

Love God & Love Neighbor

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 January 2019

Preacher: Matt Coburn

[0 : 00] In ninth grade, I picked up the sport of lacrosse.

If you've never played lacrosse, it's a sport where they run around looking like hockey players on a field with helmets and gloves like that. But instead of the ball being on the ground, it's in the air and you have these sticks that are about yay long that have these nets on the top, kind of baskets, and you throw it back and forth.

If you've never seen it, it's a great sport and totally worth learning. By the way, the Yale team is actually quite good. You should go check them out. They competed, won the national championship.

Anyway, they're worth seeing for sure. Anyway, lacrosse is a great sport. And but as I learned lacrosse, one of the joys and trials that I had in it was learning the basics because the mechanics of catching and throwing a ball out of a basket at the end of a stick is not easy.

I had a coach. I remember his name to this day, Ridge Diven, and he would make us drill incessantly. We started our spring season in November inside the gym after basketball practice, running back and forth, passing the ball, learning the basics, getting the bottom hand down so that your stick was up and down, learning how to properly throw and catch, learning the basics over and over and over again until it was painful.

[1 : 49] It was grueling to do that day after day, week after week, month after month. And if we didn't do it right, he had a signature move.

He would do this. Do you know what that means? Take a lap. If you didn't do it right, take a lap. He would drill into us.

Doing the basics well was exactly what we needed, and yet it was the hardest thing to do. And I think that's true in the Christian life as well.

It is the basics that are the things we most need to do, and they are the things that are the hardest as well. We're going to look at a passage this morning.

Jesus is going to say, what is it? What do we have to do? What does it mean to follow Jesus? Well, love God and love your neighbor. That's pretty well known. Everybody knows that. It's so simple, and yet how easy it is for us to lose sight of these as the basics.

[2 : 58] And how difficult we actually find it to be to do when we actually try to make them to be the right thing. I think we often as Christians delude ourselves to think that we are doing better than we actually are in these basics.

And this brings us to our passage this morning. We are in Luke chapter 10, starting in verse 25 in your pew Bibles. That's page 816.

And we are continuing our series that Greg began last week on being with Jesus on the road of discipleship.

Discipleship is one of those words that church people throw around. It's not necessarily used in other contexts. But a disciple is simply someone who is a learner and a follower. That is someone who listens to the words of a leader or a teacher.

And then who also follows those words and emulates the life of that leader. That's basically what a disciple is broadly. And it is what Jesus is doing in this section of Luke.

[4 : 09] In chapter 9, verse 51, it says, And Jesus set his face to Jerusalem, which means that he was turning to the cross. He was heading for his crucifixion and his death.

And during this whole section from 9:51 all the way to chapter 19, Luke records this series of events where Jesus is teaching his disciples and displaying to the world, what does it mean to be a disciple?

What does it mean to follow Jesus in these ways? So that's what we're going to look at this morning for a few minutes.

We're going to read the passage and then we'll pray together and then we'll dive in. So Luke chapter 10, verse 25. And he answered, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself. And he said to him, You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live. But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbor?

[5 : 39] And Jesus replied, A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and he fell among robbers who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.

Now by chance a priest was going down that road and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.

Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, Take care of him and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.

Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers? And he said, the one who showed him mercy.

[6 : 50] And Jesus said to him, You go and do likewise. Now, as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him to her house.

She had a sister called Mary who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?

Tell her then to help me. But the Lord answered her, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things.

But one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her. Please pray with me.

Lord, we thank you for your word this morning. We thank you for these well-known stories. And we pray this morning that you would make them new and fresh again to us.

[8 : 01] Lord, we pray that you will speak to our hearts. We pray that you will move our wills. And that, Lord, you will use our hands. Lord, we pray that as we listen to your word this morning, that you will help us to be disciples.

Those who know you and listen to you and follow you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Our text is all about the basics.

The basics in three part. They're sort of the introduction of the basics in verses 25 through 28. Then in 29 through 37, we see the basic of loving your neighbor.

And then in the last part, the basic of loving God. So that's what we will look at in that order this morning as we walk through it. So the context, the setup of all this, the introduction to Jesus reminding his disciples of the basic, is a lawyer, a teacher of the law, comes to Jesus, and he stands up and he asks him a question.

And this would be a normal question for students to ask rabbis, what must I do to inherit eternal life? What are the things, what are the criteria, what are the actions that I need to do in order to qualify to be in God's kingdom and to be God's person, to be secure?

[9 : 30] These are the questions that he is raising. But interestingly, Luke not only records the interaction, but he speaks into the heart of the lawyer.

Because the lawyer isn't simply asking this out of sincere curiosity. In fact, as a teacher of the law, he knows much of the Torah and much of the Old Testament.

And so when he is coming to Jesus, he is asking this question to test him. In what way is he seeking to test him? Well, it's not entirely clear because Luke doesn't expand anymore.

But it seems to me that maybe what this lawyer is saying is, you claim to be a great teacher, but I think you're an upstart. Will you uphold the traditions? Or are you making a new way?

And it's possible as well, because we see it later on, that he's asking this question in order to make himself look good. I know the answer to these questions. In fact, I am living these answers.

[10 : 31] I'm the embodiment of this. So I'm going to ask this question in order to make myself look good in asking the question. But whatever it is, he asks this question.

And Jesus, perceiving this heart, responds on the safest ground possible. He says, well, you're a teacher of the law of God. You tell me, what does it say?

And the man quotes back to him from Deuteronomy 5, which we read earlier, and then from Leviticus 19, 18, saying, you shall love the Lord your God, and you shall love your neighbor.

These two things. And Jesus responds and says, you're right. Great. Now go do it. Jesus says, you have thought rightly about what it would require for you, but now you must embody it.

You must actually live it out. Go and do these things. And in this introduction to these basics, we see these things laid out. Thinking rightly and doing rightly.

[11:40] Loving God and loving your neighbor. As we think about the pattern of discipleship, what do we think is most important? It's pretty easy for us to get distracted.

Can I create a checklist of things that I'm doing? Can I create a creedal belief statement where I can check off and say, yep, that's what I believe, so I must be good.

Maybe it's, I come to church every Sunday. Isn't that right? Isn't that what he wants? And here's the thing. All of those things are good. None of them are bad.

But when we make them the most important thing, when Jesus says, what is the heart of discipleship? It is loving God. It is being in a right relationship with God where you are responding to him in love.

And loving your neighbor where having known God's love for you and responded to him in love, you then turn around and love your fellow human beings.

[12:49] Men and women made in God's image. And we realize that at the core of the Christian faith is these relationships of love.

And it is so easy for us to be distracted, isn't it? I think of our church and as we sit on the brink of moving ahead, hopefully with a building project, with the disruptions and the distractions and the extra work and the, the, the, uh, some of the, the strains of transition that it will cause.

And I'm reminded here, we need to hear Jesus reminding us this morning, this is what is most important about our church. This is what we need to fight for more than anything.

The carpet of, or the color of the carpet does not matter. But if we love or don't love, that is what matters. So Jesus sets up this rubric, loving God and loving your neighbor.

And interestingly, then the next two sections unpack this. This is one of those places where those bold, uh, uh, section breaks in your Bible are not always helpful.

[14:07] Um, because the last verses in 38 through 42 are set off with another heading, aren't they? At least they are in my Bible. And in lots of Bibles, I think they're set off.

And so you think, oh, well, this is a new, this is a new setting. And that's not completely illegitimate because in verse 38, there's a sort of classic Lucan. He says, and now something else happens.

Um, and yet, as I studied these passages together, isn't it interesting that he sets out this basic, love God and love your neighbor. And then he tells these two stories about loving your neighbor and loving God.

And this is what we see as we go forward. So starting in verse 29, then we see Jesus expanding and, uh, uh, deepening our understanding of what does it mean to love our neighbor?

This basic that Jesus has laid out for us. Now you see this, the lawyer is, the story is in some ways continuing because the lawyer, having heard Jesus challenge, you've, you're thinking rightly about it.

[15:09] Now go do it. Feels threatened, doesn't he? Because somehow he feels the need in that moment to justify himself. I'm an upstanding religious man.

Don't you see me? Aren't I doing enough? And so he asked this question so that he can say, yes, I have met the standard. I have, I have been able to do what is necessary.

And he asked the question, who is my neighbor? So that he can know what are the boundaries of my responsibility? What are the, what are the, um, where's the limit of what you're really asking of me?

How good enough is good enough for God? When can I get to the end of the checklist and say, I'm okay and go home, put my feet up, watch football and not have to think about walking this road of discipleship this afternoon.

Can I just rest please? He wants to know how to check that box so that he can, uh, feel good and secure about his own actions.

[16:14] He wants to know what those boundaries are. And Jesus responds with this well-known story. A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho.

If you've been in the Holy Land, I've not, so you can probably picture this far better than I can. Jerusalem is up on a mountain and you go down to Jericho. And when you go down to Jericho, this was a well-known dangerous road to take.

So no one would be surprised that this man in, in Jesus' parable, as he goes down, he is beset by robbers. He is stripped, beaten, and left half for dead.

In all good storytelling, this raises the question, what's going to happen? Who will save this man? And lo and behold, a priest's arrived. And for this Jewish audience, you would think, yay, the police have come.

We're going to be saved. And yet that's not what happens. He looks at him and he passes on the other side and continues. And similarly, a Levite, one of those in the tribe of Levi who served the priests, especially set apart by God.

[17:27] Well, this certainly will, but he passes by as well. And in the first century years, there was this saying that would ring in the ears of the people that would describe the special people of God.

There are the priests, the Levites, and the people. And so, if you're listening to this story as a first century Jew, you're expecting the next sentence to be, and then finally, a Jewish layman was walking by, and suddenly this is going to be the hero of the story.

This is going to be the one who will rescue this man in distress. And yet that's not who it is, is it? It's a Samaritan.

Now, many of you know this, but some maybe... Samaria was the area north of Jerusalem quite a ways, up near the Sea of Galilee and beyond.

It was a place where two things had happened. One is that the Jewish community had been both forcibly and willingly intermixed with people.

[18:44] Both the Assyrians and then later the Macedonians, the Greeks, as they conquered this area, they forcibly removed some of the Jews to other places and brought in other people. And over time, this created an intermarriage and a syncretism that betrayed the Jewish commitment to being a people set apart for God.

But not only that, but up in this part of the world, the northern kingdom, and you've got to get into the history of Israel. I'm not going to tell you all about it. But when Israel was divided after David's kingdom was established, when it was divided north and south, they set up another altar on the slopes of Mount Gerizim.

And so, and that's up in Samaria. And so the people who lived up in Samaria, if I could use the crassest words, they were half-breed infidels.

Okay? They were outside of the community. And they were hated. They were despised. And they were opposed.

And Jesus says, a Samaritan, the worst of the worst, is trying to think of what might be, it would be an ISIS soldier seeing an American in need and stopping and helping.

[20:10] Maybe, maybe that's close, something close to the emotional impact that it would have for Jesus to say, a Samaritan stopped and he helped this man.

And he didn't just help him a little. Look with me at the story. Verse 33 and following. He came to where he was.

He saw him and he had compassion. So he saw a need. He responded out of his heart. And then look at the actions. First, he went to him.

He actually physically approached this enemy who was in need. And then this whole list of verbs that Luke, he bound up his wounds.

He poured oil and wine on him. He set him on his animal. He brought him to an inn. He took care of him. The next day, he paid for him. Not only did he pay for him, but he basically opened a tab and said, whatever you need.

[21:13] Which put him at great risk because inns were not places of great repute in those days. And it would have been opening him up to being massively scammed by the innkeeper.

And yet he says, whatever he costs, I will pay. The enemy responds to one in need in a remarkable way in this picture.

And Jesus then turns the table on the lawyer. You've asked me, who is my neighbor?

Because you want to know what the boundaries are. But I'm going to ask you the question, which one of these three was a neighbor? Neighbor moves from being a noun, tell me who I'm responsible for, to being a verb.

Tell me what I'm responsible for doing, for being, for becoming. Who showed mercy? Jesus is asking not about the limits of our responsibility, but the quality of our character.

[22 : 26] When he asked the lawyer, the lawyer couldn't choke out the word Samaritan. Isn't it interesting? He didn't say, oh, it was the Samaritan who did it. All he could say is, the guy who did that.

The lawyer was choking on Jesus' rebuke of his understanding of what it meant to follow him. Because it's not about checking the box.

It's not about just doing good within a certain range of reasonable expectations. It's about being a kind of person who responds to those in need with love.

He says, go and do likewise. And you will live. The inheritance you're looking for flows out of a life that recognizes these things.

So what about us, church? Daryl Bach, one of the commentators on Luke, says, one of the ways to summarize what Jesus is calling us to in this parable is to see and to feel and to serve.

[23 : 38] I thought that was really helpful. Questions for us to ask. Do we see need? Do we respond with compassion? Do we do actions to serve those?

And you know what? I want to stand before you and say, I'm really glad to be part of this congregation. Because do you know what I've seen over the years? I've seen a homeless mother and daughter housed for a month to get through a gap between when emergency housing ended and when they were able to get themselves onto their feet.

Strangers were invited into homes and kept for a period of time. I've seen some of you regularly visit retirement homes where members are.

I've seen some of you show up as a team to unpack a large moving van full of furniture for someone you have never met because they're coming to be a part of our church and you welcome them with serving.

I've seen single women adopt foster care kids and raise them to know Christ and to know the love of Christ in their homes.

[24 : 57] I've seen men and women befriending the children and single parent families to mentor, to love them. I've seen busy families absorb other kids so that overwhelmed parents can get a break.

I've seen couples take up the mantle to become a hub for singles who need a place to be on Friday night for fellowship and for fun that's going to be constructive and not destructive.

I've seen you be willing to take on your neighbor's kid when baby number two was ready to come and many, many, many other ways that I have seen you love your neighbors within this church and without in beautiful ways.

what I want to say is Jesus calls us to keep going to excel still more in our love for our neighbors to have a heart of compassion and I know it's not easy some of you think but I'm so overwhelmed I wake up every morning and the need in the world and the need even in my world is so much what do I do?

I'd simply say recognize that Jesus doesn't call you to serve everybody and to save everybody but pray and then do.

[26 : 38] Find something to respond to and serve. Don't let yourself get stuck in the paralysis of I can't do it all just do something.

And if all of us just do something we'll be following in the footsteps of what Christ is telling us to hear. Some of you want to solve the problems you see.

You see people in need and you want to solve their problems. Friends, there are problems that we may not be able to solve. I sit in the office and I see some of you and I see others our neighbors in the neighborhood come in and they have many problems that I cannot solve.

I cannot find them housing. I cannot find them jobs. I cannot find them friends. I cannot do any of those things. But I can still be a neighbor to them in those moments treating them with dignity with love and with care helping them in ways that I can.

some of you will say well I don't have time. I'm just so busy. This is the hardest one isn't it?

[27 : 55] Because in our life in our world today our currency the thing we value the most is often not our money. it's much easier to say here take some money hope that fixes your problem than it is to actually respond in compassion isn't it?

Our time and our attention are far more valuable than our money. And yet the example of the good Samaritan is that he took the things that were most valuable to him both his time and his money and his attention and he invested it at cost to himself.

And so I like many of you probably feel the sting of Jesus' rebuke. If I think I don't have time to ever stop and respond in compassion maybe my heart has gotten hard and my life has gotten so full that I'm not able to respond and to be a neighbor.

And if that's true I probably need a deeper reckoning with the Lord about what I'm doing with my life. It's very easy for us to fill our lives with selfish things that keep us from being able and willing to love others.

If you are sitting here this morning and you're like how do I do this? What do I do? Well here are a few specific practical things that you can do. One is we live in a city if you walk around New Haven you will find people who are in need.

[29 : 41] I want to point to you Pastor Greg has written a great little brochure called Helping the Homeless. Is that what it's called? I think that's what it's called. Yeah close enough.

It's on the back you'll see it there's only one like it. But it's really wise because there's a whole discussion that I chose not to get into this morning about when helping hurts and how do you help well and how do you not help well and there's all that thing because the heart of what Jesus is saying is see the need respond in compassion and serve them.

But as we do that you'll learn there's better and worse ways to do that. There are more helpful and less helpful ways to do that. Greg's pamphlet is a wonderful starting place for thinking about how do we respond to the needs of people that we meet on the streets of this city.

But there are other ways as well. Think about joining the Night Runners team that goes to Columbus House simply to love people there. Think about joining the mentoring team that bridges mentoring ministry.

Think they're full right now but think about whether you'd be available next year for mentoring kids in our city who are needy.

[30 : 51] if you're not on the have need list that Michelle sends out on a regular basis it's one of the ways to be aware of needs within our congregation that you might be able to meet.

So those are four practical ways for you to take steps. But at the end of the day what I want to ask you to do most in response to this is to pray. Ask the Lord to help you see the needs of the people around you.

ask the Lord to give you a heart of compassion in response to those and take steps do something to serve in response to what you see.

The lawyer was not prepared for this and we are often not prepared to be challenged the way Jesus challenges us with this parable.

And yet this is the basics that are simple and yet hard to do. And then he goes on as Luke tells the story he moves from this basic loving your neighbor to then this second story about Mary and Martha.

[32 : 05] Jesus in his traveling entourage it seems clear that Mary and Martha would be people who are known to him. It's not clear if this is the same Mary and Martha who are the brother of Lazarus.

That's an interesting exploration for you to see but it seems that this is probably happening somewhere else although again it's not clear that Luke structured this part of his story in a chronological geographic order and so it's possible that anyway I don't want to get into all the details of it but to say we don't know a lot but we do know that Mary and Martha were probably known to them partly because they call him Lord.

they were probably a part of the larger following that included both the 12 disciples but also others who were following with Jesus and they welcomed him into their home and they began to serve him and you see that there there are in these two sisters there are two responses.

Martha welcomed him into her house and she had a sister named Mary who sat at the Lord's feet. Both of these were disciples both of them were looking to serve Jesus but they did so differently and actually really interestingly if you have a King James Bible it says that Mary also was sitting at

her feet which is an interesting picture because it maybe suggests that Martha had started there. It's not clear and it's not in your English in your ESV but if you go back to the original language there's an extra chi in there which probably means also and it might suggest that Martha started there but it's very clear that that's not where she ended up right?

[33 : 55] Because Mary stays and sits at Jesus' feet and this is the posture of a disciple. This is the posture of those who would follow traveling rabbis around in this context and they would sit there and listen to the teacher.

They would listen to the words that the teacher was teaching and they would absorb these things they would internalize them sometimes they would interact like the lawyer did with a question but this was a posture of a disciple.

And yet Martha when you get to verse 40 but Martha was distracted. Martha was distracted by her serving.

She got up and she was taking care of them and for those of you who have served in churches or served in all sorts you know what this feeling is like when you're sitting there and you're trying to do the right thing and you're trying to help and serve and you see the guy over there who's doing the thing that you wish you were doing but you're not doing and you're wondering why he isn't helping to do the right thing because Mary clearly felt like this was the right thing for me to be doing and yet it was filling her with resentment with anxiety.

Jesus says you are anxious and troubled. Troubled is this great word it might be translated you're full of rioting in your heart. Have you ever felt your heart do that in these where you're just like oh why isn't no one else helping?

[35 : 28] That's Martha. She got there and it was very hard she challenges Jesus and Mary don't you see what's going on here Jesus?

Which is sort of ridiculous right? It's not like this is a you know but he's like don't you see? Why isn't she helping me? It's always good sometimes we don't even get to the point of verbalizing it we just mutter and grumble and become bitter.

Martha at least had the wherewithal to express it and say so. and Jesus responds and here's the thing I don't think that Jesus' rebuke is of her serving per se.

We just had a whole parable about how serving others is important. It's hard to see that his rebuke is oh no Martha you shouldn't have been serving food is not important hospitality is not important. I don't think that's what Jesus is saying. But Jesus is saying look at your attitude and look at what your serving has done.

[36 : 35] It has distracted you from the thing that is most important. Because in your serving it seems and this is where it seems that Martha has started to serve serving or serve duty or serve her picture of what she thinks is right.

And in the process she's lost the vision that she's actually serving Jesus. Mary for maybe her obliviousness to the opportunities to serve in other ways has kept that right.

And it seems that that is what Jesus commends in this passage. Look at me and see what she says. I see what he says in verse 41.

Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion which will not be taken away from her.

She has chosen to make Jesus and sitting at his feet and being his disciple the most important thing in her life. and she will not let other things even good things distract her from that.

[37 : 57] And wonderfully this is also an incredibly counter-cultural and socially explosive move because the rabbis in the first century would never let a woman sit at their feet like that.

That is not what women are meant to do. What Martha was doing is what women are meant to do. They had the old barefoot and in the kitchen perception of what women are meant to do.

And Jesus comes and he says no, don't you see? This is exactly what women are meant to be. Sitting at my feet being my disciple receiving my teaching serving me in this way as well as that way.

And he didn't say but he might have said and men you can go in the kitchen too and help out a little bit too. That's another story. But Jesus is exalting and holding up Mary as an example of the incredible thing that discipleship is a calling for all men and women.

For all the ones created in God's image. This is what he's called us to and for in Christ. And he says to Martha don't despise what Mary is doing instead value it celebrate it exalt it cherish it.

[39 : 31] Follow in her example of making following me the most important thing. and following me has a particular shape here because Mary is there are lots of ways to follow Jesus we just saw in the story of the Good Samaritan there's another kind there are other but here the key is that she is sitting and listening to his teaching.

And friends I just wonder for us this morning do we actually do that? we live in a busy world and we have many many distractions we live in a world that values our external productivity what have you done with your day?

What have you produced today? And Jesus comes in and he says to be my disciple is to love me and to love me is to sit at my feet and listen to my teaching.

How well do we do that? Do we have the creativity and the wherewithal to be like Susanna Wesley and to sit in our house full of innumerable children and to throw her apron over her head so that she would have time with the Lord every day?

Can you do that in your lab? Can you do that in your workplace? Can you do that in the busyness of your home? Can you do that when the papers are waiting to be written?

[41 : 06] When the books are waiting to be read? Are you willing to sit and listen to Jesus speak his words into your life?

Are there parts of your life where you're like no thanks Jesus I got this part I don't really want you to speak into it I don't want you to speak into my ethics at work I don't want you to speak into my sex life I don't want you to speak into how I spend my money that's kind of uncomfortable can we just stay on the like worshipping you and nice stuff like that go to church?

Are we resistant to sitting at Jesus feet because we think he might challenge how we live? Do you find yourself on a regular basis asking the Lord Lord how do I honor you?

How do I love you? How would you instruct me to walk through this circumstance this trial this opportunity?

Do you rather let your life be filled with distractions things that drive you away from Jesus rather than filling them with things that drive you to Jesus and allow you to sit at his feet?

[42 : 26] This is what Mary did this is what Jesus commends so the basics easy yet hard simple yet complex love God and love your neighbor and there is a logical progression of course in this because it is that when we love God first that we are able to love our neighbor maybe I don't know if you've tried to love your neighbor on your own strength it's very humbling because you find that your love has very little steadfastness you find that you run out very quickly but Jesus comes to us as the perfect good Samaritan he comes as the one who pays the greatest cost for our salvation he's the one who shows the greatest love and compassion for us in our sin as he heads to the cross to die for us and he comes to give us then a new life to restore us into a right relationship with God whereby his love becomes the wellspring from which then we in response to him love him and then overflow with that love in love to our neighbors this is the pattern of the gospel this is the picture of what it means to be a disciple to do these things may it be so for us let's pray

Lord we thank you for Jesus words Lord we pray I pray now that by your Holy Spirit you would take these texts and the questions that they have raised and the challenges that they put before us Lord that you would convict us of where we fall short where we have misunderstood where we have sought to justify ourselves where we have become comfortable in ways where we have lost our willingness to be costly in our love for you and our love for others Lord renew in us a vision of how great your love is how worthy you are of all of our lives that we as disciples might sit at your feet and love you and love our neighbors for your sake and we pray this in Jesus name amen