

40 DAYS OF PRAYER

Week 5 LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR (LOVE THE LOST)

Day 29. Matthew 22:37-40

³⁷ Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

In the "Great Commandment" the word Jesus used for love is "agape." This is said to be the deepest love because it is based on doing good things for another person. Love at this deep level is not about a feeling but about an action.

If we say we love someone and do nothing for them then it is not love. Love is truly known by the sacrifice that is made to express it. Love your neighbor – say it and show it.

Day 30. 2 Corinthians 2:15

"For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing."

Authentic Christianity is always emitting a fragrance that is pleasing to God. Those around us can sense its presence too – our brothers and sisters, and those that are out there waiting to sense it too.

Day 31. Luke 10:25-37 – Parable of the Good Samaritan

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

.....Due to the length of this reading please use your own Bible.

Do you think the first question the priest and Levite asked themselves was: 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?' But by the very nature of his concern, the Good Samaritan reversed the question: 'If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?'

Day 32. Matthew 25:31-46 – Sheep and Goats

³¹ *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.*

.....Due to the length of this reading please use your own Bible.

Jesus wants to instill in us His love so that blessing others will not be something that we feel compelled to do, or something that we do out of mere obligation; instead, He wants those things to come second nature to us, like breathing. This is what differentiates a sheep from a goat – the character of Christ becomes the nature of their character. Are you a sheep?

Day 33. Mark 6:34

“When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.”

Jesus reminds us of the incredible importance of teaching. While we might have expected miracles or wonders arising out of Jesus' compassion, what shepherdless sheep most need is good, solid, down to earth, practical teaching from a teacher who knows them and cares for them.

Day 34. Luke 15:1-32 – The Parables of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Son

¹ *Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus.* ² *But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”*

.....Due to the length of this reading please use your own Bible.

We are never so like God as when we rejoice at the salvation of sinners. We are never so like Satan as when we despise those who are converted and think ourselves superior to them.

Day 35. 1 John 3:16

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

Love is self-sacrifice. Following the example of Jesus, John writes, “we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” Self-sacrifice, the act of laying down our lives for others, can be understood literally. Certainly Jesus understood it literally with regard to his own life. But self-sacrifice can also be understood metaphorically, as a mindset that places the interests of others before one's own.