



First Principles Project

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Sermon Outlines

PART 1. Citizens of the Kingdom

SERMON OUTLINE:

1. *Give to Caesar what is Caesar, and to God what is God's.*

Jesus refused to choose sides. Instead, he reminded the Pharisees that God's agenda was way bigger than Caesar's, and makes a crucial distinction. There are governments of the world. And then there is the kingdom. Give to the governments of the world what belongs to them, and give to God what belongs to him and his kingdom. But when in conflict, the second one must always win.

2. *What God says about who we are as his children, made in his image - and therefore citizens of the kingdom of heaven.*

Inherent within God Himself we see a God who is one, yet is three. The whole story of God is one in community, and love in community. And when God makes humanity in God's image, we reflect God best when we are a radical yet beautiful "us".

And while each individual has fundamental values and dignity that come from God, no one individual — or group for that matter — reflects the best of God's creation by him, her, or themselves. No one person is alone the "image of God" — but together, collectively, we are made in the image of God. If we can fully wrap our heart and head around that, it has the power to change everything.

3. *What God says to us on how we are supposed to engage with one another as citizens of the kingdom.*

If you saw your neighbor — regardless of the deepest divides in political ideologies or party alignments or pain they have caused you — as an image bearer of God, picking up some aspect of God that you do not, it would be impossible not to love them.

We love our neighbors as ourselves because the truth is we are all joint and equal participants in God's transcendent and forever storyline. Each of us is a God-purposed contributor to God's bigger reality. Regardless of our differences, we need each other.

4. *What God says about where he is ultimately going to take us.*

God casts a vision in Revelations for all of humanity — this is his end game. There we would see the fullness of our identity, the fullness of God's image represented in the collective. And we would see a love of neighbor, a commitment, care, and love for each other, made possible by a shared allegiance to the one true king of all.



The scriptures make clear this vision, this community, this reality was not possible without the execution — one might even say the state-sanctioned “lynching” — of God Himself, and the power of that same God in Christ walking out of the grave three days later.

5. *“A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

At the very end, the thing Jesus was most concerned about was the unity of the Church and our oneness. He knew that as long as we are united with each other and with his Heavenly Father, the world would change.

We need to be brought to “complete unity” in order for the world to know that God sent Jesus, God loves Jesus, and they are loved by God. The whole redemptive story of the world, and our participation in it, somehow turns on whether we are unified or not.

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES:

Mark 12:13-17

13 Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. 14 They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax[b] to Caesar or not? 15 Should we pay or shouldn’t we?”

But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. “Why are you trying to trap me?” he asked. “Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” 16 They brought the coin, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

“Caesar’s,” they replied.

17 Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”

And they were amazed at him.

Matthew 22:35-40

35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

37 Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’[a] 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’[b] 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Genesis 1:27-28

27 So God created mankind in his own image,



in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Deuteronomy 6:4-8

4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.[a] 5 Lovethe Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Luke 10:25-37

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?”

26 “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

27 He answered, ““Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’[a]; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.””

28 “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

30 In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

36 “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

37 The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”



Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Revelation 7:9-10

9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.”

John 13: 33-35

33 “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 17:20-26

20 “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— 23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

24 “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

25 “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26 I have made you[e] known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”