

Lessons and Discussion Questions for Sunday, October 25, 2020

Below are our lessons for Sunday as well as questions for you to ponder before we gather for Coffee Hour. Even though each of you will be discussing only one of the questions, my hope is that by providing you with all of the questions our time of sharing will be enhanced.

Old Testament

Leviticus 19:1-2,15-18

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the Lord.

You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

Psalm 1

1 Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, *
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the seats of the scornful!

2 Their delight is in the law of the Lord, *
and they meditate on his law day and night.

3 They are like trees planted by streams of water,
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; *
everything they do shall prosper.

4 It is not so with the wicked; *
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.

5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes, *
nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.

6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, *

but the way of the wicked is doomed.

The Epistle

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

The Gospel

Matthew 22:34-46

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" 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 greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: "What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?" They said to

him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

"The Lord said to my Lord,

"Sit at my right hand,

until I put your enemies under your feet"?"

If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?" No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Group Discussion Questions for Coffee Hour

In today's gospel lesson Jesus is having another conversation with the Pharisees. The issue is raised regarding which commandment in the law is the greatest.

Group One: Love God with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength and your neighbor as yourself is the answer to what is the greatest commandment. Do you believe that God expects you to obey? How is this possible in the hostile atmosphere in the USA?

Group Two: We often understand the word **neighbor** to be a reference to a geographical location. Who is my neighbor? Does my neighbor include the strangers who travel in and out of the area near my home?

Group Three: Jesus is quoting a verse from Leviticus 19 when he speaks of loving your neighbor as yourself (see today's OT lesson). How can we love a stranger or neighbor like we love God? Are we really supposed to do this?

Group Four: Does loving your neighbor as yourself mean that you must **feel** love for your neighbor? Is Jesus referring to what you must **feel** when He talks about love in this context?

Group Five: There is a saying: *What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor.* While the thought seems so logical and clear, why is it so difficult for us to live this way? Is our major struggle only with those who live outside of our house?

Group Six: Jesus asks a question of those who seem to believe that they have God all figured out. He asks them, ***What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?*** Why do you think it was important for the religious leaders (in this case the Pharisees) to be asked this question?