



Week of May 16, 2021

Lessons in Luke: Judging Others

Luke 6:37-42

Day One: Read Mark 12:28-34

²⁸ One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” ²⁹ Jesus replied, “The most important commandment is this: ‘Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. ³⁰ And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.” ³² The teacher of religious law replied, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. ³³ And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law.” ³⁴ Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

- What does it mean to “Love your neighbor as yourself”? Can you think of more than one way to interpret what this command means? Which interpretation is most compelling to you and why? What is the connection between loving yourself and loving your neighbor?

Day Two: Read Mark 9:14-29

¹⁴ When they returned to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd surrounding them, and some teachers of religious law were arguing with them. ¹⁵ When the crowd saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with awe, and they ran to greet him. ¹⁶ “What is all this arguing about?” Jesus asked. ¹⁷ One of the men in the crowd spoke up and said, “Teacher, I brought my son so you could heal him. He is possessed by an evil spirit that won’t let him talk. ¹⁸ And whenever this spirit seizes him, it throws him violently to the ground. Then he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast out the evil spirit, but they couldn’t do it.” ¹⁹ Jesus said to them, “You faithless people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.” ²⁰ So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth. ²¹ “How long has this been happening?” Jesus asked the boy’s father. He replied, “Since he was a little boy. ²² The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and help us, if you can.” ²³ “What do you mean, ‘If I can’?” Jesus asked. “Anything is possible if a person believes.” ²⁴ The father instantly cried out, “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!” ²⁵ When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil spirit. “Listen, you spirit that makes this boy unable to hear and speak,” he said. “I command you to come out of this child and never enter him again!” ²⁶ Then the spirit screamed and threw the boy into another violent convulsion and left him. The boy appeared to be dead. A murmur ran through the crowd as people said, “He’s dead.” ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him to his feet, and he stood up. ²⁸ Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, “Why couldn’t we cast out that evil spirit?” ²⁹ Jesus replied, “This kind can be cast out only by prayer.”

- In this story Jesus casts a demon out of a boy. This demon often sought to destroy the boy by casting him into water or fire. What “demons” (think self-destructive thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, etc.) need to be exorcized from your life? How might this empower you to love others better? What is preventing you from asking Jesus for healing?

Day Three: Read 1 Samuel 16:7

⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

- How can you see into someone else's heart? What does this imply about how we tend to judge others?

Day Four: Read Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴ "When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, ¹⁵ the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. ¹⁶ I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. ¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ¹⁸ And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. ¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. ²⁰ Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. ²¹ Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen."

- Read Paul's prayer again slowly and meditatively. Now make the prayer your own but pray it on behalf of someone you know that struggles to love themselves. Then pray it one more time for yourself.

Day Five: Read Luke 6:39-42

³⁹ Then Jesus gave the following illustration: "Can one blind person lead another? Won't they both fall into a ditch? ⁴⁰ Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher. ⁴¹ And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? ⁴² How can you think of saying, 'Friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye."

- What "specks" do you tend to try to pick out of other people's eyes? What "log" do you need to work at removing from your own eye?