**Is Love All That Matters ?**

**Review Of Al Maxey's 11-10-13 WVNN Radio Sermon**

Last Sunday at the 8:00 a.m. hour a lesson by Al Maxey of Alamagordo, NM was played. This morning’s program will be a review of that sermon.

Our brother Mr. Maxey read Matt 22:37-40 ("Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it , Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."). Maxey said this meant religious issues like instrumental music in worship and the number of containers in communion don't matter; all that matters is love. It is true multiple containers in the communion are authorized by the NT, but the fact that love should be the motivation for our obedience to God's law doesn't mean paying attention to what his law says doesn't matter. Quite to the contrary; the greater the love I had for my Dad, the greater became my attention to the details of his instructions to me.

Jesus quote here in Matt 22 would also apply to the NT law, but it was said in reference to the OT law. Once in the OT a man sinned by picking up sticks on the Sabbath in Num 15:32-36. Was it inconsequential because love is all that matters? No, God commanded Moses that the man should be stoned to death. Even though love was the guiding principle of service to God in the OT, the Israelites were still expected to obey God's law to the letter. The same would also be true under the NT, since on love hangs all the NT law also.

Do doctrinal matters affect our soul's eternal destiny? Evidently the apostle Paul thought so as he said in II Tim 2:17-18 "And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." See how teaching false doctrine about the resurrection was causing some to be lost even then?

When my friend Tommy Thrasher heard Maxey's "love is all that matters" mantra, he pointed out John 14:15,21,23-24. Let me read those passages - "15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.” So if love is important (and it is), then keeping God’s commandments is also important. “21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. 23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." Do you see how that the way we love God is by keeping his commandments; and if we don't keep his commandments, that proves we don't love God?

Maxey used passages like Gal 2:16 that say we are "not justified by the works of the law" to say that we are not under any law today, that we are under no legislation, regulation, or rules today. But what about I Cor 9:21 which says we are "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ"? And what about Gal 6:2 which says we are to quote "fulfil the law of Christ"? And let me read James 1:25 - "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Wouldn't that verse prove we are to be a doer of the law of liberty today? By the way, that verse shows the liberty or freedom we have in Christ is not a freedom to disregard God's NT instructions.

Since "sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4), wouldn't any verse telling us to be obedient to God imply there is a law to obey? Heb 5:9 tells us that Jesus is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Obey what? That would have to be God's law, right? Matt 7:21 reads " he that doeth the will of my Father ... shall enter into ... heaven." Do you see how God has a NT law, and he expects us to abide by the regulations, legislation, and rules of that law? Indeed, he says in I John 3:7 "he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."

Maxey accuses those who believe in strictly obeying God's word of being "legalists." A simple definition for "legalism" would be - "strict adherence to law." According to this definition, Jesus was a legalist, because he believed in strictly following God's law. About a still binding (at that time) old law, he said in Matt 5:19, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Remember Nadab and Abihu in Lev 10:1-2? They worshipped God by burning incense, but were destroyed by God, because they didn't worship exactly as God prescribed. It has been my experience that any time the charge of legalism is made, the accuser is not willing to follow God's law as completely and as accurately as those whom they are accusing. Contrary to popular opinion, we should be legalists. We should learn from Jesus, and Nadab and Abihu, that we must follow God's law completely and in every detail. So the next time you are called a legalist, consider it a compliment.

How could anybody think doctrinal differences don't matter after looking at II John verse 9? which says "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." So it turns out it is very important that we believe and teach the doctrine of Christ just precisely as he has revealed it. If we don't, we don't have God; we can't go to heaven.

And doesn't Matt 15:9 say that if we teach "for doctrines the commandments of men," our worship is vain, even if we love our fellow man?