

Discipleship Moment

Mark 12:28-34

Yesterday we heard from our missionaries serving in Brazil: the Steidinger family. The Steidinger's were a great example of a family willing to sacrifice everything in order to see the Gospel spread to the farthest reaches of the world. They used innovation and technology in order to raise up pastors and missionaries and spread the Gospel. This innovation includes flying into the Amazon Basin in order to provide resources and to give boats to the pastors and missionaries so they can go from village to village and teach people about Jesus.

Near the end of the video, the Steidingers quoted something they had heard as they were preparing to leave the country. In essence, the quote said this, "We should not simply be humanists, alleviating suffering and spreading the Gospel for the sake of humans, but we should love God so much, and seek his glory so much that we are compelled to heal other's sufferings and spread the Gospel."

This quote can seem jarring and even insensitive. But I think it highlights something important: loving God means loving people. And it is not our love for people that makes us love God, but it is our love for God that compels us to love people. People are broken, stupid, annoying, and generally unlovable. It is hard to care about our neighbors. If we watch cable news or listen to how people talk about politics, we can see that loving other humans is not something that comes natural to us. But we, as Christians, have come face to face with a love that transcends human potential. We have experienced a love from a being who wants to know us and be with us no matter how many times we have messed up.

This makes all the difference. God, in the face of our sin, forgives us and draws us close. He sees past our selfishness and immaturity, and calls us to come to him, learn from him, and be healed by him.

We hear in this text about two commandments (which Jesus actually calls one commandment) those are, "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all you mind, and with all your strength," and, "love your neighbor as yourself." To Jesus, this is one commandment: our love for God means we love our neighbor as ourselves. When we have been given such love, we want to share it with others.

Have you ever had something really good happen to you? And you want to share it with everyone you see? That's what this love of God is like. It is really, really good news, and we can share it with everyone we meet.

Going Deeper

Use this resource to start conversations about this week's sermon for your personal devotions, with your family, or with your Life Group. You can use one question per day or all at once

1. When was the last time something really good happened to you and you wanted to share it with everyone you saw? What was that like? How did you feel?
2. When was the last time you felt this way about God's love? Why did you feel that way?
3. Martin Luther in the Large Catechism describes a god as something or someone from whom we seek all good, and from whom all good is given to us. Is this the way that you feel about God? Do you believe that *every good thing* comes from him? Why or why not? Is there something else in your life that
4. This week, make a list of the good things in your life, try to write down every good thing.
5. Once you are done (or as done as you can be), pray to God and thank him for each and everyone of this things.
6. What are some of the ways that our love and thankfulness to God produce love for other people?