

## **EXTREME CHRISTIANITY**

### **Matthew 22:34-40**

#### **INRODUCTION**

- A. Extreme Sports.
  - 1. Definition – recreational activities perceived as involving a high degree of risk.
  - 2. X Games, since 1995.
  - 3. Examples of “extreme” sports.
- B. Extreme Christianity – Following Christ.
  - 1. Luke 9:23 – Deny yourself.
  - 2. Luke 9:57-62 – who can follow Jesus?
  - 3. Luke 14:25-35 – hate father, mother, etc.
  - 4. Luke 18:18-23, 26 – Rich young ruler.
  - 5. Sounds “*extreme*” to me!
- C. In lieu of the previous verses, some questions to consider:
  - 1. What does it mean to “follow Christ”?
  - 2. What does it mean to “put Him first”?
  - 3. Am I an “extreme” Christian or am I settling for “lukewarm”.
    - a. Revelation 3:15-16
    - b. Hot (on fire), cold or lukewarm (status quo?).

#### **I. ...WITH ALL YOUR HEART...**

- A. The Setting.
  - 1. The last week before the crucifixion, Tuesday.
  - 2. Pharisees and Sadducees trying to find something in which to ensnare Christ.
    - a. Tribute [*tax*] to Caesar, Mt. 22:15-22. (vs. 21)
    - b. Question regarding marriage (levirate law, Dt. 25:7-10) and the resurrection, vss. 23-33.
  - 3. What is the greatest command? (vss. 34-40)
    - a. Asked by a lawyer – one educated in the law of Moses (an expert).
    - b. This question was often debated among the Jewish scholars.
    - c. Summarize the law in one general statement.
- B. Jesus’ Response.
  - 1. Love the Lord your God... (vs. 37)
  - 2. With all your heart, soul, mind... (Hebrews text).
    - a. Mark and Luke add the word “strength”, (Mk. 12:28; Lk. 10:27).
  - 3. How does that impact our lives?

#### **II. THE LAW FIRST HEARD.**

- A. The Shema (*shama*’).
  - 1. It follows after a summary of the 10 commandments given at Sinai, Deut. 5:6-21.
  - 2. Moses reviews the reason for following the laws, 6:1-3.
  - 3. The Shema: The Lord our God is one! (vs. 4)
    - a. No other God.
    - b. Make no idols.
    - c. Do not take Name in vain.

- d. Remember the Sabbath – keep holy.
- 4. Do them – Teach them, 6:6-9.
- B. The Fall of Israel.
  - 1. Immorality. Numbers 25
  - 2. Idolatry, 2 Kings 17:7-18.
    - a. Other things became a priority in their lives.
      - i. Family.
      - ii. Work.
      - iii. Pursuit of wealth.
    - b. They began to justify themselves.
      - i. The question to Jesus – 613 laws.
      - ii. Traditions more important and more binding than the official interpretation of the Law itself.
      - iii. Mark 7:6-8

### III. EXTREME CHRISTIANITY.

- A. Love the Lord – All Your Heart...
  - 1. John 14:15 – What holy religion is all about.
  - 2. Based on the holiness of God – and His people, Leviticus 20:26; 1 Peter 1:16.
  - 3. The Creator (God) desires this love of His children.
  - 4. This obedience cannot be coerced – it is a choice, a freedom of our will.
- B. Justifying Our Lives.
  - 1. Forsaking the assembly.
  - 2. Weekly contribution.
  - 3. Putting Christ first (*based on convenience?*).
  - 4. Matthew 7:21-23. They were religious, but...

### CLOSING

- A. C.S. Lewis, book *Mere Christianity*: *The Christian way is different: harder, and easier. Christ says “Give me All. I don’t want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want You. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. I don’t want to cut off a branch here and a branch there, I want to have the whole tree down. I don’t want to drill the tooth or crown it, or stop it, but to have it out. Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think innocent as well as the ones you think wicked – the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you Myself: my own will shall become yours.”*
- B. Jesus says, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” Luke 9:23
- C. Extreme Christianity! “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”