



# Sunday Teaching Guide

Identity, Week 1

September 10, 2023

## Bible Texts

- Matthew 22:36-38
- Deuteronomy 6:4-5
- Psalm 34:18
- Proverbs 14:33
- Proverbs 4:23
- Luke 6:45
- Colossians 3:1-2, 5-6; 8; 12-14
- Romans 3:15
- Romans 10:9

## Important Terms

- SHEMA: This Hebrew word means "hear" and is used as the name of the prayer in Deuteronomy 6:4-5.
- LEVAV: This Hebrew word means "heart."

## Sermon Notes

- The SHEMA is a prayer that reminds that loving God with our hearts, soul, and strength will result in action, change, and a shift in how we live our lives. And we begin that shift and change with our hearts.
- The word LEVAV, which we translate as "heart", more than just a physical aspect of our being, the ancient people believed the heart to be the emotional, spiritual, and mental center of their lives.
- God of the universe aware of the emotional reality of our hearts, and he draws close to us and comforts us. The writers of scripture knew this emotional aspect of our hearts and showed how God, in his wonder and grace, meets us there.
- Other aspects of our hearts, spiritual and emotional aspects, are also present in scripture. For instance, Proverbs talks about how wisdom finds rest, lives in or finds a home in the heart of discerning, understanding, or intelligent people.
- In Luke, Jesus says that what's in our hearts impacts what we say, how we live, and what we do, which comes back to the essence of this prayer. If we're to live as people who love God with our hearts, what dwells in our hearts matters.
- Paul writes about how we sometimes have bad things in our hearts. He writes about how Jesus can help us to rid ourselves of such things. He writes that the peace of Christ should rule in our heart.
- Allowing Jesus to rule in our hearts means to follow after him -- to do the things that he said we should do. In this way, through Jesus, we can learn the new rhythms of grace that teach us to love God with all your heart.

## Reflection Questions

- What are some common sayings that you hear about the word "heart"? What is some common advice you hear about the word "heart"?
- Why do you think this sermon series begins with the heart? Why do you think the heart comes first?
- Do you think that the heart is more important than the brain? Are they both valuable in their own ways?
- How do you think wisdom finds a home in the hearts of discerning, understanding, or intelligent people?
- How would you explain to someone the importance of ridding your heart of bad things? What sort of effect does this have on a person's life?
- What do you think it means to have Jesus rule in your heart?
- Are you able to discern when people have Jesus rule in their hearts? What do their lives look like?
- What are some ways that you can help Jesus rule in your heart more? What acts do you have to take to make this so?

## Prayer for the Week

- Psalm 51:10-12: Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Amen.

## Additional Readings

- Jeremiah 29:13
- Proverbs 3:5-6
- 1 Samuel 16:7