

Love for the World

Matthew 22:36-40

Matthew 22:36-40, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

37 Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Loving God makes sense right? The with your heart, soul, and mind part makes it a little challenging, but we’ll come back to this concept later this summer.

Let’s look at that second commandment, love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus says all the law hangs on these 2 commandments. Both of them. This is nothing new, Jesus was just telling us what we see in:

Leviticus 19:18, “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”

So, this is a theme held throughout scripture. Why?

- I. Because God so loved...John 3:16!

But that is not all.

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Then Jesus gave us the Great Commission:

Matthew 28:19a, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations”

PEOPLE MATTER TO GOD! We are made in His image; this alone makes us valuable. And guess what, your neighbor matters to God.

- II. Loving our neighbor strengthens the fabric of our community!

Catch this, when families and neighborhoods are strong and healthy they require less government assistance. So, why is this important?

When we live out the values of Scripture, like loving our neighbors, we are living the way God designed us to live. There are less problems, nothing for manmade governments to do.

When society lives contrary to God’s plan what happens? Problems arise. Now, when problems arise, you can turn to God for the resolution of those problems, or you can turn to

government to resolve those problems. Do you see the problem here?

Who should you turn to? God or government? Because whoever you turn toward for help is who you give power too.

Believers, we are the ones called to humble ourselves and to repent turning to God, not the government. But even believers have been looking to government to solve the problems when we should be turning to God.

When we turn to government to solve our problems, who have we put into the seat of authority in our lives? Do you see how that works?

This is why Christianity and communism has never been able to work side by side. Communism takes the place of God, the place of authority in our lives that is reserved for God.

III. Who is your neighbor?

Do you remember how the parable of the Good Samaritan begins? Not the parable itself, but the conversation before Jesus tells the parable.

Jesus repeats the two great commandments here in Luke 10:27. Then the expert in the law asks Jesus, "who is my neighbor?"

Jesus answers by telling the story of the Good Samaritan. The wounded man was ignored by 2 travelers, but when the Samaritan came along, he had mercy on the man. He was the

one who was the neighbor to the wounded man. Not his fellow countrymen, but the Samaritan.

Who is your neighbor? Is the person sitting in front of you your neighbor? How about the person sitting behind you? How about the person living in the house next to you? How about the people you meet at the gas station or at the store? How about the wait staff at the restaurant?

Who is your neighbor?

IV. It fulfills the law!

Romans 13:8-10, "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

It's about love! It's about love! It's about love!

If we love someone, we aren't going to kill them, we aren't going to cause them to commit adultery, we aren't going to steal from them. Do we get this? It's about love!

James 2:8, "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right."

How can we show love?

1. Be helpful. Do small acts of service.

I was able to help my neighbors recently. They had asked Barb for a name of a handyman as they were having a plumbing issue. The next day I was outside and my neighbor came out to talk. I asked about their need for a handyman and she began telling me what was wrong with her toilet.

Now let me tell you something, I don't do plumbing. I have finished 2 basements in my day, but I don't do plumbing. But what she told me sounded like something I dealt with a couple times with our toilets. Guess what, I was able to fix their toilet. That is a small act of service that I could do. What can you do?

2. Show hospitality.

Introduce yourself, invite them for a meal or snacks around a fire.

3. Offer support in hard times.

You can pray, provide a meal, be an ear to listen.

4. Support the community.

Volunteer with local organizations. Be present in the community.

Now, let's bring it closer to home. If we are going to love our neighbors well, we need to love one another well.

This is where Satan likes to hit us. Just like he loves to pit husband against wife, Satan seeks to pit church members against one another. When he can cause waves in the church, he completely neutralizes the witness of the church.

Remember that warning?

1 Peter 5:8-9, "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings."

So, how does Satan do this in the church?

First, leadership is going to disappoint you. It might even be....Mike, you know, youth pastors. It might even be....an elder, who are they anyways? It might even be....me.

Let me be real with you for a moment. I'm just as big a sinner as, well, you. Maybe even bigger. The bible says that all have fallen short of the glory of God and well, I'm in the all.

If and when you see this you can do one of two things. One, you can bring it to my attention. If you do I make you this promise: I will thank you for bringing it to my attention and I will own it. This gives me the opportunity to repent and for us to preserve our relationship.

Or you can go and tell others about my sin or my offense. (Tell MGEFC staff story.)

But what does that do? I'm not confronted so I miss out on repenting. Our relationship is hurt and by telling others now my relationship with them is hurt.

Now, flip the script. What if I see you sin, what should I do? Should I tell everyone we both know about it? Should I only

tell my faithful prayer partner? I tell them everything, so I should tell them right? What does Scripture say I should do?

Go to that person...alone! That's what Scripture says, but unfortunately too often people feel they need to discuss it with others to "get good advice." The Bible already told you what to do. Go to them alone, don't talk to anyone else unless they don't repent.

Even more unfortunate, I believe some enjoy going to others to gather support for their hurt feelings in order to get support for their side of the broken relationship. This is why it happens, but let's be crystal clear about this. It is a violation of Scripture to do it that way.

Not only are we to go to that person alone, we are to go immediately. Don't let it fester because the longer it festers the greater the gap between the two of you grows. The greater the hurt. And until it's resolved, we look at everything they do through a lens of hurt. Is that fair?

How many times have you been hurt by a friend's words or actions to only discover that it was a misunderstanding or a misinterpretation? This is normal in the real world.

When we are hurt, we have a choice. How will we deal with it. You can do as the Bible teaches, deal with it one on one immediately bringing restoration and understanding to the relationship. Or you can choose to be offended.

You see, when you are the offended it gives you power, superiority over the other person. And honestly, that is all some people want, but it's at the cost of the relationship.

Some people like to take their badge of offence and share it with everyone pitting brother against brother, sister against sister. But this is not God's way.

If we love one another, if we love our neighbor we will obey God. Oh, one more thing, if we love God we will obey His commands.

So, let's make it real. Who offended you? Whose sin have you witnessed? Whose humanity have you found yourself judge over? Whose name is in your head? You have that name?

OK, what are you going to do about it? You may say to me, "yes, they offended me, but I haven't told anyone about it. I'm not seeking gain in this broken relationship." Great, what are you going to do about it?

If we say we love God, but we ignore His commandments we lie. So, if you say you love God show me, show me how you will love your neighbor, show me how you will love one another.

Some may even say, "I went to them. But the relationship is still broken." Did they ask for forgiveness? If they did and you feel the relationship is still broken, have you forgiven them? If not, why?

If they didn't ask forgiveness the Bible says that we are then to get an elder to go with you. Did you do that? If not, you are the one in violation of Scripture. How should you be judged?

Some of you think 'this sermons about you, don't you, don't you, don't you?'