

Love at the Center

Matthew 22:34–46 | Rev. Cheryl Farr | October 25, 2026

SERMON THEME

The heart of faithful religion is love of God and love of neighbor, rooted in Christ Himself.

BIG IDEA

God's grace teaches us to love Him with our whole lives and to make that love visible in the way we treat others.

What Matters Most? | Matthew 22:34–36

During His final week in Jerusalem, Jesus faces another test from the religious authorities. An expert in the Law asks which commandment matters most. Jesus answers by showing what holds all the commandments together.

- It's possible to know Scripture and still miss what God wants to do in our hearts.
- Church work matters, but it should always lead us toward deeper love for God and people.

Love God With Your Whole Life | Matthew 22:37–38

Jesus reaches back to Deuteronomy 6:5. Loving God with heart, soul, and mind is more than a feeling during worship. It shapes our priorities, choices, relationships, and everyday decisions.

- Give God more than the leftover time in your day.
- Let your faith influence how you respond to stress, conflict, and responsibility.
- Ask what matters to God before deciding what matters most to you.

Love the Neighbor in Front of You | Matthew 22:39–40

Jesus joins love for God with love for neighbor. The two belong together. Our neighbor isn't only someone we agree with or enjoy being around. Real love seeks another person's good while still allowing honesty, accountability, and healthy boundaries.

- Welcome the stranger; notice the lonely; care for people who are struggling.
- Speak truth with kindness, especially when you disagree.
- Let people experience God's love through your actions, not just your words.

Grace Comes Before Our Love

None of us has loved perfectly. The good news is that God loved us first. His prevenient grace reaches toward us before we respond. Through faith in Christ we receive forgiveness, and through sanctifying grace the Holy Spirit keeps shaping our hearts.

- We don't earn God's love by loving well; we learn to love because He first loved us.
- Wesleyan holiness is a life increasingly ruled by holy love, not a claim that we never make mistakes.

More Than David's Son | Matthew 22:41–46

Jesus asks why David calls the Messiah “Lord.” His question reveals that the Messiah is greater than a descendant of David or an earthly ruler. Jesus is the risen Lord whose authority gives meaning to His teaching. The One who commands love also demonstrates it through His life, cross, and resurrection.

- We follow Jesus not just because His words are wise, but because He is Savior and Lord.
- The cross shows us how far God’s love will go to reach us.

Love Looks Like Something

The heart of Christian faith should become visible in ordinary acts of mercy. No church can meet every need, but every congregation can show people that they matter to God.

- Call or visit someone who feels forgotten.
- Offer a meal, a ride, a prayer, or a listening ear.
- Make room for someone who wonders whether they belong.
- Respond to differences with conviction and compassion rather than contempt.

Key Truths

- **Love is central:** Everything we do as disciples should grow from love for God and neighbor.
- **Grace comes first:** God loves us before we can get everything right.
- **Growth is possible:** The Spirit continues changing our hearts and habits.
- **Christ is Lord:** Faith is more than admiration; it calls for trust and obedience.

Questions for Reflection

- Where have urgent responsibilities crowded out your relationship with God?
- Who is one neighbor God may be inviting you to notice this week?
- What would a visitor learn about Jesus from the way our church welcomes people?
- How is God’s grace changing the way you respond to difficult people?

Takeaway: Put Love at the Center

Choose one ordinary way to make Christ’s love visible this week. Spend a few quiet minutes with God, check on someone, offer practical help, or listen to someone you usually disagree with. When you fall short, return to the grace that met you first.

Key Verse | Matthew 22:37–39

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (NIV)