

10.29.23 Week 2 Participant Material, Getting Ready for the King
Do the Most Important Thing Matthew 22:34-40

Context: The scene is the same as last week, Jesus in the area of the Temple, answering loaded questions from his opponents seeking to test or trap him.

Matthew 22:34-40 (NRSV).

“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 commandment in the law is the greatest?” 37 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.’ 38 This is the greatest and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Ice Breaker Question

1. What’s something important you’d like to do that’s on your “bucket list?”

Questions for Discussion

1. How do you determine what’s most important to you? What ethics, values, principles, and people influence your answer?
2. A lawyer asks Jesus, “*Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?*” How would you respond if someone asked you, “*What’s the greatest or most important thing I should do?*”

3. What might be different in your life if you more fully pursued living out the great commandment? For example, what would it look like for you to love God with all your heart?

4. How do you love God with all your soul?

Here is some background on “soul” from Harper’s Bible Dictionary:

For a Hebrew, ‘soul’ indicated the unity of a human person; Hebrews were living bodies, they did not have bodies. In the New Testament, ‘soul’ retains its basic Hebrew field of meaning. Soul refers to one’s life: Herod sought Jesus’ soul (Matt. 2:20); one might save a soul or take it (Mark 3:4). Death occurs when God ‘requires your soul’ (Luke 12:20). ‘Soul’ may refer to the whole person, the self: ‘three thousand souls’ were converted in Acts 2:41 (see Acts 3:23).”

5. Why is it important to love God with all of your mind?
6. What is significant and transforming about Jesus linking loving God with loving our neighbor? How do you show your love for God by how you love and treat other people?

Closing Prayer: Almighty God, you have sent Jesus to show us how to live. Grant us the power of your Holy Spirit so that we may follow Christ in faithfulness and love all the days of our lives. Amen.