CHURCH OF THE
Good Shepherd

Sermon Discussion Questions: November 22, 2026

Love is Essential

Passage: Matthew 22:34-40

1. **Love is essential.** Jesus says that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. What do you think it means to love God with the core of who we are, rather than simply performing religious duties? Where are you most tempted to substitute religious activity or other pursuits for genuine love of God?

2. **Our love is often transactional.** The parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates how easily we put boundaries around whom we are willing to love. We tend to love people who are like us, make us feel good, or share our interests. What kinds of people are you most likely to overlook, avoid, or find difficult to love? What might it look like to see them as your neighbor?

3. **We love because God first loved us.** The sermon emphasized that our love for God and others is not something we can simply will into existence through greater effort. How does knowing that Jesus has loved us, sacrificed for us, and become our neighbor change the way we approach the command to love? How does the gospel free us from guilt and self-reliance while motivating us to love others?

4. **Love should characterize the church.** The sermon acknowledged that Christians and churches have sometimes been judgmental, hypocritical, and inattentive to the needs of others. Why do you think churches can struggle to embody the love they proclaim? What would it look like for our community group and CGS to become places where people genuinely experience the love of Jesus?

5. **Love is the mission.** The sermon described three ways we can love our neighbors: personal relationships, tangible acts of service, and gospel witness. Which of these comes most naturally to you, and which is more challenging? Who is one person God may be calling you to notice, befriend, serve, pray for, or invite into your life?

A suggested closing exercise: Give everyone a moment to identify one person in their neighborhood, workplace, school, or existing relationships whom they could intentionally love in the coming week. Then pray for those people by name, asking God to help you see them and love them as Christ has loved you.