

THRESHOLDS

5- What's My Purpose?

Serving

10/13/24

*** Say this with me: *Love God...love others.***

Question: *Don't you just love God??*

Let's hear from a few of you why you love God today...

Threshold: *Serving*

***Opposition:**

- The world wants to control you...
- The enemy wants to corrupt you...
- You want to be the center of the universe...

***Thresholds:**

1. Belief: Is there a God?
2. Salvation: Can I be forgiven?
3. Surrender: Can I trust You?
4. Submission: Is holiness possible?
5. Serving: What is my purpose?

Introduction:

Let me share a story about Joseph. Joseph had been a believer for most of his life, born into it and been a part of it for 42 years. He attended very regularly, knew every inch of the church building; had even helped with a few of the renovations. This church was his second home and a special place of peace and power for him. But something happened recently in church. A surge of new people had begun to attend and they weren't very *churchy* people. They didn't seem to have any understanding about the church traditions and culture. And they always asked, "Why? Why do you do that?" Joseph was shocked. He had been raised to never ask "why" in church! You just did it! Some of these people were really broken, some spiritually immature, and some were not even believers yet! Joseph's safe haven had been invaded!

Laughing aside, Joseph was wrestling at a big threshold.

***Do I rest in my frustration and discontentment
or do I see an opportunity to serve?***

Last week, we explored the idea that our motives will determine our motions. If my motive is to live for my selfish ambition, my motions will ultimately seek to serve me. If my motive is to be liked, then my motions will be desperate efforts to gain your approval. But if my motive is to bring glory to God and to please Him above all else, my motions change dramatically.

****To bring glory to God and to please Him above all else = to love God with all of your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.***

***How well do you love God?** What does that even mean and what does it look like? Is it in our worship? Is it in our obedience? Is it in our faith?

Well, yes...but not entirely. This question is asked in a roundabout way in Luke chapter 10.

***(Luke 10:25-28 NLT)**

One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?" The man answered, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"

This scribe or lawyer is essentially asking this question: *What do I need to do to show my faithfulness to God, to please Him, and thereby win eternal life? Jesus answers through the Torah, this lawyer's main source of wisdom. He uses both Deuteronomy 6:5 which talks about loving God and Leviticus 19:18 which talks about loving your neighbor as yourself. The Lawyer is grinning and puffing his chest out. Obviously, he is a standout in loving God then! So, he throws out this next question just to hear Jesus say, "It's YOU!"

(v. 29) The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

***That's the question** isn't it? Who is my neighbor? If it were the upright and

wealthy Jews of the day, then this lawyer was absolutely loving his neighbors! Home run! But Jesus doesn't let him off the hook that easily. But His message isn't just for this lawyer, it's also for the Joseph inside all of us. That person that wrestles with God when our comfort and convenience gets disturbed.

Luke 10:30-35 NLT

(30) Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

- Now, a little **context: Jews HATED Samaritans and vice versa.** It was an old feud between full blooded Jews that worshiped at the Temple and the mixed race of Samaritans who also worshiped God but in their own Temple and in their own way. You know, those who were born and raised in church and those who came later...

(31) "By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by.

(32) A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

- Let's set the stage: this was a JEW who had been mugged, a brother, a kindred spirit. And it was a PRIEST and a LEVITE, pillars of the church, who walked by this poor, bloodied man who was near death.
- **Why?**
 - **It was inconvenient**
 - **It was messy**
 - **It wasn't "their job"**
- How many "neighbors" do we pass by? "I don't have the time", "I don't have the resources", "I don't have the skills needed"... **or is it that we just don't always have the "heart" for it?**

(33) "Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him.

(34) Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.

(35) The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.'

- I don't know if they did air quotes back in that day, but you can hear it in His voice... "despised" Samaritan. The person who should have been the villain- "it was probably Samaritans who mugged this man!" is what the average Jew would say.
- But Jesus makes this Samaritan the hero of the story. You can hear the gasps. And what was the defining catalyst of this hero? **What made this Samaritan stop? Compassion.**
- **Compassion is an expression of love.**
- **Love will take you out of your way. Love will inconvenience you. Love will cost you.**

"Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked. The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."

(Luke 10:36-37 NLT)

Love God...love others

- **Loving God is expressed in loving others**
 - Because God loves them...in spite of all their mess
 - Everyone is important to God, therefore everyone should be important to us
- **Loving God enables us to love others**
 - This relationship with God pours love into us that should spill out on everyone around us- our neighbors
- **Loving God requires us to love others**
 - Because He first loved us.
 - WE were the one laying broken, bruised, bloodied...left to die on the side of the road. JESUS...an unlikely hero from Nazareth (what good could come from Nazareth?)...a simple carpenter...the HERO who stopped and had compassion on us.

Listen, once you've stepped over the thresholds of belief, salvation, surrender, and submission... we should have learned a very important truth: we ARE loved, we ARE valued, we ARE blessed beyond measure...it's not about us anymore. It's about our neighbors. **This Threshold of Serving is about compassion and love. It's an ultimate act of worship. It's about getting beyond me.**

What would you give so your neighbor could be saved?