

University Ministry Launch

Sermon: The Creed of Jesus: Loving God, Loving Others

Study Text: Mark 12:28-33

Date: August 29, 2010

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Bible Study Introduction:

When we come to this particular passage of Mark, we start to see what is at the heart of the teachers of the law. The previous debate earlier in the chapter focuses on a purely hypothetical situation concerning marriage and the resurrection. Finally, a teacher asks Jesus a question that really matters: “What is the greatest commandment?” I do not doubt the sincerity of his question; he truly wants to know.

Look at how Jesus responds. It is simple. It is straightforward. It involves the entirety of human existence: mind, body, soul, and emotion. But even more interestingly, it is traditional and a twofold answer. Everything Jesus says is straight from Deuteronomy and Leviticus. It is not innovative. The answer is not some secret that has been hidden. In fact, the desire for that “one answer” is answered twofold: love God; love others.

Opening Questions:

- What are some things you would consider “the best”? How many of them involve your neighbor?
- This is a rather well known passage. What sort of understandings and frustrations (if any) do you have with it?

Read Mark 12:28

- The teacher wanted to ask Jesus his question because he heard Jesus debating and giving a good answer. Where has Jesus “given you a good answer” in an area where you have expertise? What would that even look like?
- Has Jesus settled any debates for you? Which ones? Has he started any?

Read Mark 12:29

- Why do you think Jesus put loving God and loving neighbor together? Think theologically as well as practically.
- It is often easy to look at this text from the external—loving God or loving neighbor. But how do we hear these words if we do not love ourselves?

Read Mark 32-33

- The teacher gives back validation to Jesus. It’s like he is saying, “Yes! You have answered correctly.” What kind of “right answers” are we expecting from Jesus in our lives because we think we know that answer?
- Why do you think the teacher left out “loving with all your soul” in his reflective response?

Group or Personal Reflection

- One of the common ways of thinking about this passage is that it is linear—I love God, then I love my neighbor, then I love myself. But this passage is messier. Play with these questions concretely: If I love myself, how am I loving God and neighbor? If I love my neighbor, how am I loving myself and God? If I am loving God, how am I loving my neighbor and myself?