

Loving Who God Loves
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Matthew 22:39 (KJV) And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

First we are told to love God with every fiber of our being. Now we learn we are supposed to love our neighbor – even the strange one down the block. But then the question comes up, who really is our neighbor?

And this question was asked by an expert in the law. Had this man really understood the law, he would have realized that this same thing was told to the Israelites by Moses. Exodus is filled with examples, but I want to use Exodus 23:4-5:

If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.

Wow! If I see my enemy's ox or donkey loose, I am to bring it back to my enemy. Or if his beasts of burden are struggling under a heavy load I am to help him.

How many of us today would stop to help those who hate us? To do good to those that want to harm us? To pray for those who would spitefully use us?

Matthew 5:43-45 (KJV) Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

But isn't this what our Lord is saying right here? And what He said in His sermon we call the Sermon on the Mount? To exemplify this, he told the story of the Good Samaritan to this expert of the law. Remember that a Samaritan was lower than a dog in the eyes of an Israelite. And yet Jesus chose to use a Samaritan to get his point across.

It's not really that we don't know who our neighbor is. It's that we want to pick and choose whom **WE** call neighbor. But God didn't say we could pick and choose. We are to love all people – regardless of race, creed, color, religion, etc. We are to love the person, not the sin. We are to tell them the Good News – the Gospel.

So the next time you see someone who doesn't fit your standard of a friend or neighbor, remember that we weren't asked to pick, but to love all.

In His love,
Christopher Dale