



- If I asked you to find a NT passage that speaks of the necessity of believing to be saved, could you?
- Which one comes to mind first?
- Why?

Whoever believes and is baptized  
will be saved, but whoever does  
not believe will be condemned.

Mark 16:16

- Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

And they said, “Believe in the  
Lord Jesus, and you will be  
saved, you and your household.”

Acts 16:31

- Acts 16:31 (ESV) 31 And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

For I am not ashamed of the gospel,  
for it is the power of God for  
salvation to everyone who believes

Romans 1:16

- Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For by grace you have  
been saved through faith.  
Ephesians 2:8

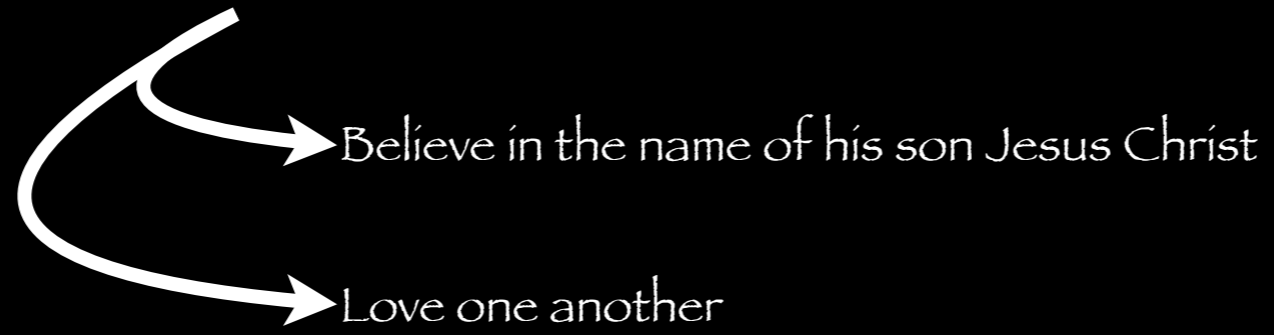
- Ephesians 2:8 (ESV) 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

And this is his commandment, that  
we believe in the name of his Son  
Jesus Christ and love one another,  
just as he has commanded us.  
Whoever keeps his commandments  
abides in God, and God in him.

1 John 3:23-24

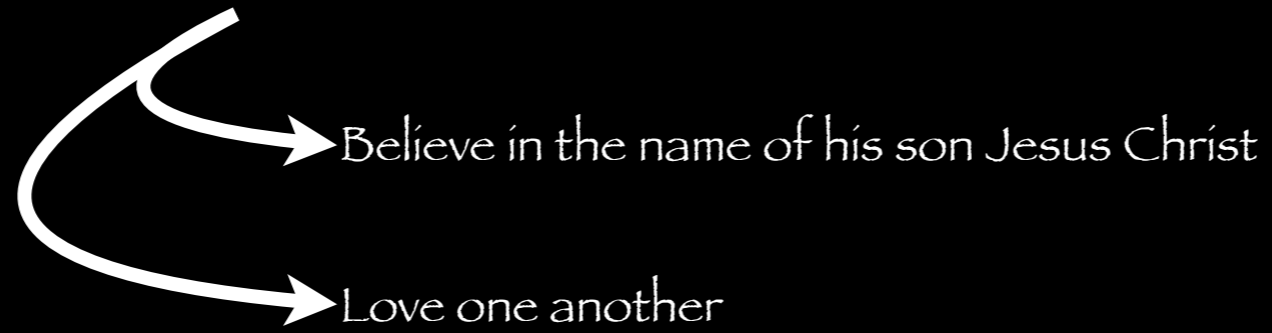
- 1 John 3:23-24 (ESV) 23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. 24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

## His Commandment



- Commandment ...
  - singular, not plural (significant!)
- These two statements, are just one commandment.

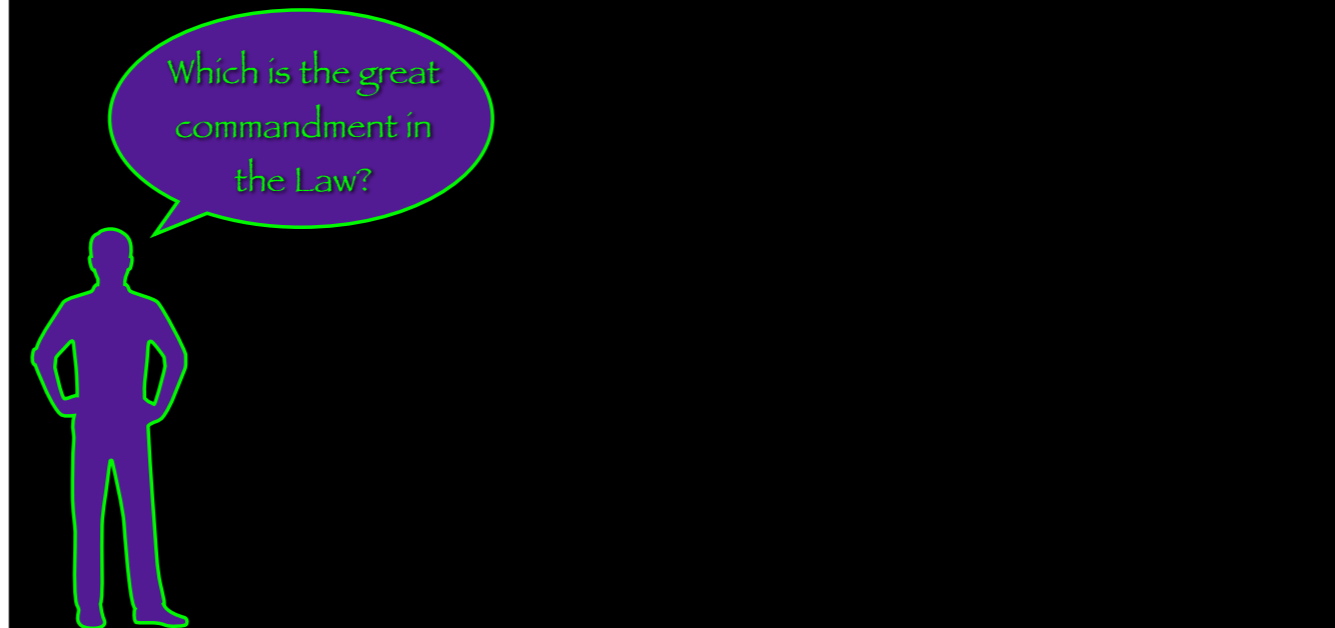
## His Commandment



- Generally, we've tended to elevate doctrinal correctness above our relationships with one another in Christ.
- I want to be clear ... Jesus and the Apostles and the Scriptures all teach that our salvation depends on the fact that we believe Jesus is the Christ, the son of God.
- I want to be clear that John is reminding us that loving one another is just as important as belief in Jesus.



Believe & Love



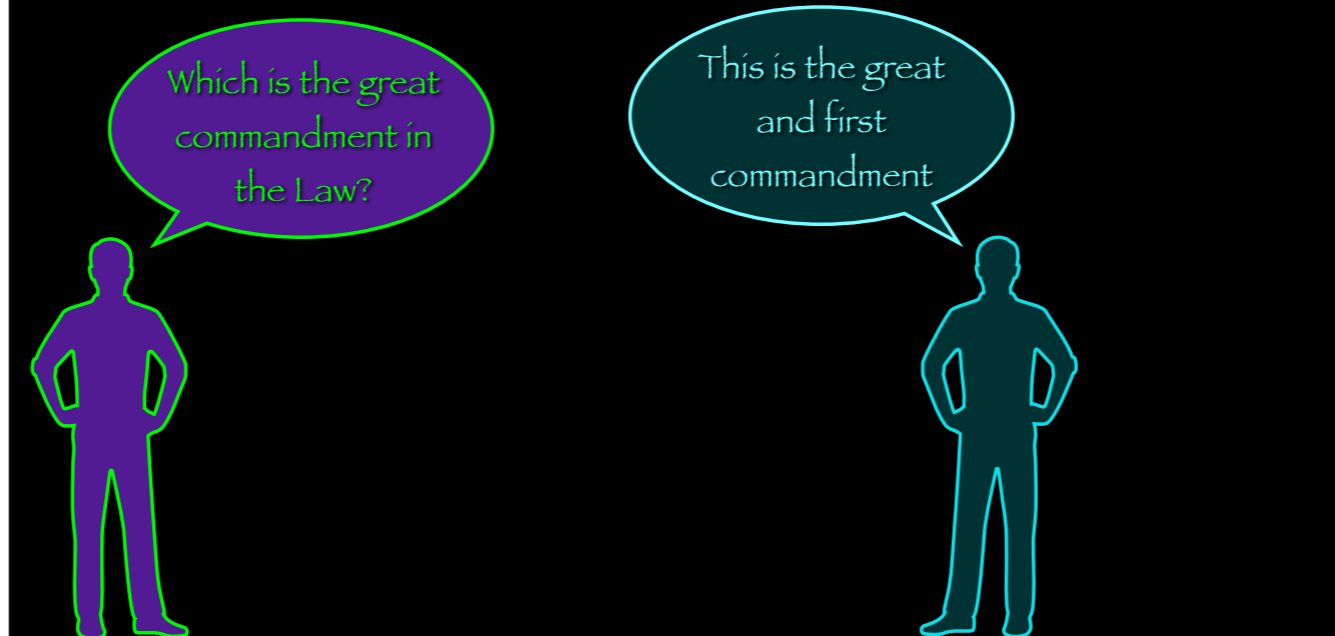
- Matthew 22:34-40 (ESV) 34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 “Teacher, which is **the great commandment in the Law?**”

Believe & Love



- Many would say: All the commandments are important, great, cannot be neglected.
  - James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.

Believe & Love



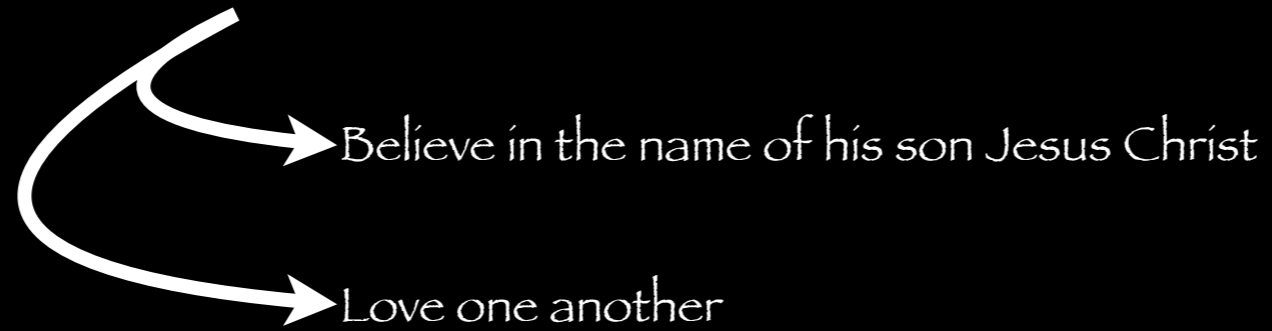
- Matthew 22:37 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 **This is the great and first commandment.** 39 And a **second is like it:** You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 **On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”**

Believe & Love



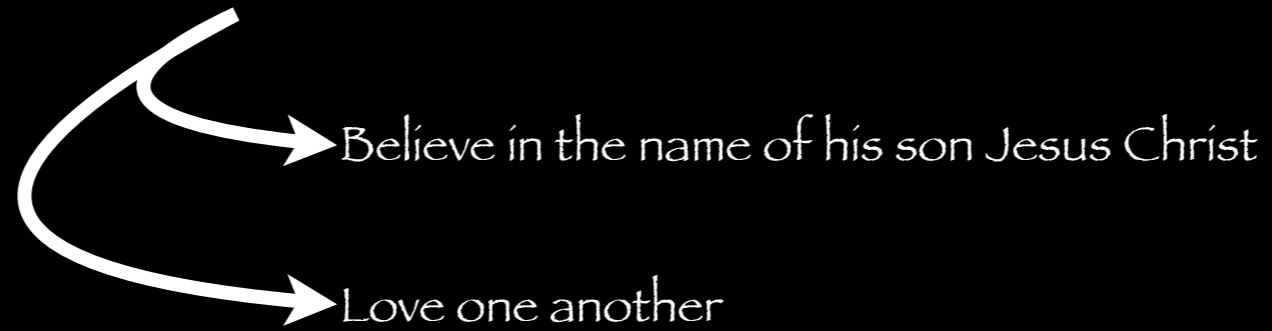
- Matthew 23:23-24 (ESV) 23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have **neglected the weightier matters of the law**: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. 24 You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

## His Commandment



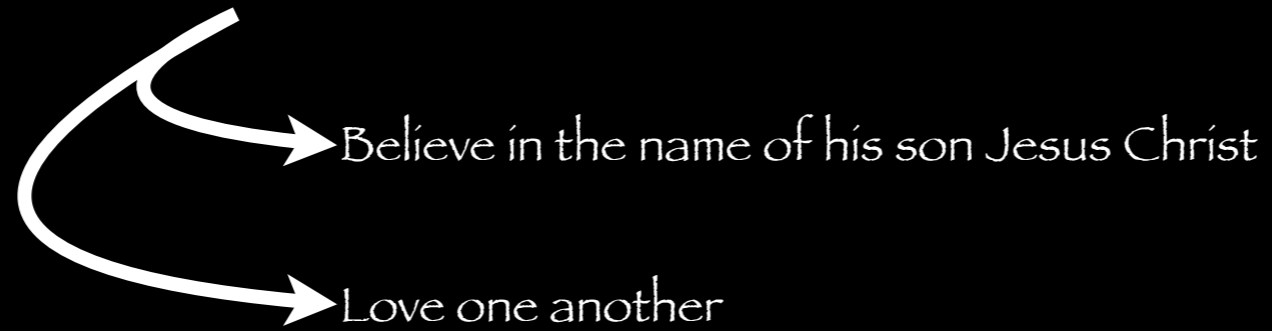
- We are reminded by John that we must not try to separate belief from love, nor love from belief.
- Yet we seem to have a tendency to do just that.
  - We will sometimes choose one or the other and decide that it is of primary importance.
    - Luther's teaching has been summarized as "faith only" for example.
    - Calvin: "grace only".
  - Some have so elevated "love" that nothing really matters

## His Commandment

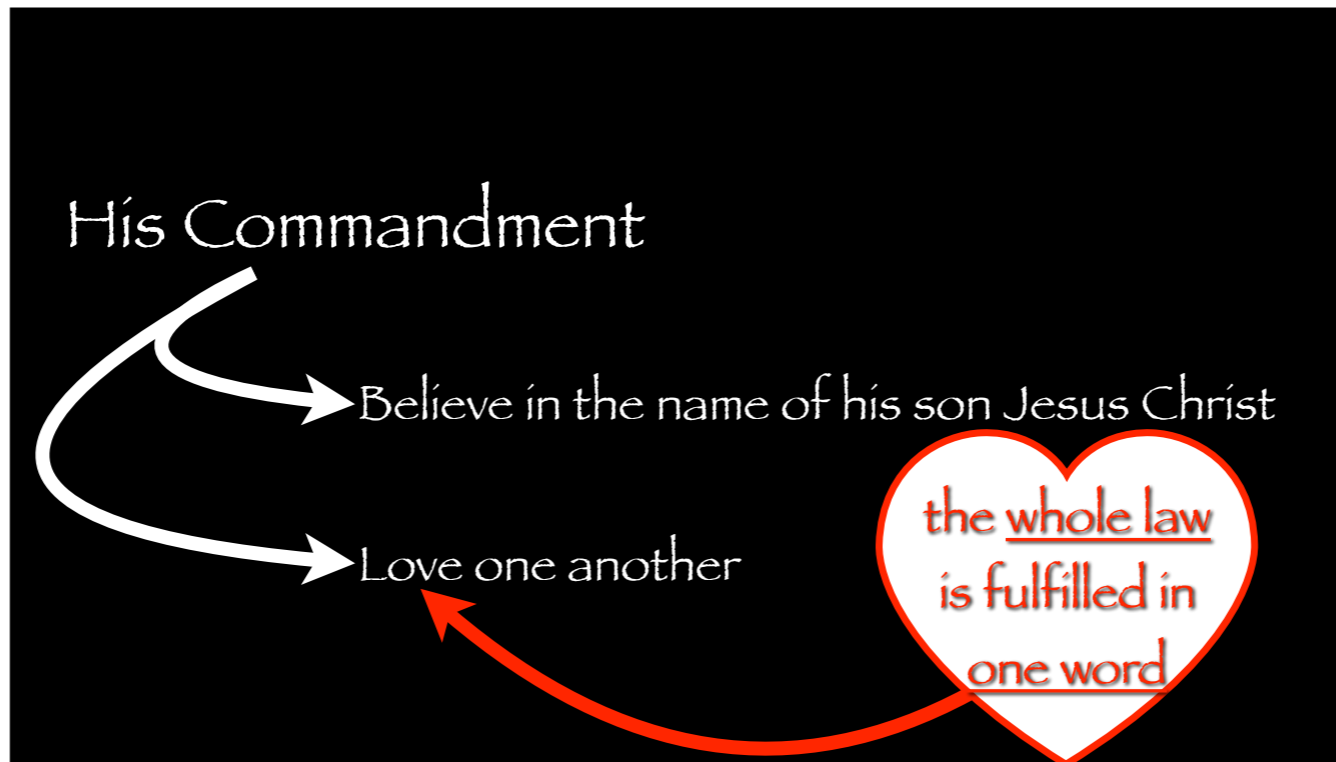


- John blends these two into one commandment.
  - Believing in Jesus is absolutely necessary for our salvation (we know!)
  - Loving one another is absolutely necessary for our salvation
    - Yet we sometimes, sadly, don't emphasize the need to love each other.

## His Commandment

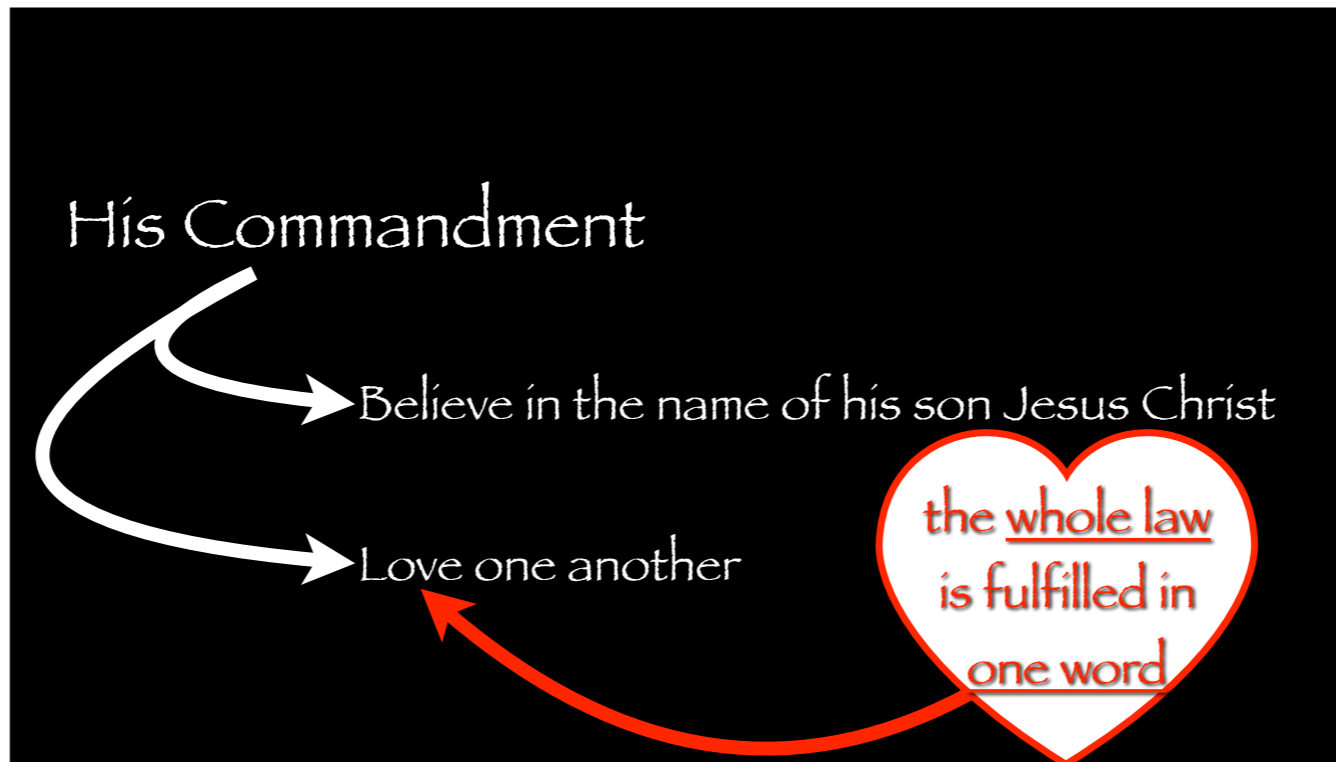


- Galatians 5:13-15 (ESV) 13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 **For the whole law is fulfilled in one word:** “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 15 But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.



- the whole law is fulfilled in one word
  - This is NOT a competition between belief and love.
  - And yet, from both Jesus and James: law is fulfilled by love.
- The antithesis is to bite and devour and consume one another.
  - This is not what we learned from Jesus





- Especially when we disagree about something.
- Romans 14, for example, where they disagreed about eating of meats.
- They hid behind “doctrinal” disagreements
- Justified **quarreling** with one another, **despising** one another, and **passing judgment** on one another
  - We often read this passage and shake our heads in dismay, for we would never do this on such trivial matters
  - except we do ... and often
- Romans 15:2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

Believe & Love

if I have all faith, so as to  
remove mountains, but  
have not love, I am nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:2

- 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 (ESV) 1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and **if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.** 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

if I have all faith, so as to  
remove mountains, but  
have not love, I am nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:2

- Faith in this context is probably talking about the spiritual gift of faith given through the Spirit.
- While that's probably not the same faith as John referred to ("saving" faith?), Paul certainly makes the same point.
- It may be more impressive in a way:
  - Even if I have the very special gift of faith, given by the Spirit of God
  - But don't have love
  - I am nothing.

Believe & Love

But be doers of the word, and not  
hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

James 1:22

- James 1:22-27 (ESV) 22 But be **doers** of the word, and not **hearers** only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 **But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts,** he will be blessed in his doing.

Believe & Love

But be doers of the word, and not  
hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

James 1:22

- The law is not just about rules for how I am to behave, or not to behave
- Law of liberty (again ... Galatians 5: called to freedom)
  - look into law of liberty
  - perseveres ... a doer who acts
    - Is this about showing love?
    - Consider the story of the good samaritan: those who knew the law, priest and levite didn't act.
      - Samaritan acted ... merciful, good, Love.

Believe & Love

Religion that is pure and undefiled  
before God the Father is this: to  
visit orphans and widows in their  
affliction, and to keep oneself  
unstained from the world.

James 1:27

- 26 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. 27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

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James 1:27

- What is pure and undefiled religion?
- When seeking a church to worship with, many have a pat question: is this a sound church?
  - Have you asked this question?
  - What is generally meant by it?
    - Correct positions on certain issues about worship (singing without instruments); money use; etc.
      - Why do we do this?
      - We've tended to focus primarily on doctrine.
    - (not that it doesn't have a place ... but it's not the only thing, nor the most important things)

Believe & Love

Religion that is pure and undefiled  
before God the Father is this: to  
visit orphans and widows in their  
affliction, and to keep oneself  
unstained from the world.

James 1:27

- Sound = healthy
  - If a church doesn't love one another, are they healthy? NO!
  - Must change our perspective to include the importance of us growing in love for one another as an aspect of being healthy.
- When James defines pure and undefiled religion: it's first about how we show love to our neighbors, especially in need.



Believe & Love

My brothers, show no partiality as  
you hold the faith in our Lord  
Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

James 2:1

- James 2:1-4 (ESV) 1 My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. 2 For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, 3 and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," 4 have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

Believe & Love

My brothers, show no partiality as  
you hold the faith in our Lord  
Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

James 2:1

- James provides a challenging example of this struggle we have with faith and love.
- Suppose you're at an assembly.
  - You're there because of your faith in Jesus, you know how important it is to sing, pray, read, commune.

Believe & Love

My brothers, show no partiality as  
you hold the faith in our Lord  
Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

James 2:1

- Suppose two visitors also show up.
  - Why do you suppose they are there? What assumptions do you make?
  - Why would we suppose that they are for any other reason than because of their belief in Jesus?
  - In this situation, though, we have different suppositions based on the way they are dressed (which also indicates social status): one is rich, the other is poor.
    - If James were writing today, he might have used racial differences, e.g.

My brothers, show no partiality as  
you hold the faith in our Lord  
Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

James 2:1

- James indicates that you treat one of these men with honor (because he is obviously rich), and the other with dishonor (because he is obviously poor).
  - partiality (respect of persons)
  - What James is looking at here is how exactly do we demonstrate our love for one another.
- While our “faith” has us at the right place at the right time,
  - Our love for one brother is a worldly love, currying the favor of one who is rich.
  - Our love for the other brother is just as base, for it dismisses (despises) him for being poor.

Believe & Love

Mercy triumphs over judgment.

James 2:13

- Thus begins a discussion of loving one another
  - James 2:8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.
  - James 2:9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.
- The challenge to us is obvious, whether with visitors or even among ourselves, am I showing partiality between brethren?
  - It may be about any number of things
  - What would others say of us?

Believe & Love

Mercy triumphs over judgment.

James 2:13

- 12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.
- Perhaps we can make a connection here.
  - What was it that separated the priest and the levite from the samaritan? He showed mercy.
  - Amazingly, James has made a connection between how we treat brethren and whether we show mercy.
  - The poor brother was not shown mercy, and so these brethren who showed partiality were just as bad as the priest and the levite in Jesus' parable.

Believe & Love

Mercy triumphs over judgment.

James 2:13

- Will you choose love or judgment?
  - Romans 14:4 Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.
  - (This judgment is putting one's self in the place of God, determining another's worth in God's eyes.)

Believe & Love

What good is it, my brothers, if  
someone says he has faith but  
does not have works?

James 2:14

- James 2:14-17 (ESV) 14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.



Believe & Love

What good is it, my brothers, if  
someone says he has faith but  
does not have works?

James 2:14

- Faith and Works ...
  - What “works” has James just been talking about? Partiality vs. mercy
  - What works here? Helping a brother in need (Mercy, Love)
- Faith and Love (by definition, love is an action)

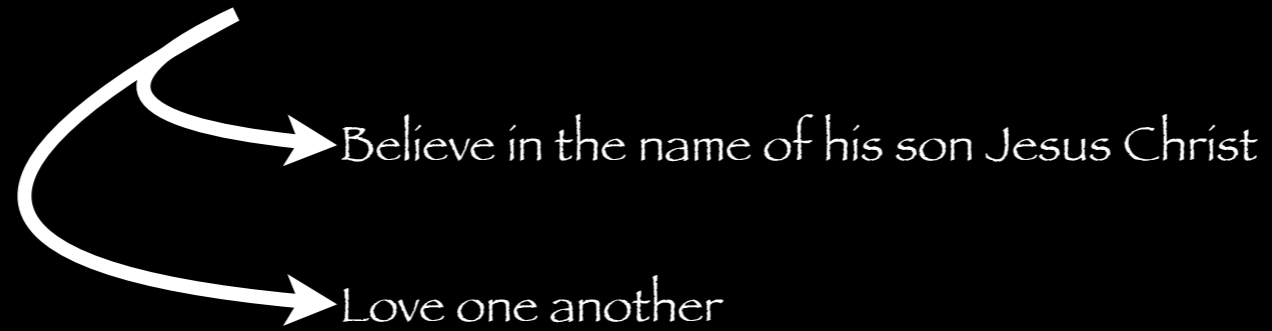
Believe & Love

So also faith by itself, if it does  
not have works, is dead.

James 2:17

- James 2:17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

## His Commandment



- Belief and Love
  - They must both exist within us
  - They are mutually dependent
- Don't deceive yourself
  - just because you adhere to all the right teachings is not enough
  - show your love for your brethren
    - today and this week

**We implore you on  
behalf of Christ,  
be reconciled to God.**

**2 Corinthians 5:20**

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One Another

#07

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## Believe and Love

1 John 3:23

Synopsis: John combines belief in Jesus and loving one another into one commandment, thus reminding us that both are necessary for salvation. Some have tended to so emphasize belief that love has been neglected. James helps reminds us of how our faith and loving one another blend into a beautiful picture of one who is striving to be like Jesus.

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**“Let all that you do be done with love.”**