

Studies in Christianity Christian Love #6

S#1.

Paying Interest on the Debt

S#2.

Text : **Matt. 25: 31-46**

A. We are studying one of the two foundations of the Christian religion.

S#3.

1. The first is that salvation is by grace through faith in the Son of God.
2. The second is that of being like the God in whose image man is created.
I John 4: 8 – The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
3. The purpose that God has for ALL of His followers is to love.

Matt. 22: 36 – "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

S#4.

37 And He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' **38** This is the great and foremost commandment. **39** The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** " On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

S#5.

B. The previous lesson began unpacking the 2nd command, "Love your Neighbor."

1. The ability to love one's neighbor as himself requires a health self-image.
2. One who is self-absorbed and narcissistic cannot love his neighbor.
3. Love for one's neighbor must be both proactive and interactive.
 - a. Elders must be among the sheep "They Smell Like Sheep" by Lynn Anderson
 - b. In order to love them Christians must be among their neighbors.

C. This lesson will center around five practical ways to love one's neighbor.

S#6.

1. Be God's Ambassador.
2. Wash their feet.
3. Meet their needs.
4. Be a comforter.
5. Be merciful to the undeserving.

I. Be God's Ambassador to your neighbor.

S#7.

A. Every Christian is a representative of God on the earth.

1. **II Cor. 5: 20** – Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

S#8.

2. While on this terrestrial plain, your neighbor will not see God face-to-face.
- * 3. As God was represented by Jesus, God is now represented by His servants.

B. When you became a Christian, God created you anew to conform to His likeness.

1. **Eph. 2: 10** – For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good **S#9.** works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
2. **Eph. 4: 22** – ... in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, **23** and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, **24** and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.
3. One who is in the likeness of God is in the likeness of LOVE.
 - a. **I John 4: 8** – The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
 - b. Thus, YOU are the demonstration of love which God sent to your neighbors.

C. God sent you with a message of His love for your neighbor.

1. **John 3: 16** – For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, **S#10.** that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.
2. **II Cor. 5: 18** – Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to **S#11.** Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, **19** namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

D. So, when we love our neighbor we draw him to us so we can draw him to God.

1. Our love has an ulterior motive, to lead them into the loving arms of our Savior.
2. The bonus is that we get to enjoy their friendship along the way.

II. Wash your neighbor's feet.

S#12

A. Remember John 13 where Jesus washed the disciples' feet.

S#13.

1. The washing of feet was the job of the lowliest servant in the household.
2. None of the disciples were willing to humble himself before the others.
3. Jesus, their Lord and Master, humbled Himself to do the lowest task.
 - a. The washing of feet was NOT a ceremonial task; it was a practical need.
 - b. They wore sandals in a dusty place so their feet got very dirty.
 - c. They reclined at a low table with their feet near another person.

B. Vs. 7 ... Jesus told Peter that he did not understand what he was doing.

1. Peter very clearly understood the washing of feet, that's why he refused.
2. Jesus told Peter that it meant something that he would understand later.

C. Jesus said that His washing feet was something His followers should do.

1. **John 13: 12** – So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and **S#14.** reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? **13** You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. **14** If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. **15** For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."
2. He was not instituting a ceremony to be done periodically in the church.

D. The example is that the Christian should humble himself to serve others.

1. Jesus responded to do a humble task which was not an emergency.
2. **Phil. 2: 3** – Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of **S#15.** mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; **4** do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.
3. When your neighbor sees you are willing to put him above yourself he feels loved.

III. Meet your neighbor's needs.**S#16.****A. We do many things just to be nice, but there are times when there are needs.**

1. **Titus 3: 14** – Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds **S#17.** to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.
2. **I John 3: 17** – But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?
3. The Apostle Paul gathered money from far places to help the brethren in Jerusalem.

B. Needs frequently pop up unexpectedly.

1. Neighbor is laid up by a sudden illness or an accident; house burns, storm damage
- * 2. Congregation have started ministries devoted to disaster relief.

C. There are times when hospitality is needed.**S#18.**

1. Hospitality is much more than having friends over for dinner and fellowship.
2. The Scriptures instruct us to exercise hospitality to strangers.
 - a. **Matt. 25: 35** – I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;

- b. **Heb. 13: 2** – Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. **3** Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body. **S#19.**

* 3. This congregation puts people up in the motel from time to time, **BUT** ...

IV. Be a comforter to your neighbor.

S#20.

A. When your neighbor's world comes crashing down around him, what's your response ?

1. When your neighbor's child is near death from a drug overdose ;
 - a. What would your response be ? Judgment, gossip, feeling sorry for him ?
 - b. Is your relationship such that you would go to him to support him.
 - c. Would your neighbor feel comfortable discussing it with you ?
2. Do you know your neighbor well enough so you would know if there is a problem.

B. Is your love proactive or reactive ?

1. When there is a death, do you reach out or wait to be asked.
2. Is your relationship such that your neighbor will open up to you.
- * 3. A man from our home town in Tennessee lost his job when the factory closed. Three days later his wife took his severance pay, got in his car and left him. He fell into a deep depression and did not come out of his house for a week or two. He finally called a his sister and give her a bunch of instructions which she found alarming. When her husband came in from the field they went to check on him. He had covered the bathroom with plastic and shot himself right after he had called. Though he lived on a city street and had close neighbors, no one knew he had a problem.

C. As Christians we must be known as being approachable and empathetic.

1. **II Cor. 1: 3** – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, **4** who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. **S#21.**
2. God expects the same from us as He expected from the first disciple He sent out.
Matt. 10: 8 – Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. **S#22.**
3. We have not been given miraculous powers, but we have been given comfort.
4. Sometimes life is tough. *Imagine life without God !*

V. Be merciful and compassionate to the undeserving.**S#23.****A. Jesus came to give His life as a ransom for undeserving people. YOU****S#24.****B. Man's first impulse is to look down on evil people and to judge.**

1. Jesus instructed His followers to overcome their natural tendency.

Matt. 7: 1 – Do not judge so that you will not be judged. **2** For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

S#25.

2. Our relationship with God is threatened if we are judgmental toward others.

Jas. 2: 13 – For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

3. We want our transgression to be dealt with mercifully.

Matt. 7:12 – In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

S#26.**C. Godly people view others as God views them.**

1. God describes His view of man as being :

Exod. 34: 6 –Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; **7** who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; ...

S#27.

2. The Lord God requires all who follow Him to be like Him.

a. **Matt. 5: 7** – Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

S#28.

b. **Eph. 4: 32** – Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

3. When we have learned to love our neighbor, (**Matt. 25:35-36** you visited/ gave)

Col. 3: 12 – So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

S#29.**CONCLUSION : How do I love my neighbor ?****S#30.**

1. Be God's Ambassador.
2. Wash their feet.
3. Meet their needs.
4. Be a comforter.
5. Be merciful and compassionate to the undeserving.

S#31.

When Jesus divides the sheep and the goats will we be on His right or be left?

#32. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**Matthew 25: 31-46**

31 But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

34 Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 38 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 " The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

41 Then He will also say to those on His left, ' Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; 42 for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; 43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' 44 "Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' 45 "Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46 "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."