



“Love God. Love People.”

Biblical Text: Luke 10:25-28

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Do.Something.KC – you’ve figured out that it’s our theme for these three weeks.

As a part of Vacation Bible School this year, our students will be meeting people who are making a difference. Two of them I’d like to highlight today from the dozens of stories are ***Kimberly and Trent Robinett**, owners of ***Trek Design Group**, and active members at Old Mission. Give a listen to their challenge. *

We can’t all serve exactly how Kimberly and Trent serve, or do exactly what they do, but we don’t have to. We can’t do everything. But we all can ***Do Something - KC!** We can all can ***Love God and Love People**. That becomes clear in our text.

Our Bible reading is from **Luke 10:25-28**. It is one of the source Scriptures from which we found Old Mission Church’s Statement of Purpose - I hope you know it by now: ***"Making a difference by Loving God. and Loving People."**

Luke 10:25-28 has parallels in Matthew and Mark. But each presents the material differently. Matthew 23:36 has Jesus answering the interrogation of the teachers of the law, who asked, ***“Which is the greatest commandment?”** Mark 12 agrees.

Luke, however, rewrites the conversation, to answer a different question about loving God and neighbor from Luke 10:29, ***“Just who is my neighbor?”**

Luke 10:25 starts with a question from a lawyer (*To be fair to our Old Mission attorneys, this is not a lawyer joke that starts there once was a lawyer....*) Instead it is the opening to a important question, ***“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”**

Jesus answered the question with a question – a very common rabbinic method. Verse 26: ***“What us written in the Law? What do you read there?”** The lawyer’s response provides Jesus teaching common to all three synoptic Gospels:

***“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”¹**

You’ll find nearly identical words in Matthew 25, Mark 12 and Luke 10:27.

¹ Luke 10:27, paraphrased from the Bible by the author.

They summarize to this: * **“Love God. Love People.”**²

This is at the heart of all the “do's and don'ts” in the law. The first of Jesus’ two great commandments is called the **“Shema”** from the Hebrew word meaning “hear” or “listen.” You’ll find it in Deuteronomy 6:5:

**“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.”*

Jesus, like his Hebrew ancestors, and the lawyer in our text, taught that we are to have complete devotion to God, in all things, with all we are and all we have.

We “get it” that we are to love God with our worship. But how do we love and honor God with all our possessions? With every hour we labor? With our relationships, our marriage, in all we speak and do as a parent or a child or a spouse? How do we love God in those things? **That’s harder, isn’t it?**

The second commandment that Jesus taught was something also from Hebrew Scripture, from Leviticus 19:18: *“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

But it’s not just **any kind** of love that Leviticus and Luke are referring to here. This love is **Agapé**, the highest form of love. It is the love that demonstrates love for others, as equal to, or greater than, ourselves. And that kind of love is never easy.

And notice what Jesus doesn’t say. He doesn’t say love other people because you **like** them. He doesn’t say love them if they have their act together, or only if they don’t mess up. He doesn’t say, love others only if they vote for the same candidates as you, have the same perspective about * Bruce/Caitlin Jenner as you, or cheer for the same teams you do. He says, **“Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

Taking that seriously is incredibly hard. Bart Campolo founded **Mission Year** in the mid-1990’s. It places 18 to 29 year olds in blighted urban neighborhoods with this purpose: **“Love God. Love People. Nothing Else Matters.”** Now twenty years after the group's founding, Mission Year still has trouble finding enough young Christians willing to devote a year of their lives to urban ministry. Why is that?

It’s because in the church, in Christian families like yours and mine, there is more emphasis on working hard and being successful, getting a good job, finding the right partner, buying a home, and living the American dream than there is on serving those who Jesus called “the least of these.” Fact. Not comfortable.

² Ibid. Matthew 25, Mark 12, Luke 10.

And yet when it clicks – when it finally sinks in - something fundamental changes in us. Listen again to what Jesus says: *“The first and greatest commandment is this. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

A few years ago I preached on today’s text when I was serving in Wichita. In response, the Student Ministries of that Church, under the guidance of my young associate pastor, now serving Churches of his own, made Jesus’ teaching their central focus for an entire year. They called it **“Rule One and Rule Two.”**

They had T-shirts made that said ***Rule One: Love God** on the front, and ***Rule Two: Love People** on the back. They based their activities on those simple rules.

One Sunday Night, Pastor Todd turned them loose in pairs of two or three in places all over downtown Wichita with the instruction to find ways for the next hour to live out those simple rules. Three young men, all of whom I had either baptized or confirmed, or both, chose ***Century II**, where our pastors and lay members will attend the Great Plains Annual Conference next week.

Cody, Alex and Jon found a convenience store, managed to buy several rolls of quarters, and spent the next hour plugging expired parking meters at Century II’s lots, which were full due to a concert. One of the people, who skipped out at intermission to plug his meter, found them at work. *“That’s very nice,”* he said, *“but why would you do that for people you don’t even know?”*

They pointed at the back of their T-Shirts which said, ***“Rule Two: Love people.”** Then they turned around and pointed at the front, ***“Rule One: Love God.”** They didn’t have to say anything, the words and their work communicated. **True story.**

Do you love God? I hope you do! But what do you mean by saying so? You know, I know you do that loving God with an hour or two on Sunday morning is not a love affair with God, it’s more like a meeting for an occasional cup of coffee.

But the more we live out a rhythm of loving God as we worship in here and then learn to live him out there in how we love people, the more our love grows. Because loving God is to love what God loves, and God loves people.

So the essence of all I’ve said this morning is this: **Love God. Love People. Nothing else matters!** Actually, it’s more than that. **Everything else** will matter more if we learn to be serious in following those two simple rules. Amen.