

Talk It Over

20/20 Vision Clarity (part 2) (Week 2)

SMALL TALK

1. What were you doing the last time you lost all track of time, forgetting to eat or sleep?

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Matthew 22:37-40; Matthew 7:12; Galatians 5:14; Romans 13:8-10; James 2:8-10; 1 John 3:16-18; 4:19-21** In what way is the “first and greatest commandment” tied together with “the second that is like it”?
3. **READ John 13:34-35.** What is new about the “new commandment”?
4. **READ Mark 10:42-45.** What is “delayed gratification?” What is “displaced gratification”?

GETTING PERSONAL

5. When are you tempted to define your faith by what you know rather than by what you live? When are you tempted to define your love for God by your devotional habits rather than by the way you love and serve people?
6. Can you name a time when you experienced “displaced gratification”?
7. Serving others is sometimes joy filled, and sometimes very painful. Can you think of an example in each kind of serving? Is the painful kind of serving worth it? Why or why not?

MAKING PROGRESS

8. What can we do to make sure our efforts in these core statements are coming from a humble response to how God first loved us? Why is this question important?

March 8, 2020

20/20 Vision Clarity (Resumes)

We started this series with part 1 in January. One of the things I had you do was narrow your focus to bring clarity. For those of you who took me up on the one word focus challenge for the year, did you come up with a one word focus? If so, is it bringing any clarity or progress? Let me encourage you to stay with it.

The outline this morning is the same outline as it was in part 1, back in January. The reason for that is that the outline is our newly revised set of 5 core statements, and we want them to sink down deep into us, not just for this year but for many years.

We are a church with these 5 core statements.

- 1. Love God Wholeheartedly.**
2. Do First Things First.
3. Don't Do Life Alone.
4. Saved People Serve People.
5. Followers say, "Follow Me."

This not a list, but a life!

We don't check off our core statements like a task list then think we are done. Everyone has a next step. As long as we are alive we take another breath. We breathe in life and grace from God and we live it out by the power of Jesus in us. These core statements are ongoing as we live with eternal significance every day from wherever we are ... to where God wants us to be.

IT'S HAPPENING!

So many of you already are living out these core statements so beautifully.

I asked at our Tuesday staff meeting if anyone had any stories they have heard about as examples in our church of people loving God and serving others.

I was reminded about one member who received devastating health news about a year ago, and about how so many of you rallied around her in prayer and many other practical expressions of serving and loving her through that year. She is so grateful and she has come through it and is doing really well now.

I learned that another couple in our church has a studio apartment that use it to help people they feel God leads them to help. During the “For” series they were challenged by the “4 for For” challenge, and wrote down 4 names to be for. They have seen God moving in those 4 in dramatic ways. There has been remarkable progress from where all 4 of these people. One of them has accepted Jesus as their savior.

Another couple took in 2 more foster kids this week past week, it's a long story, but a remarkable one that God is at work in. This family has 5 foster kids, and 3 biological kids in a household of 10. God's love is coming through as they are serving with hearts that are bigger than Texas.

I heard that another member recently put an envelope with \$700 cash in it to give anonymously to another foster family to simply come alongside of the effort to help serve their needs. It was given through a staff member.

Another member donated a car worth \$4,500 to a family who was in need of transportation.

I heard about caregivers who go and take care of neighbors, and I heard about others who are caregiving in their homes.

Many stories only God knows but God is at work every day, and we hear about great stuff he is doing through you almost on a weekly basis. This is fantastic. You honor Jesus! Keep loving Jesus and loving those who need Jesus' love. Thank you!

THUMBS UP! (A review) [SHOW ALL 5 AGAIN!]

To assist memory, we think of the 5 core statements like 5 fingers on a hand. Our first core statement is the thumb. Loving God wholeheartedly is saying “Yes” to God. Thumbs up! Now think of the other four core statements as the fingers in relationship while the thumb is up. While the thumb is up, all the other statements as represented by your fingers hang from this one statement as represented by your thumb. “Loving God wholeheartedly” does *not* mean you are sinless! It means you are not holding anything back. You are willing to trust God with everything. You are trusting him for your eternity, so you can trust him also for the details (the other core statements). Anything half-hearted says thumbs down to God, but we say “Yes”—thumbs up. We love God wholeheartedly for giving us this unbelievable gift, for love, forgiveness, and acceptance, and everything we need for life and godliness. If he says, “do this...”, we are willing to take a step, even if we don't know how it will go. Even if we don't know what to do after that, we step forward in trust and obedience knowing he will help us.

DO FIRST THINGS FIRST

What do we mean by “First things”?

I work at “Doing First Things First” very intentionally every day, by doing things like: getting up early each morning and spending

time with God *first thing* where I read scripture, I memorize scripture, I pray, I journal. I do this *first thing* every day. I very literally try to “Do first things first.” I try not to neglect first things.

But in this process I was struck by a verse that slapped me awake. It is quite possible to do all these first things first, and completely miss the proof that I am actually doing first things first.

Are you curious as to what that verse might have said? Are you curious what possibly could prove or disprove that my desire to grow and learn from God, and depend on God, and Love God, and grow in my faith and knowledge is completely missing the boat if there isn't something else besides this?

Do I have your attention?

Let me introduce what struck me with a riddle. It's a really lousy riddle so don't answer it out loud. I'm only using the riddle as a memory help.

RIDDLE 1: When is something that is second not second?

The answer is when it is first.

Now you might be wondering how can something that is second be first. Well that's what today is about. How can something that is second be first?

RIDDLE 2: According to Jesus what is the first and greatest commandment?

Matthew 22:38 (NIV) {38} This is the first and greatest commandment.

Do you remember what the “This” is?

The first and greatest commandment is to Love God...with everything we've got. Love God wholeheartedly! (Matthew 22:37)

Knowing that ...

RIDDLE 3: How would you finish this sentence: “For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command:”

You would think the answer should be this:

Matthew 22:37-38 (NIV) {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.

You would think that if we really did this we would fulfill the entire law. Right?

But Paul surprises us with this in Galatians.

Galatians 5:14 (NIV) For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

“Wait, WHAT!?! I thought loving your neighbor was the second commandment.”

Matthew 22:39 (NIV) And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

According to Jesus and the Apostles, the first and second of the greatest commandments are tied together.

Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV) {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.*"

See the references on the flipside of the outline or bottom if you are using the "events" online outline to see how Jesus and the Apostles agree that the first and second are tied together as the two that hold it all together.

The second commandment proves the first. The first results in the second. One without the other is a lie!

Are we defining our life in Jesus by loving like Jesus loved, or are we defining our love for God in some other way?

Our doctrine is Jesus. He is the way, the truth, and the life.

So, when is something that is second not second?

When it first.

This second commandment that is like the first, is tied to the first, and is an expression of the first and greatest commandment. It proves the first. To have the one is to have the other. To *not* have one is to *not* have the other.

***Galatians 5:13 (NIV)** You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.*

"**Humility** is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less. **Humility** is thinking more of others." — **Rick Warren**, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth am I Here for?*

**“Delayed Gratification”
and
“Displaced Gratification”**

In delayed gratification, we put off something so that we can enjoy something even better later on. In displaced gratification, we put off something that might gratify us so that the gratification can go to somebody else. It is putting the needs of someone else ahead of your own.

Who did this more than Jesus? He set aside his needs to meet ours.

People will know you love God when you love like Jesus.

The science of happiness is now saying that the secret to happiness is helping others!