

Wednesday, June 10th Bible Study Notes
Cedarville United Presbyterian Church Facebook Live
Fruit of the Spirit Series: Love
Text: Matthew 22:34-40

³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵ and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.

³⁶ “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷ 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.” ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Summer Series: Fruit of the Spirit

- Sunday’s passage – Romans 8:28-39, nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ our Lord
- What does it mean to love God, love our neighbor, love our enemy?
- Tonight – same theme of love, but looking at what does it mean to love ourselves as well?

Tonight’s Passage:

- Beginning in verse 15 of this chapter, the Pharisees and Sadducees were trying to trap Jesus. At this point in the gospel, the religious leaders just wanted Jesus gone. He had a following, it was increasing, they didn’t like it.
- First the Pharisees and the Herodians together sent a delegation to try to trick Jesus. Their question was, “Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”
- Then the Sadducees came. The Sadducees believed there is no resurrection and were trying to make the resurrection appear ridiculous.
- And then our passage for today begins, “When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.” Okay, now we’re really going to get him, they thought. So they asked, “Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”
- Jesus’ reply summarized the entire Ten Commandments. He replied that the greatest commandment is to love God with everything we have...our heart, soul, and mind. He added that the second commandment is to love one’s neighbor as oneself. The commandment to love God summarized the first five commandments, and the commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves summarized the last five.

Unconditional And Conditional Love

- We all struggle at times with believing that we are good enough
- Think about times in your life when you really messed up...do you still think back and say, “I can’t believe I did that?” We have a hard time letting ourselves off the hook, and therefore we think that God can’t possibly love us the way we are.

- God does love us unconditionally, but we struggle to do that with each other. We have sin in us, so mixed with our love will be expectations of others that they may not meet, and mixed with people's love for us will be those expectations we may not meet.
- We've all experienced the concept that we don't measure up. We need to be fixed. We need to be different. In order to be acceptable.
- Who we are is enough. Who we are is holy and dearly loved. Who we are is perfect in God's eyes...because He created us in His image. And He, as our Creator, gets to tell us who we are.

Loving Ourselves Isn't Selfish

- We talk a lot about what it means to love God and others. But we don't talk a lot about how to love ourselves. *Love your neighbor as yourself.* There is a reason Jesus said "as yourself." We are as important as our neighbor.
- I remember in Sunday school that we were taught to think of ourselves last. Even the JOY prayer—JOY stands for Jesus, Others, You.
- We don't want to fall into the trap of pride, thinking too highly of ourselves. It's important that we don't see ourselves as *better* than other people.
- But sometimes we confuse humility and false humility. True humility is seeing ourselves as we are—loved by God, sinners who have been saved by grace, not better than others. False humility is where we put ourselves down thinking it's the Biblical thing to do. We think we're less than others, that we're not as worthy as others.
- We are called to bear one another's burdens...that means we let others bear our burdens sometimes, rather than shooing them away because we feel unworthy of help. We are called to love ourselves as much as we love our neighbor. To treat ourselves as well as we would our neighbor.
- Are we willing to say no when saying yes would overextend us? If we serve because we feel Christ calling us to do it, either joyfully or sacrificially, that's one thing. If we do it because we're afraid that God will be mad at us if we don't, or people will judge us if we're not there, or we feel guilty when we're not busy, then that's a problem.
- Are we caring for our bodies, our souls, our minds? How are we practicing self-care?

Homework:

- As we continue through this week, think of ways to respect and care for yourself as much as you do your neighbor.
- Our goal is not to become selfish, but to make sure we nourish ourselves the way God intended.
- What are ways you are letting God nourish your soul?