word Shema Means to Listen, but it also equally means to respond, to do as asked. "Hear O Israel" listen and do! Now that is the framework that we need to apply to the rest of this passage. And I plan to say this often as a Mental Q for you to ask yourself the Question, am i listening?? And how will I respond? This passage is a call to a partnership with the Lord. We have been told to listen and then respond. Now that is the first word of our passage.... We have a few more to go.

"The LORD is our God, the Lord is one, and as for you, you shall Love the Lord your God-" Pause!! We are now getting to what we are supposed to do! We are to Love, but what does that really mean, well the word used here is Ahavah which can be used very generally. But the catch here is that the Love we are to give to God, comes from God. in the same way that we are to Hear and respond, this is a command to Love God as He has first loved you, and to express that Love through action. If I were to speak or pray this passage today it would be,

"Listen and respond Jared, you shall love God as he loved you, with Action"

But he doesn't end it there, he explains how it should look and what it should look like! "Love the lord your God with all your heart," The word for heart here is **Levav**, or **Lev**. Now the Isrealites knew about our Heart (organ) but they didn't have an understanding of the brain. Therefore they understood that all thoughts were from your Heart. Understanding came from the Heart, decisions, choices for right and wrong came from the Heart. Whereas we may overthink things. They also felt their emotions in the Heart as we often describe love from our hearts. Hurts come from our hearts when we have a broken heart. They understood both emotions and thoughts to come from a single source, our hearts! With that in mind we are to LOVE the Lord with all of our Hearts, with every thought and emotion, with all of our hearts desire... not just with our Hearts in the sense we often associate that word to mean today. I feel we often see people use the word heart with a sort of carelessness. We fail to see perhaps the gravity of this piece of ourselves. It in a way is taken for granted. The bible is filled with examples of people Praying that God would give them a pure heart, or a heart of flesh and not of stone. They wanted a heart that wasn't fickle and wishy washy,

yearning for and desiring worldly things, but knew that to give God their Heart was to have him in their thoughts and emotions constantly, in all things.

Hear O Israel, Love me with all of your thoughts and emotions. (are we listening, how do we respond?)

“You shall love the lord your God with all of your Heart, with all of your Soul,”

What does that mean? Loving god with all thoughts and emotions is one thing we can grasp... we understand what that means. But what of this whimsical word soul? How do we do that?

I want to ask you to discuss this very quickly with your partners.

1. What do we think our soul is?
2. How do we love God and others with it?

I'd like to bring you back here now, Love the lord with all of your soul. Well the word Soul here is the word **Nephesh**. This word, literally translated, is the word, Throat... but let's find out why. The Isrealites didn't have the same thoughts on the soul as we do today. We think of the invisible part of ourselves that leaves when the body died, but they didn't picture it that way. The word Nephesh was used to describe your whole being, body and all. The whole person, every part. And the word Nephesh (throat) is used to help describe the Thirst we should have for God. Are you thirsty for Jesus? The word Nephesh is used Hundreds of times in the old testament and it never refers to the part of you that lives on after death but rather used to describe the whole being of a person. If a person died there corpse was a dead Nephesh.

In Psalm 63:5,8

5 “I (nephesh) will be satisfied as with the richest foods: with singing lips my mouth will praise you.”

8 “I (Nephesh) cling to you; your right hand upholds me.”

Hear O Israel, our we Listening? How do we respond? No need to discuss this one, but seriously ask yourself this question.

1. How do I Love the Lord with all of our thirst, with all of our being?
2. How do We as a body, Love him with our Nephesh?

Hear O Israel, Love the Lord your God with all of your Strength/Might.

This to me, seems like the one we can perhaps grasp easiest. It doesn't so much mean strong man strength, but rather is translated as VERY or MUCH. The Shema is one of the only places it is translated as Strength. The word Strength here is **Me'od (Much or very)**. It means Vehemently, Speedily, Wholly. In English this is used as an Adverb, to describe an action word. Example is he lifted something mightily. And this is how it is used in the bible as well.... Except in this passage. This would be written clearly, the Jews knew that when reading the word Me'od in this passage that it was written as a Noun.... As a person, a place or a thing. We are told here to Love God with ALL of our strength and might, so much so that it is as a Person, a Place, or a Thing! Our love of God is to be tangible, touchable, real! This is imperative.... Hear O Israel, LOVE ME TANGIBLY!!

The passage continues to show us How we do this.

“These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

It's tangible....

He is saying Love me with all your heart, all your emotions, your thoughts, love me with all of your souls, your desire, your thirst, your full being, with ALL of you, and with everything you do, With all your strength your Muchness, Tangibly love me so that it touches people, so that the Love I AM, the AHVAH (Love) i gave you, is given back to people, out of a Love for me!! That you love so mightily that it touches, changes, and fills their Whole being and becomes them! Like a wildfire, the Love I have shared for you, You share it with Others, and then more and more and more!! ARE you Listening Israel, are you Going to respond, Fort George/ Lighthouse?

Jesus says the same thing in The Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew 22:35-40

“One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

If Jesus was to pick one of the Commandments he would have been called out for Blasphemy, if he doesn't respond then he wasn't as knowledgeable as this “expert” in the law.

37 Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’[c] 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’[d] 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Jesus doesn't need to say Hear O Israel, these teachers know the verse and they know that he has evaded their plot to trick him. But this is one of those moments that he knows they are not hearing and responding... They are hearing with their ears, but their hearts, souls and strength are not Loving God. They have been Caught up in the ways of the world, the Power they have as teachers, the wealth they can acquire. Remember this is a prayer/ Verse that they were praying morning and evening. What a slap in the face to the Pharisees.

I fail to do this daily, I get caught up in the ways of the world, worried with worldly things. But I believe that if we pray this over ourselves, ask ourselves if we are listening and responding to the Lord, and submit ourselves to the renewing of our minds Daily as Paul teaches in Romans 12:2 then we can begin to partner with Jesus more and more in our walk with him as individuals and as a body. I'm going to end in Prayer and we will go into our interactive worship time, but before we break off to go and worship further, take 3 mins, and go back to the people around you. Don't discuss anything but this passage. Ask each other how we live out the Shema, how do we listen better and respond... and when you finish talking, pray with each other. Pray.