

Take Away – Love Yourself in Light of Eternity

Text: Mark 12: 28 - 31

Date: 12-4-22



With your group...

Answer each of the following questions prompted by the text and/or today's sermon.

1. We are called to love our neighbor. Why is it impossible to love our neighbor if we do not love ourselves? How can making sure you are taking care of yourself mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually be an act of love for God and others?
2. Is it a “good” or “bad” thing to love yourself?
3. How does making comparisons with others detrimental to our loving others?
4. React to: “We don’t love God as we ought...therefore, we don’t love others as we ought...and all of this flows from the fact we don’t love ourselves as we ought.”
5. We learned about the *ABC’s of Christian self-love*: Accept Mistakes, Build Boundaries, and Center on the words, works, and ways of Christ.
 - a) Does accepting mistakes equate to condoning sin? Discuss.
 - b) What are ways that we can stay connected to others yet build boundaries between them and us?
 - c) How can we center on the words, works and ways of Christ?
6. How would you define “loving God?” How can you show love to God whom you cannot see?
7. What does with “all your heart, all your soul, all your strength” mean? Is there any difference between these three things? Why is it repeated three times?
8. Read Mark 12: 32 – 34. These verses capture Jesus and the Scribes follow up discussion to his initial question about what the greatest commandment is.
 - a) Do you think the scribe who questioned Jesus was trying to test/challenge Jesus like the others? Why or why not?
 - b) What does this interchange show us about his motivation for the questions he had for Jesus?
 - c) What does it mean that the scribe was “not far from the kingdom of God”?
 - d) What implications does this have for our asking Jesus questions?

Small Group Leader – Answers

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1. We are called to love our neighbor. Why is it impossible to love our neighbor if we do not love ourselves? How can making sure you are taking care of yourself mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually be an act of love for God and others?
2. Is it a "good" or "bad" thing to love yourself?
Because of God's infinite worth He has given to us in our baptism. God loves you with everything that He has. He created your body and your mind to be a stand-alone work of art.
3. How does making comparisons with others detrimental to our loving others?
Imposter syndrome is obviously not self-love in light of eternity. The other extreme is narcissism. Narcissism is on the rise in America. How could it not be when we're so infatuated with our own face?
4. React to: "We don't love God as we ought...therefore, we don't love others as we ought...and all of this flows from the fact we don't love ourselves as we ought."
Jesus loves you. We love God and others because Jesus first loved us. God loves you with everything that He has. His love is unconditional and we cannot reciprocate. Jesus loved the Father, others and self perfectly for you.
5. We learned about the *ABC's of Christian self-love*: Accept Mistakes, Build Boundaries, and Center on the words, works, and ways of Christ.
 - a) Does accepting mistakes equate to condoning sin? Discuss.
You will sin. You will fall short of God's expectation. This is why Jesus came. Quickly confess your sin. Do not hide from it. You are a work in progress, growing up more and more into the image of your Head, Jesus.
 - b) What are ways that we can stay connected to others yet build boundaries between them and us?
Admit you need connection to other people. And...differentiate yourself through statements like, "I cannot be God for you. Only God can."
 - c) How can we center on the words, works and ways of Christ?
Read and reflect on the affirmations that God has spoken over us in Scripture, Baptism, and Communion.

6. How would you define “loving God?” How can you show love to God whom you cannot see?
Answers vary. Be prepared to give your own responses.
7. What does with “all your heart, all your soul, all your strength” mean? Is there any difference between these three things? Why is it repeated three times?
We love God with all our heart when we love Him exclusively, Him and Him alone. We love God with all our soul when we find our satisfaction in Him more than any other person or thing. We love God with all our mind when we make decisions with our free will that align with God’s will. We love God with all our strength when we persevere in the face of every trial through the Holy Spirit’s power.
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