

We Are Easton

Four Values to Shape Our Church Culture

Love God & Others

Series Overview

In this series, we're looking at the four key values that shape who we are, and who we aspire to be, as a church. At Easton, we aim to (1) love God & others, (2) grow together, (3) serve one another, and (4) share (our story) with others.

Sermon Introduction

To be the people God has called us and created us to be, starts with loving him. But loving God never stops with God. Love for God should inevitably move us to love others.

Passage: Matthew 22:34-40 (NIV)

Matt. 22:34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.

Matt. 22:35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

Matt. 22:36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Matt. 22:37 Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

Matt. 22:38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

Matt. 22:39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Matt. 22:40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

1. Read the passage. What stood out to you? Was there anything that you found surprising or confusing?
2. What do you think the Pharisees' motive was for testing Jesus? Why wouldn't the Pharisees and other religious leaders welcome someone who was obviously, if nothing else, a gifted teacher (cf. Matt. 7:28; 13:54)?
3. V. 39 says that loving one's neighbor is somehow "like" the first commandment to love God. How is loving others similar to loving God? What do they have in common?

4. By pairing these two commandments together, Jesus seems to be saying that, in some way, it's impossible to separate them. Do you think it's possible to love God without loving people? Do you think it's possible to love people without loving God? Why or why not?
5. Jesus assumes that how we love ourselves should serve as a template for how we love other people. What does it mean to have a healthy love for yourself?
6. Do you think it's possible to have a healthy relationship with God or others if you hate or despise yourself? Do you think God ever wants you to hate yourself?
7. How should your relationship with God change how you view yourself? How should it change your view of other people?

Prayer

Often a position of submission helps us physically connect with the spiritual reality of meeting God. A posture of kneeling with open hands can demonstrate our willingness to submit to God's power.

- Give God praise for loving you even in times when you felt you weren't worth loving.
- Confide in him if there have been times when you've struggled to love yourself.
- Thank him that his affection for you isn't based on your performance or perfection, but upon his love for you as his child.
- Ask him to help you love others knowing that you are completely and utterly loved.