

CrossRoads Baptist Church
October 22, 2006 10:00 am
Matthew 22:37-39

“Road Marker for our Church and Lives”

When you are headed somewhere that you have never been, you might begin to question if you are headed in the right direction. Then you pass a landmark that you remember someone saying that you would pass and your confidence that you are headed right increases.

We need to occasionally check some road markers to make sure we are headed in the right direction.

I. We need a Road Marker for our Church

We are on a journey as a church that none of us know a lot about. Starting a new church is a place we have not seen. Are we headed in the right direction? How do we know?

I believe one way is how obedient are we to the great commandment of our Lord? Our calling as a church is to have a church in this area unlike any other – we are believing God to raise up a Southern Baptist church where there is freedom in worship and praise.

How do we know we are going right? Are we, as a church, loving God with all our heart, soul and mind? Is this what our heart beat is as a church? Is this what we are preaching? Teaching? Demonstrating?

Also, are we “loving our neighbor as yourself?”

Since March, I have been preaching and teaching on the issue of worship – the kind that God likes according to the Scripture. We are beginning today a new series of talking about how to love our neighbor.

Are we headed in the right direction? I believe so.

II. We need a Road Marker for our lives

How do we determine if our lives as individual Christians is on the right track? We might be tempted to look at our church attendance, or on this special Sunday called “Commitment Sunday” that we are giving to the “Fueling the Vision” and we feel good about ourselves. But the real marker that we need to look for is what Jesus said is the most important thing.

New American Standard says “this is the great and foremost commandment.”

And the second is like it. It is like it in principal and importance. The New Living Translation says in verse 39 “A second is equally important.”

I believe if this is correct in our life then everything else will take care of itself.

Look at this love....

A. Love is demanded.

Love is a choice and a commitment not a convenience or a contraption you fall in. The word is *agape* which is a commitment of devotion that is directed by the will and can be commanded as a duty. This is not a human love we have for God, it is a God love we can have for humans.

This love is not based first on the emotions of the person giving it or the worthiness of the person receiving it.

Romans 5:8 (New Living) “But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”

1. We are to love God with our heart: The drive of our life is our passion.

Eugene Peterson in “The Message” says that we are to love with our “passion.” Our heart is our passion. We are to be passionate about God.

2. We are to love God with our soul: The direction of our life reveals our priority.

The direction of our life comes out of our passion. In the long run, over the long haul – our will, our emotions, our decisions will always follow our passion.

Jesus' drive was to do the will of the Father, then his decisions reflected that drive.

The soul is the seat of our will and emotions. We are to make the choice to love God and the commitment to love Him.

3. We are to love God with our mind: The delight of our life involves pleasurable thoughts

We to love Him with our mind by thinking rightly about Him. A person falls in love with another person as they think rightly and goodly about another person. But if they start thinking bad thoughts about that person, they will not feel love with them.

We should think good thoughts about God. He has never done us wrong and never will. The more we think about Him the more we should love Him.

4. We are to love God with our strength: The dynamite of our life.

Mark 12: 30 adds a fourth dimension in which to love God: "And all your strength."

Dennis Swenburg talks about your "love tank being full." When our love tank is full with the love of God and love for God, then out of that comes real mission.

Your strength is the dynamite of our life that provides us power.

B. Love is deserved.

But God is not just telling us to love something or someone that we have no knowledge of or experience with. He has demonstrated His love to us and "He first loved us."

I John 4:9-11 "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation ("the atoning sacrifice") for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

C. Love is demonstrated

This love is demonstrated by loving our neighbor. We're going to talk about this for the next few weeks.

I close with this quote. I don't like the terminology he uses in this quote of calling church members "volunteers." I don't believe we are volunteers but instead we are called. Nevertheless, the quote:

"Perhaps the only thing worse than losing volunteers is when a volunteer in your ministry unplugs from his or her relationship with God and stays involved in your ministry." - Bill Allison, *Recruiting, Motivating & Retaining Volunteers in the Church*

My dear friend, the most important issue is how is your love for God? Your passion? Your priority? Your power? If it is not love for God, then you are headed in the wrong direction. You may be in church today, you may be about to give a commitment to "Fueling the Vision" but you are headed in the wrong direction.

Repent, and return to your first love.