

Open your Bibles to Matthew 22:36-40. That's where we'll begin.

- We're continuing our study of Evangelism.
- And this morning we'll be considering Love for Our Neighbors as a motive for evangelism.

As I said last week, fear is the major reason why most Christians don't evangelize.

- Fear of what others might think.
- Fear of not knowing what to say.
- Fear of getting in trouble at work.
- Fear of losing a friendship.
- Fear of violence from strangers.
- Fear of being ridiculed.
- People have many excuses for why they don't evangelize. And most come down to fear.

But, as 1 John 4:18 says, "...perfect love casts out fear."

- Love overcomes fear. Love conquers fear.
- So we need to be motivated by love, or we'll never get past our fears (however small and silly they might be).

Last week we considered how love for God is the primary motive for evangelism.

- Love for Him leads to obedience to His commands, a

desire to worship Him, a desire to see Him worshipped, and a desire to see Christ receive His reward/People.

- Love for God is FIRST in everything.
- Love for God will overcome our fears in evangelism because we want to see Him glorified.

But God gives us other motivations, too.

- Love for God is the primary motivation for evangelism.
- But love for neighbor is second.

Brothers and sisters, love desires the object loved to be kept from harm.

- And the facts are that our unbelieving neighbors are in harm's way.
- They're headed to Hell. And that's where they'll end up unless they repent and believe on Christ.
- And they can't believe unless someone tells them about Christ and calls them to repentance.
- So if we love our fellow men at all, we must evangelize.

This sermon is incredibly simple.

- And it's incredibly somber and heavy.
- It's stuff you've heard before. But sadly, I have to assume, hasn't penetrated many of our hearts.
- And I say that because of the self-confessed lack of

evangelism in many of us.

- But with God's blessing, this sermon will stir up our hearts to love our neighbors as we consider their eternal destiny without Christ and the only way for them to be saved.

- So may God bless the preaching of His Word.

At this time, I'll pray, and then we'll begin.

(PRAY)

Our Heavenly Father,

- Have mercy on us now and open our minds and hearts to understand and believe your Word.*

- Break our stony hearts and teach us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.*

- Teach us to show mercy by preaching the Gospel to the world.*

- Move our hearts to do the work. And grant us repentance for our apathy toward the souls of our fellow image-bearers.*

- Work in us today and glorify yourself as you teach us how to love.*

- We ask these things in Jesus' Name and for His sake.*

- Amen.*

1.) Our Lord Jesus was once asked a question about the Law of God.

- Matthew 22:36-40 tells us of the exchange:

- “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.’”

- These two commandments summarize the entire Moral Law of God: Love God with everything you have. And love your neighbor as you love yourself.

- If you keep these commandments, you will obey God in every single way.

Now, catch the order: Loving God is FIRST. Loving your neighbor is SECOND.

- The command to love your neighbor is actually predicated on love for God.

- You love your neighbor BECAUSE you love God.

- IF you love God, THEN you’ll love your neighbor.

Why?

- Because the God whom you love, whom you desire to please, COMMANDS you to love your neighbor.

- And it's your joy to honor and obey Him.
- So because we love God, we love our fellow man.

And if we love our neighbor, we will do toward him all that God commands of us.

•This is why the Apostle Paul could say this in Romans 13:8-10:

•“Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Just think about that for a second:

•If you love your neighbor, you won't commit adultery with his wife, but will instead seek to protect and strengthen his marriage.

•If you love your neighbor, you won't murder or hate him, but will instead seek to protect his life and show him kindness however you can.

•If you love your neighbor, you won't steal from him, but will protect his property and be generous to him if he's in need.

•If you love your neighbor, you won't covet his stuff or

be envious toward him, but will be glad for how God has blessed him.

LOVE is the motivation behind every good thing we do toward are neighbors.

- If we love them, we'll do every good for them that we can.

Now, just in case you've forgotten, let me remind you who your neighbor is.

- Jesus was once asked, "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29)

- Jesus replied by telling the Parable of the Good Samaritan. (Luke 10:30-37)

- In that Parable, Jesus taught us that whoever we come into contact with IS OUR NEIGHBOR.

- Whoever God has providentially put in your life, whether long-term or short-term. Whoever you rub shoulders with, as well as your circle of people.

- Anyone you see IN NEED is your neighbor.

- Whoever you can help is your neighbor.

- Their race, gender, age, background, income, style, past sins, whatever DO NOT MATTER.

- If they're in your life, they're your neighbor. And you're commanded to love them.

And let me remind you that our Lord doesn't say

to generically love your neighbor.

•He says, “You shall love your neighbor AS
YOURSELF.”

•Those two words make all the difference in the world, don't they?

•You don't show a small amount of love. You don't just “do no harm.”

•You are to love your neighbor the same way that you love yourself.

•However you care for yourself is how you care for your neighbor.

•You care about your needs. So you care about your neighbor's too.

•God commands us to take our neighbors into our hearts. To take on their needs as if they were our own and do whatever we can to meet them.

Now, when you hear “love your neighbor as you love yourself” you probably think of material, earthly needs.

•If you see a hungry man, you should feed him.

•If you see a naked man, you should clothe him.

•You should seek to show kindness toward all and treat others the way you'd want to be treated in daily interactions.

•That's what usually comes to mind.

•And that's right and good. I don't want to minimize

that.

BUT, don't we love ourselves more deeply than that?

- Don't we have needs beyond the material world?
- Hear me: Don't you care about your own soul?
- I know you do. That's why you're here.

And aren't spiritual needs infinitely more important than earthly ones?

- After all, earthly needs are temporary. Nothing in this world, in its current state, lasts forever.
- But spiritual needs have to do with eternal matters. They're infinitely more weighty.

Brothers and sisters, if we're going to love our neighbors as we love ourselves, we must care about their souls.

- We must be concerned about their eternal destinies, whether they'll spend eternity in Heaven or Hell.
- If we're going to love them like we love ourselves, we **MUST** desire their salvation.
- Anything less falls **FAR SHORT** of how we love ourselves.

If we love others AT ALL, then we care about this.

- If we have any love AT ALL, we want our fellow men

to be saved.

- The spiritual state of our unbelieving neighbors ought to **BREAK OUR HEARTS** to pieces.

- Our blood ought to be chilled at the thought of the state of their souls.

- We ought to weep and mourn as we consider their eternal destiny without Christ.

- Love, even the smallest bit of love, ought to make us concerned to the highest degree for their souls.

2.) Let me remind of the spiritual condition of every unbeliever you've ever met.

- Please hear me: I'm talking about your children who haven't yet come to faith in Christ.

- I'm talking about your wayward children who have abandoned the Faith of their youth.

- Your parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews.

- Your coworkers, friends, and acquaintances.

- The sweet old lady down the street and the stranger in the park.

- ALL OF THEM ARE SINNERS.**

And that is NOT a small thing.

- Every one of them is in Adam. And in Adam, all die.

- Every one of them is in rebellion against God. Bound in sin and blind to truth.

- They all hate God. They break His holy Law with every breath they take.

- There is no good in them. Not really. In a worldly sense, some of them are alright. But in God's sight, there is no good in them whatsoever.

- Every breath is a blasphemy. Every thought is only evil continually.

- Their minds are set against God. Their hearts are far from Him. And their words and actions display it.

- They are His enemies. And He counts them as such.

They are guilty of sin.

- And, being found guilty, they will be condemned.

- “...it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment...” (Hebrews 9:27)

- “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”

(2 Corinthians 5:10)

- There is coming a day when every unbeliever you've ever met will stand before God and His Christ in judgment.

- And on that day, “every mouth [will] be stopped, and the whole world [will] be held accountable to God.”

(Romans 3:19)

- They will be without excuse. And they will admit their guilt before Him.

And God will judge them according to His Law.

- He will judge them perfectly. There is no unrighteousness in Him.
- The wages of sin is death. Eternal death. And He will make each one to receive what they've earned.
- The Divine Judge will render the verdict.
- And what will be the greatest day of our lives will be the worst day for them. And only the beginning of their terror and suffering.

My dear friends, our unbelieving neighbors are currently living under the wrath and curse of God for their sins.

- His judgment hangs above their head like a sword, ready to fall at any moment.
- They're but an instant away from death and condemnation.
- They are "separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promises, having no hope and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2:12)
- They are HOPELESS because they are without God, without Christ, and in their sins.
- And what is true of them now will follow them into eternity.

Christian, does your heart not break?!

- Do you not fear for them?
- Do you not see yourself in them? This was once you!

3.) Brothers and sisters, let me say the awful truth as clearly as I can: They're going to go to Hell.

- Hell is the eternal destiny of everyone who dies in their sins.
- Let me say it again: Your unbelieving neighbors are going to go to Hell.

I'm going to read some Scripture about Hell now.

- I beg you, please listen closely.
- Listen, so that your heart might be stirred up with compassion and pity and love for your neighbor.

2 Thessalonians 1:9

“They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might...”

Matthew 25:41

“Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

Matthew 8:12

They “will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Matthew 13:41-42

“The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His Kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Mark 9:47-48

“...hell, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”

Revelation 14:11

“And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night...”

These descriptions are horrible. But they're true.

- A place of eternal burnings. Pain beyond explanation.
- A place where the gnawing worm of conscience accuses forever.
- A place of utter darkness. Complete loneliness and desperation.
- A place of eternal weeping. Feeling the unmitigated weight of guilt and sin, fully seen in the light of God's perfection.

- A place of remorse and hatred of self for shunning the light of God's truth.

- A joyless place. Not one ounce of God's grace is found there. Only His wrath and hatred.

- A place of no rest. Nothing to break the ongoing misery or dull the pain.

- Eternal suffering in both body and soul await those who die in their sins.

Brothers and sisters, do you believe the Scriptures?

- Do you believe such a place exists?

- You must, if you're a Christian.

- Our Lord Jesus spoke about this awful place more than anyone else in the whole Book of God.

- Don't turn your eye away from this. Look this awful truth dead in the face and reckon with it!

Our religion isn't a joke! Our God isn't playing games.

- He is deadly serious about sin and sinners.

- His eye will not spare in the day of judgment.

- The one who dies without Christ will receive everything we've just read.

Friends, when we evangelize, we're not trying to get more people to come to our church services.

- We're not trying to get money.
- We're not trying to make bad people good.
- We're trying to keep people from this!

This is where our unbelieving neighbors are headed.

- And there is no escape.
- Divine Justice shuts the gate. And Omnipotence closes the lock.
- Forever. No rest. No breaks. No peace. Forever.

WE CANNOT FATHOM THIS.

•My words fail to convey what grabs my heart as I read texts like this.

Christian, does this not bother you?

- When you consider these things, does your heart not pity the unbeliever?
- Surely, if you have any love at all, this moves you.

4.) And we know that the only One who can save our fellow men from this horrible fate is JESUS CHRIST.

- We know that there is no other Savior.
- No other way to be forgiven for sins.
- No other way to be made righteous in God's sight.
- No other hope for sinners.

God's Word says, "For there is one God, and there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time." (1 Timothy 2:5-6)

•And again, "...there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

•And again, "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" (John 14:6)

•Christ alone can save our neighbors.

**Jesus Christ alone is truly God and truly man.
Able to save because He is God. Able to represent
sinful men to God because He is a man.**

•Christ alone has rendered perfect obedience to God on behalf of His People, that they might receive His righteousness and be accepted by God.

•Christ alone has suffered for the sins of His People, bearing their sin and guilt, suffering the wrath and curse of God for it on the Cross.

•Christ alone has conquered sin and death by rising from the dead, victorious over both.

•Christ alone can save.

Men must be perfect if they're to be accepted by God.

- And who but Christ can give perfect righteousness to sinners?

- Who else has perfectly obeyed God?

- Who else can make men righteous?

Sin must be paid for. God will by no means clear the guilty. An offering for sin must be made or the wrath of God abides.

- And who but Christ has suffered the penalty of sin for sinners?

- Who but Christ is a spotless, sinless, substitutionary sacrifice?

- Who else has purchased the forgiveness of sins for sinners?

NO ONE!

- There is no other. None but Christ.

- He is the only hope for the unbeliever.

- Apart from Him, men will die in their sins.

- Apart from Him, men will stand before God naked and exposed, with no help, no Mediator to make peace, no plea for mercy.

- Without Christ, only death and Hell remain for the sinner.

5.) And the only way for the sinner to have Christ is to believe in Him. To trust Him to save them.

•God's Word says, "To Him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name." (Acts 10:43)

•Jesus said, "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise Him up on the last day." (John 6:40)

•Faith in Christ is how sinners receive Christ.

•And, receiving Him, they are saved from their sins.

By faith in Him, sinners have peace with the God they've sinned against.

•In Him, there is now no condemnation.

•In Him, the many are made righteous.

•In Him, sinful rebels are adopted by the Father and made beloved children.

•In Him, sinners receive eternal life and eternal joy with God both now and in the age to come.

•By faith in Him sinners are saved.

But listen very close to what comes next. You've heard it before, but you must hear it again:

•"For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him

of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they preach unless they are sent?..." (Romans 10:13-15)

- Sinners must believe on Christ if they're to be saved.
- And they CANNOT believe unless they hear.
- And they CANNOT hear unless someone preaches.
- Brothers and sisters, if we don't evangelize, they can't be saved.

Now some might say, "But God is sovereign and will save His People."

- Yes, that's true. But that's a separate subject for another time.
- Don't try to out-theologize God. His Word says both.
- They can't believe if they don't hear. And they can't hear if someone doesn't preach.
- So let's believe that and focus on that right now.

To love our neighbor as we love ourselves demands that we evangelize.

- You care about your own soul. So you must care about theirs, too.
- If we don't preach the Gospel, they will certainly perish.

If you love your neighbor at all, this grabs your heart.

- Do you want them to go to Hell?
- Doesn't love compel you to speak?
- Doesn't compassion for your fellow man, your fellow sinner, move your heart to want to keep them from Hell?

Friends, I know that fear is real. And it can make us silent.

- But tell me, what's worse?
- You get mocked, or they go to Hell.
- You get in trouble, or they go to Hell.
- You get beat up, or they go to Hell.
- You feel stupid, or they go to Hell.
- Love will make us speak. Because we know that whatever we suffer, we're trying to save them from something much worse.
- AND WE CARE! We would rather suffer than see them go to Hell unwarned and unloved.

Listen to how the Apostle Paul put it:

•“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. **THEREFORE, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others...**” (2 Corinthians 5:10-11a)

- Paul knew that everyone must stand before Christ.
- And he knew that sinners will be damned without Christ.

- THEREFORE, knowing what dreadful wrath the Lord has against the wicked, he made it his life's ambition to persuade others to be reconciled to God.

- Friends, that is LOVE! He loved men and didn't want to see them damned.

- So he preached.

Most of us care about our neighbor's body more than his soul.

- We wouldn't dream of letting a man go around hungry or naked. We care too much.

- But we'll watch sinners march straight to Hell, knowing that's their fate, and say nothing to try to prevent it.

- Friends, we must LOVE THEM!

When we count their needs as serious as our own, we'll speak. When we love, we'll speak.

- So remember their state before God.

- Remember their need for Christ.

- Remember that they cannot believe if they don't hear.

- And then OPEN YOUR MOUTH in love and tell them about the only Savior of sinners.

Brothers and sisters, let me say it again: If we don't preach the Gospel, they cannot be saved.

- They will certainly go to Hell if we don't warn them and tell them about Christ.

- Faith comes by hearing. And hearing through the Word of Christ.

- And without evangelism, men remain deaf to the message of salvation.

- If we have any love at all, any compassion, any grace in our hearts, we are compelled to do something.

- Love for our fellow men demands us to act.

Sin is real. God's wrath is real. Hell is real.

- And our neighbors are really going there without Christ.

- If we believe God's Word at all, we must be moved with pity to preach.

Charles Spurgeon said it best:

- “Oh, my brothers and sisters in Christ, if sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies; and if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay, and not madly to destroy themselves. If Hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for.”

6.) Before I end, let me make one more point:

Christian, can't you love others as you've been loved?

- Someone did this for you.
- Someone told you the Gospel.
- Whether it was a preacher in a pulpit, a friend in their living room, a coworker, or a stranger on the street, someone told you of your sin, God's judgment, and Christ the Savior.
- We all have someone, or a group of people, who we'll always thank God for because those are the ones God used to lead us to Christ.
- Those are the ones who snatched us from the fire, by God's grace.

Where would we be if not for faithful Christians preaching the Gospel to us?

- Doesn't common sense, common gratitude, and common love push us to do the work?
- How much more the command of God!
- How much more the love of Christ within us!

Brothers and sisters, don't you want to be that person for someone else?

- Love others as you've been loved.
- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- And do unto others as you HAVE HAD done to you.

May God help us to love, that we might be bold to declare the Gospel.

•Amen.