

Should Christians Get Involved With Social Issues?

Sunday, April 23, 2023 ▪ Jeremy Winkelman

What did Jesus say?

How did Jesus live?

Why did Jesus die?

Matthew 22:34-40

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 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 first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 14:13-19

¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵ Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶ But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷ They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." ¹⁸ And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

1 John 4:10-12

¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: What are some social issues you've personally had the opportunity to address? What did this look like?

Read & Discuss: Matthew 22:34-40

1. Why would Jesus pair demonstrating love to others with loving God? Jesus says that all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments of loving God and loving others. What do each of the following Old Testament verses reveal about God's heart regarding how He wants His people to think about social issues: Deuteronomy 10:18; Isaiah 1:17; Proverbs 29:7, 31:9; Zechariah 7:9-10?
2. Jesus says in verse 39 to "love your neighbor as yourself." If you were in a situation where you found yourself in need, how would you respond to meeting your own need? How should this guide our application of Jesus teaching to love others as we love ourselves?

Read & Discuss: Matthew 14:13-19

3. Although Jesus' mission was primarily about spiritual redemption, what does this passage tell us about Jesus' heart towards those with more practical needs? What are some "social" issues or needs in our community, nation, or world that Jesus might look upon with compassion?
4. In this passage, what role did Jesus expect his disciples to play in responding to the needs of those around them? What are some ways you've seen Christians address social needs in ways that demonstrate similar dependence in God?

Read & Discuss: 1 John 4:10-12

5. John uses the word love several times in these three verses. What various truths is he communicating to us about love? What connection does Jesus' death (v. 10) have with how we're to live in this world?
6. How might our attempts to deal with social challenges help others understand the love of God for this world? What is necessary to ensure that our attempts to respond to social issues result in people better understanding the Gospel, that Jesus died to pay for the sins of all those who put their faith in him?

Apply: How might you begin to think or act differently with regard to some of the social concerns around us? What's one specific issue that you will begin to pray about or look for ways to engage?

Pray: Pray we will be people who demonstrate Christ's love for the world not just with words, but with action.