

Steve Boul

11/13/22 Encounter – Love your Neighbor

Introduction – Questions

Questions start conversations. Is a hot dog a sandwich? Who is the GOAT?

Oxford comma, or no? Floppy or crispy bacon? Pronounce words. Taylor Swift's best song?

Questions can reveal what we believe. Math – Axiom of choice

2000 years ago in Jesus time. What is the greatest commandment?

613 commands. 248 positive. 365 negative.

No surprise that this is posed to Jesus

A lawyer asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 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. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 22:35-40

Matthew exposition

Quick background. Lawyer – expert (not trial)

The man is doing important work. Then, as now, the scriptures were quoted and misquoted by anyone who wanted divine authority for his or her program.

The stakes are too high for an untested Messiah. We don't want to risk our lives on what may turn out to be a fraud.

Jesus answers with the command to LOVE

Not a new topic for Jesus. Sermon on the mount. Doesn't go back to his material.

Deut 6:5 part of the Shema (4-9), twice a day.

"Hear O Israel. The Lord is our God. The Lord alone (is one) ... Love the"

Lev 19:18 is love your neighbor

His answer ends the discussion. Jesus passes the test talking about love.

Hard to define. Understood not as simply an emotional attachment, there was always an action

But to help us from reducing it to simply a to-do list NT Wright helps us with the context.

What Jesus says here about loving God, and loving one another, only makes sense when we set it within Matthew's larger gospel picture, of Jesus dying for the sins of the world, and rising again with the message of new life. That's when these commandments begin to come into their own: when they are seen not as orders to be obeyed in our own strength, but as invitations and promises to a new way of life in which, bit by bit, hatred and pride can be left behind and love can become a reality."

NT Wright (with picture)

Luke exposition

Great if we could simply receive the invitation

Look within us we see this isn't the case

How do we proceed?

Story ends here in Matthew, but there is a similar story in Luke starting in chapter 10:25 that doesn't end here and can help us.

Jesus and a lawyer again

Lawyer starts with a different question. Jesus turns it around. Lawyer's answer is exactly what Jesus said in Matthew. Jesus then replies "go and do"

Lawyer passed the test. But he doesn't leave it there, in verse 29 we read "But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?""

The commands that were meant to include had been used to exclude and neighbor was narrowed

Is the lawyer seeking the minimum for obedience – connect for youth etc.

Luke 10:30-37

Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

Luke 10:30-37

Real places and circumstances in the story

Lawyer has to be feeling uncomfortable. His people are not helping.

Expectation was an Israelite lay person. That was the progression. An anti-clerical story.

Introduction of Samaritan would blow his mind

Story was clear the lawyer got it

The priest (don't)

Nothing excuses lovelessness

Before we consider the Samaritan and what we do

The man (be)

More about who we are, can we see ourselves in the man?

Rebel soldiers as good Samaritans article and Jean Claude story

NT Wright brings the importance into focus

Can you recognize the hated Samaritan as your neighbor? If you can't, you might be left for dead.

Were there people who left at the mention of Samaritans?

Do we do this, with any group (created in the image of God)?

The Samaritan (do)

"Moved with compassion" irrespective of creed etc.

Gave up his comfort (clothes/provisions/ride/finances/time)

He shared in the man's peril. He enters into a relationship where the chance of extortion is high.

Innkeepers were also not of the highest repute.

Eugene Peterson sums up the interaction like this

Jesus in this story puts a full stop for all time to all the variations on the question, "Who is my neighbor?" from that time and right down to the present, the question is, "Will I be a neighbor?".

Eugene Peterson (with picture)

Response

Vital message for our time. Conference.

I am not particularly concerned that the NAE (National Association of Evangelicals) keeps the E part. I am concerned for the substance of what it means to be a follower of Jesus in this world at this time.

Walter Kim (with picture)

The work and energy could be used loving our neighbors. Just be gospel people. Be people who are going to invest in deep spiritual, economic, and physical solidarity, as the church is meant to do. They can call you whatever they want, but if I am living a life and bearing witness to the kingdom of God, I don't care what you call me, because that is what the Lord has called us to do.

Malcolm Foley (with picture)

This is what the Samaritan did. Spiritual – neighbor. Economic – gave. Physical – space.

Economic response (band returns during this portion)

Giving. About us and our hearts. Not God and his needs. Sacrificial/Cheerful.

Regular. Each week. "Tithes and offerings". Special offering.

Community Compassion to Neighbor and Nations. Line up our values.

2 things. Regular giving will go to both, and we will have ability to respond to needs.

\$100K.

How to. Take an envelope and pray. Amount. % (easy math). Bonus at work. Portion/match Christmas.

We are curious. Did the Bible scholar become a neighbor and "go and do" the love command that he knew so well we don't get an answer to that question. We only get to know our own responses and our own stories.

Eugene Peterson (with picture)

Ministry time

Before prayer requests slide

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

3-fold love command. Where do you need to love?