

Love Your Neighbor As Yourself

Part Two: "Why"

Jared continued his discussion of the command to "love your neighbor as yourself". He began with **Matthew 22:34-40**:

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Our teenagers came up and helped illustrate this by hanging the ten commandments on a string supported at each end by two of them representing "Love God" and "Love Others".

Leviticus 19 has another collection of the commandments of God, but in **verse 18**, we see the command to which Jesus refers, tucked in a larger passage of how to treat your neighbors:

Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

These commands were more than a list of regulations for God's people; they were a holy commission.

Exodus 19: 5-6

*"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a **kingdom of priests** and a **holy nation**.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."*

You can see the mission of the Israelites laid out for them by God. They are to represent God to the people around me. Like priests, they are to be an intercessor for the nations to see and to know God. This is clearly a role that the church now has been given, as the continuing presence of God's Son in the flesh. Look at what Peter says to the church in his first letter:

I Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen people, a **royal priesthood**, a **holy nation**, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

How does loving our neighbor make us intercessors for God?

How can you live into this call this week?

Luke 10 includes the Parable of the Good Samaritan, but before that, Jesus asks an expert in the Law to answer the same question Jesus has answered in the other accounts about the "Greatest Commandment". Then we see the familiar story of the Jericho road, which was known as a

dangerous place to travel. Robbers and thieves were common. When we think about it, our instinct might be to try to “fix the road”. Unfortunately, there are far too many dangerous roads, and we lack the capacity to make them all safe. Because of this, we need a different strategy.

When Jared takes our youth places, he often uses the “buddy system”. It is an effective way of helping ensure that our kids stay safe and accounted for. This is as true for adults in this world as for our children. We need a buddy when traveling through this life. The road is still dangerous, no matter our age.

Who are your buddies?

How can you be a buddy for another traveler this week?