

LOVING OBEDIENCE

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Read the text: Matthew 22:34-40

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "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."

In today's sermon, Pastor Jeff called us to make Jesus the focus of our life. As we do this, we will have one mind and maintain the unity Jesus has called us to demonstrate to the world around us. As we face all of the opportunities for division around us, we must stay focused on what unites us; Jesus Christ. So, what does obedience to Jesus Christ look like in our present moment? Above all, Jesus calls us to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. This commandment must shape everything else that we do.

Discussion Questions:

These questions are written for DNA groups, but you can use in any setting, including missional communities. Because they were written for the intimacy of DNA friendships, you may need to adjust for larger groups.

1. In this current season of gathering restrictions, polarized political discourse, and a multitude of opportunities for division within the church, what are big ways or small ways you have you moved away from making Jesus the focus of your heart and mind and pursuing unity with His church?

2. In the last month, reflect on how you have tangibly fallen short of loving God and loving others? Work through the four questions below to think through this. Confess your failure in specific ways to one another. Then, take time to remind each other in specific ways of the good news of the Gospel.
 - a. What are ways you have failed to love your neighbor as yourself? If you're wondering "who is my neighbor?", see Jesus' words in Luke 10:25-37. (*Hint: It even includes the person most different from you, who disagrees with you, and who may not love you in return.*)
 - b. What are ways you have not obeyed Jesus' command to submit to and obey governing authorities? Have you demonstrated a heart that is trusting God and willing to submit joyfully even when you disagree with governing authorities?
 - c. What are ways you have neglected meeting with the church and creatively pursuing community in our current context? Have you given up on meeting with others, as restrictions allow, because it's not the same as it used to be?
 - d. Would outsiders see the light and love of Jesus through your life's witness? What would outsiders who see your social media feeds say is the center of your life? Would they see love for God and love for others clearly in what you post?

3. What would it tangibly look like for you in this season to embrace loving God and loving others? What are the ways the Spirit is convicting you and what steps of obedience do you think He is calling you to take? Share these with each other, pray for each other, and commit to asking each other about these steps in the future.