



Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

-Mark 12:29-31

DEVOTIONAL

When Jesus is asked about the greatest commandment, he does not dodge. He gives a center: love God, love your neighbor as yourself. Not love as a feeling. Love as a whole-life orientation.

What is striking is that Jesus answers with the *Shema*, the ancient Jewish prayer recited by faithful people every morning and every night. This was not a new idea. It was the oldest one. As if Jesus is saying, "You already know this." The question is whether you are living inside it.

Jesus puts love at the center and refuses to let us separate love of God from love of neighbor. They are not two commandments pulling in different directions. They are one movement. My spirituality is not only about what I feel in prayer, it is about how I treat people, especially the ones I am tempted to dismiss. The way I speak. The way I spend. The way I show up.

Love is not a feeling to wait for. It is a direction to turn toward, again and again. Holy Week reminds us that love is not abstract; it is costly, embodied, and stubbornly present even when it is hard.

If I am lost, I can return here. If I do not know what to do next, I can ask: *What looks most like love of God and neighbor, right here, right now?*

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Do one deliberate act of neighbor-love today, a call, a meal, a donation, or a kind word with nothing attached to it.

CLOSING PRAYER

God of love, gather my scattered heart. Teach me what matters most. Make my love concrete, patient, and brave. Amen.



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