

Sermon 11.10.19 Pastor Jordan Gades – Luke 20:27-38

This week I was part of a bible study that went over this text and we really dove into the deep theological debates that are brought in this gospel text. And there are a lot. Like a lot a lot. And we are dealing with some of the most profound things of our faith in which are also some of the most mysterious. We are dealing with Law and Gospel, Righteousness and justification, salvation, heaven and resurrection. These are all things that Jesus had to be an expert in to answer this question. He's not going against some innocent people asking a simple question. He's going against what are probably some of the more expert theologians of his time. And he gives the perfect answer. It's by no means a simple answer but it the perfect answer.

So we come face to face with this picture of Jesus, teacher and leader. All knowing and willing and able to take on the biggest debates of the age. And then we wonder what that has to do with us. Us, who probably don't get asked these types of questions a lot. us, who have never even thought about these things before. So how are we to respond if these things do happen in our lives. What would Jesus Do?

If we just take this text for the answer, then we all should be ready for the debate. So who here is ready to take on any questions about justification, salvation, and righteousness? Who here would like to take the questions about heaven and hell? Who here would like to take on the questions about abortion, global warming and climate change, Guns, Poverty & Hunger, LGBTQ, how historically differently peoples have been treated; like African

Americans, native Americans and women? You want some hard questions to take on there are a few.

So I'm not bringing these up because I expect us to hash these out but to bring up a fundamental issue with all of this. I bet when I read through that list of topics you had some clear stances on a lot of them and could say a little bit about some of them. I know I can.

Statistics and studies have shown over and over that if you fall on one side of those topics, no amount of data will prove to us or sway us in switching sides.

So that's pretty scary. That is the state of our world. Evil is winning in our world. I'm not saying that because one political party is doing x or y. I'm saying that because we are being separated from our neighbors in new and terrifying ways. We hate our neighbors; we are losing the ability to talk to anyone who doesn't conform to how we think.

This is exactly what Jesus came to earth to fight. God exists to bring us together in relationship. Jesus came to earth to foster this amazing relationship with each of us so that we can love God and Love each other.

We had this story of Jesus from Luke today. This story of people trying to divide and cut down. Same story happens in Matthew. Jesus says all the same things, says, married to, why is that the stumbling block, you will all be reborn children of God living in God's kingdom! How narrowly you think And then this other group asks another question to test, to divide, to cut down others, and I think Jesus gets a little fed up and lays it down.

“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.'

Got it? You can see that right? **These debates just background noise** until you first love God and love your neighbor as you love yourself. Jesus didn't try to debate his way off the cross. It was an act of love.

Sometimes deep theological debates are necessary, Reformation, Luther is facing dead in the eyes how people think about God and the afterlife. People are literally being forced to pay their way and their loved one's way into heaven. A deeply theological debate needed to be had. **But** the end result of the reformation with a broken church-universal was not what Luther wanted. The debate and those relationships ended. And millions of people of died.

Love God and Love your neighbor. Then have those debates. It's so necessary to have these loving, caring relationship with the people that you are having a conversation with.

Derek Black - NPR for full story - Homeschooled in white nationalism, Father klu klux Grand wizard, as a kid makes speeches, has radio programs, leads white nationalist youth events, finally goes to college and guess what happens; a group of Jewish students on campus invite him to Shabbat dinner for 2 years and never debate the issues with him. They build a relationship and start having honest respectful conversations, the kind you have with people whom you love want the best for. And Derek recants his entire life up to that point. Derek Repents, Derek turns completely around.

That is the power of God. This is how God works over and over and over. It's the story of Jesus. Jesus went to dinner with people, Jesus went to the people and healed them, Jesus asked nothing of them, didn't debate them into the ground until they had changed their mind, just loved them. And from there true life flourished.

It's from that true life that we live now. We don't have all the answers but we still have this relationship with God that we will never lose. this amazing eternal love and grace that is not up for debate.

"O that my words were written down! O that with an iron pen they were engraved on a rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus

destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold. My heart faints within me! Amen