

**Sermon Notes of  
Guest Speaker Elder Larry Helscher's Sermon on July 14, 2019:**

**"Definitions"**

**[In today's sermon, guest speaker Elder Larry Helscher shows us that it takes the Holy Spirit to direct and guide us as to how to love God and our neighbor.]**

**Notes**

Introduction:

- What we mean by definitions today is not what we find in the Webster Dictionary or on Google.
- Rather, definitions is how we think about spiritual subjects such as heaven or judgment.
- This is not a deep theological study – for that we should go to GCI's web site or read "A More Christlike God" book written by Brad Jersak.
  
- The key point here is that all our definitions must be within the framework of God's love.
- This really helps us.
- Now we have many ideas about spiritual subjects from our popular culture which we can accept, reject or better yet modify.

**Mark 12: 28 (ESV), And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" 29) Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30) And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31) The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."**

- It's obvious we can't love God and our neighbor without the help of the Holy Spirit.

Role of the Holy Spirit:

- Now Jesus called the Holy Spirit, "the comforter" (John 14:16) ASV.
- And as we look through the New Testament, there are other words that describe the Holy Spirit such as help, support, intercede, direct, remind, lead and guide.
- Now the question is – does the Holy Spirit do it all for us to love God and love our neighbor?
  
- A number of years ago, his wife Linda, wanted to run a marathon, which she trained for.
- A few years after that she wanted to go the bottom of the Grand Canyon and then climb back up.
- In both cases, the coach and guide had trained her to do these events, but didn't force her to do these things.
  
- Linda had to willingly co-operate with them and take the initiative to accomplish these events.

- Likewise, the Holy Spirit does not push, force or make us do things – He’s rather a guide and a help.
- Greg Williams (President of GCI) commented in one of his letters:

*I imagine you have felt the nudging of the Holy Spirit in your life.*

*He also quoted the verse from Titus 2:11-14 (NIV), “For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem, us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”*

- There is so much interesting information in these verses.
  - Grace is what teaches us godly living, not the Law, not a divine force.
  - And, we have a part to play as we follow the lead of the Spirit.

### Loving God:

- How can we not love God as we look at His marvelous creation from a star filled night to the various intricate plants that are deploying what’s called photosynthesis, which keeps them growing.
- And then there are the three Omni’s – a Latin word for all:
  - God is omnipotent: all powerful
  - God is omniscient: all knowing
  - God is omnipresent: present in all places at all times
- Unfortunately, modern society places God far off somewhere, which is not true.
- That brings us to the definition of heaven, where Joe Tkach, Jr. called it a “dimension or state of being.”
- Heaven is spiritual – it’s not a place.
- Now many translations use the phrase, “heavenly realm.”
- The word “realm” shows that God can be everywhere He wants to be or needs to be.
- Ezekiel, in the Old Testament, was given a vision of “the glory of the Lord.”
- It involved wheels, wings, colors, and flashes of light – all he could do is try to explain the spiritual realm in physical terms.
- Now there are many problems of the traditional heaven where God is depicted as an old, white haired man sitting on a throne.
- In reality, heaven is the realm of God’s existence.
- One of the commentaries talked about the glory of God said “the clouds of God’s glory are not rain clouds.”
- So, in reality, we can see that God is not far away from us.
- One of Jesus’ names is “Immanuel” meaning “God with us.”
- Was Jesus only with us for 33 and half years – or is He still “God with us”?

- Jesus said in Matthew 28:20 (ESV), “And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
- This is a promise from Jesus that He would be with us until the end of the age.
- The Mirror commentary on Revelation 1:7 says: “When God steps out of the invisible heavenly realm.”
- This means the heavenly realm is anywhere and everywhere.
- Larry personally doesn’t like the phrase, “When Jesus is coming back” because that implies Jesus is gone away from us.
- Better translations say it this way: “His appearing” meaning when Jesus steps out of the heavenly realm into our realm.
- Jesus tells us in John 14: 29 (ESV), “I in you and you in me” which tells us we can have an extremely close personal relationship with Jesus.
- So this means that Jesus isn’t in some third heaven a billion miles away from us.
- Now in Acts 17:27 (ESV), Paul is talking to Greek scholars, on Mar’s Hill in Athens, who like to debate things, told them, “Yet he (God) is actually not far from each one of us”
- So, knowing all of this will help us to love God.

#### Loving neighbor:

- In 1 Samuel 16, we get a glimpse into God’s mind as the event involved all of Jesse’s sons because Samuel was given the job by God to find a new king for Israel.
- As Jesse introduced each one of his sons, God told Samuel, “No this isn’t the one.”
- Finally, Jesse found David feeding the sheep and brought him to Samuel.
- And here we get God’s insight:

#### **1 Samuel 16:7 (ESV),” For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”**

- Now our current society that we are living in is against loving our neighbor.
- That’s especially true if you are on the parking lot of the 210 freeway, or in line at airport security or in line at the DMV.
- Society is not geared to help us love our neighbor.
- Now pastor Craig has given us a definition to define those who are not in a relationship with Jesus Christ.
- We don’t call them pagan or unconverted or even un-evangelized, but rather not-yet-believers.
- New Testament Scriptures tell us how we view others.

#### **Philippians 2:3 (ESV), Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility esteem others more significant (better) than yourselves.**

- Now, that’s not easy to do, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, it can be accomplished.

**2 Corinthians 5:16 (ESV), From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh.**

- Other translations put it this way: “We don’t look at others in a worldly way.”
- Larry then told a story about one of his fraternity brothers whom they had their differences between each other.
- Then one day when this fraternity brother had parachuted into the area where the fraternity was having a picnic, Larry developed a great new respect for him.
- Now, we’re going to look at how God deals with others which will help us deal with others in a Godly fashion.
- Justice, in our society, is the penalties or punishment due us because of our wrong doing.
- Now God doesn’t give us what should be coming to us, but rather He gives us mercy and grace.
- So when we think of justice, we need to think of God’s justice which involves forgiveness.
- About 40 years ago, Larry notice on a church marquee the phrase, “No Condemnation.”
- Now, if you are wrapped up in legalism, you believe in condemnation.
- But Paul reveals something quite different in Romans 8.

**Romans 8:1 (ESV), There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

- Now, eventually if not all then most people will have this opportunity to be in Christ Jesus by accepting Him.
- Now God, through Jesus Christ, is not condemning this society and the people in it, but rather He is redeeming His creation from condemnation.
- Now let’s look at the world “judgment.”
- In Brad Jersak’s book, “A More Christlike God” he writes, “God’s judgment is the settling of accounts.”
- Sometime or other, every person is going to settle their accounts with God and most will make the right choice when they are offered eternal life.
- Now let’s look at the phrase, “the wrath of God.”
- Does God want to zap people with pitchforks of lightning bolts, because He gets mad at them? NO!
- In Brad Jersak’s book, “A More Christlike God” he writes, “It is the free will we have, the free moral agency we have as human beings plus it involves the result of choices we make.”
- This understanding comes from many Scriptures in the New Testament.
- Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt (a German theologian: 1819-1919) wrote this about God’s wrath,

*Sadly, a focus on the wrath and damnation that God is supposed to wreak on the*

*godless has spread among many Christians. This is a direct contradiction to the love of God, which the New Testament so clearly teaches.*

- A lot of people misbeliefs about damnation and suffering forever in hell come from Dante's book "Inferno" not the Bible.

Concluding comments:

- We are to certainly love God because of His greatness and especially for His love for all of us.
- Now loving our neighbor might be a little tougher, but it can be done with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- We know from Scripture that God wants us to:
  - Esteem others better than ourselves
  - Realize that justice is for all people
  - Understand that God's condemnation does not involve destruction
  - Believe that God's redemption is for everyone
- Knowing all of this, how can we not love God and all people?

Closing prayer