

Matthew 22:34-40 | David Vinyard

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[0:00] It was mentioned there's a golf tournament on this afternoon that a lot of folks are hoping to catch the end of. Dayspring and then Teddy was like hey can you just kind of cover what I was going to cover and so it's been a collaborative effort the last couple weeks to make sure that we stay somewhat on pace.

But if for some reason today's message feels a little bit like a family road trip where you know dad's trying to make up for a few pit stops now you know why. The good news is all of this kind of flows together.

So Matthew 22 is where we're at if you want to open up and turn there. We are going to do a little more reading than I had initially planned on but that's just because I feel like it's good to kind of see how we've gotten to our primary text which is going to be Matthew.

I'm sorry verse 34 to 40 of 22. And the story if you're thinking like there's so much going on in the Gospels there's so many encounters with Jesus what are we talking about today.

Jesus is questioned and Matthew 22 is a lot of Jesus being challenged but he is questioned about what is the greatest commandment and why. So that's where we're headed.

[1:34] It's sort of a timeless question I was thinking about it early on. This who or what is the greatest. And this topic has actually come up a few times as we were going through Matthew as we went through some of the other Gospels just greatness right.

Earlier in Matthew 18 the disciples asked Jesus who was the greatest among them. You remember that conversation. Which kind of you study the 12 and it becomes a little funnier as you think about it. But prior to that I actually had a message last year on Jesus being asked about John the Baptist. And he responds saying of those born among women there is no one greater than John. And I started thinking about that there's this appeal in greatness. There's something about it.

My sons and their friends. Isaac stayed up for this. He doesn't know I'm going to say this. They use the word goated. Which annoys me. You know. It means crowned the best right if you've been goated in something.

And I kind of knew this day was always coming for me. The day when I would be annoyed by what the kids are saying. And I think just using the phrase the kids solidifies the fact that I've arrived there. Words like sigma and riz and low key.

[2:44] All those things right. Skibbity probably is the worst. But unlike this new age of slang. Greatness is timeless. It's timeless. There are many thoughts.

There are many famous people who have spoken about greatness. Vince Lombardi said the only place where greatness comes before hard work is the dictionary. I like that quote.

Tom Brady was asked which ring is his greatest. You know Tom Brady fan over here. Tom will appreciate this. He responded the next one. I like that. And then you have Bill Murray who said. Oh sorry. Bill Murray. To be great always give 100%. Unless you're donating blood. And you want to peel back a little bit. You know. So with that we'll pray.

We'll read Matthew 22. And we'll dig in. God thank you for this morning. Thank you for the chance to study your word. A chance to see. Just the way you engaged humanity.

[3:44] The things you encountered. The challenges. The questions. And that you took so much time to speak truth into the lives of these individuals around you. And by default. Those who are reading it today. Which is us. And just thank you for that.

I pray that you would speak through me. Give us an encouragement. Give us some challenge. And help us to take this into our week and glorify you. Amen. So Matthew 22.

We're going to go all the way back to verse 15. And I'm going to cruise through a couple of these segments. And I think you'll see a theme by the time we get to verse 34. So verse 15. It says.

Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. And they sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians saying. Teacher. We know that you are true. And teach the ways of God.

And you do not care about opinions. For you are not swayed by appearances. So far so good. Tell us then what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? But Jesus aware of their malice said.

[4:42] Why do you put me to the test? You hypocrites. Show me the coin for the tax. And they brought him the coin. And Jesus said to them. Whose likeness and inscription is this? And they said.

Caesar's. And then he said to them. Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. And to God the things that are God's. And when they heard this they marveled. And they left him and went away.

Okay. So that's the first encounter. We're going to jump. Keep going at verse 23. Verse 23. That same day. The Sadducees came to him. And they asked him a question. Saying teacher. Moses said if a man dies.

Having no children. His brother must marry the widow. And raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died. And having no offspring. Left his wife to his brother.

So to the second. And the third. Down to the seventh. And after all the woman died. And in the resurrection therefore. Whose wife will she be? For they all had her. Right.

[5:38] Now I'm all for a creative riddle. Or a brain teaser. Right. But Jesus knew their intent. And so he says in verse 29. Jesus answered them. You were wrong. Because you know neither the scriptures.

Nor the power of God. For in the resurrection. They neither marry. Nor are given in marriage. But are like the angels in heaven. All right. All right. So that's the second encounter. We're going to keep rolling.

Verse 33. Skipping down just a couple verses. This is the main text for today. And it says. When the multitudes heard this. They were astonished at his teaching. So they say that again. Right. But when the Pharisees heard.

That he had silenced the Sadducees. They gathered together. Then one of them. A lawyer. Or some might say an expert in the law. Asked him a question. Testing him. Saying. Teacher. Which is the greatest commandment in the law?

Jesus answered him. You shall love the Lord your God. With all your heart. With all your soul. With all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

[6:36] On these two commandments. Hang all the law and the prophets. So we're officially caught up. If the pizza arrives early. Right. So you may have noticed a trend.

You may have noticed some things happening. That sound very similar. In that text. There's a series of questions. They're aiming to entrap Jesus. In words. In rules. In front of the public. And it's been escalating. I started thinking about that. You know. Why. This is a long day for Jesus. You know. Jeff and I were talking about schedules. And just having a long week. And this is one of those days for him.

I mean. Every time he turns around. There's somebody else coming with a riddle. Or a challenge. And I started looking into this. All the way back to John 11. Is when they started to brew. And think about like. We got to do something here.

Notice this text in John 11. Right after Jesus raised Lazarus. Here's what we learn. It says. Many of the Jews therefore. In verse 45. Had come with Mary. And had seen what he did. And believed in him. So when they.

[7:35] And sorry. But some of them went to the Pharisees. And told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and Pharisees. Gathered the council. And said. What are we to do? For this man performs signs.

If we let him go on like this. Everyone will believe in him. And the Romans will come. And take away our place. And our nation. It's interesting that John was able to capture. Their real.

Their real concern. You know. What really bothered him. So they start to brew over this. We got to get him. We got to figure this out. Because they were. Afraid. They were afraid that what?

That everyone would believe in him. Isn't that interesting? And they were afraid. They would lose their position. Their favor. Their status. Anyway. All to say. These schemes have been in the works. For a little while. And so the first thing they toss at him. Is paying taxes to Caesar. Seems pretty straightforward. I think tax day. Oddly enough. Is Tuesday.

[8:31] Right? You guys done? Hopefully. Hopefully you don't have too much left to do. Nobody loves taxes. But. In this culture. Right? In the Jews. It was a particularly sensitive topic.

Right? How much should we be paying? We're kind of under Roman rule. You know. I hope Jesus says none. Right? But. He knew. He knew that this was sensitive.

And he knew what they were up to. So he solves that riddle publicly. Kind of like. Surprises him.

Right? And then they come to him again. Just in verse 23. About the Sadducees. Bringing him this riddle about marriage.

And he kind of calls them out. He says. You are an error. Because you do not know the scriptures. Anyway. This run up. This line of questioning. This entrapment with.

How to. How to navigate the uncertainties of society. And how to navigate the afterlife. Or the thoughts about what's going to happen after this. They couldn't get him. That's the point. They couldn't trap him. They couldn't seek.

[9:28] Seal him into this box that they wanted him in. Right? And so. I mentioned this to Dave before. I feel like Matthew 22. If you're looking for like. Where are we going from here? This is kind of the last attempt at civility.

Like. We're going to give it our best shot. We're going to try and humiliate him publicly. We're going to try and sweep him aside. And if this doesn't work. Right? So that is.

I think the run up. But it's no use. If you look at verse 33. Right before. It says the crowds heard this. And they were astonished. They were just. They were amazed. That someone could square off against these folks. Right?

And one thing I like to do. Anytime. Studying the Bible. Studying. The life of Paul. The life of Jesus. Something in the Old Testament. It's not exactly. First nature.

To put yourself in the room. To think about what it would have been like. Right? But I have found it helpful. And in thinking about this scenario. Thinking about putting myself there. Putting us in the room.

[10:25] With what was going on. What would your standoff have been like? How would this have been received? If you were standing next to Jesus. Or thinking about these people. And because it's the Masters this weekend. If any of you follow golf.

I found this example. I thought this was relatable. Just as a golfer myself. And because Teddy took a dig at golfers. A few weeks ago. I wanted to bring an example. That was a little helpful. So while they're queuing this up.

Or teeing this up. I should say. Thank you. This is an example. Right? Thinking about what. This. This so-called expert.

Right? Bringing a challenge to someone like Jesus. What would this have been like? Now if you've never heard the name Phil Mickelson. Show of hands. Anybody? Yeah? Even a few non-golfers out there. That's good.

That's good. Let me tell you about Phil. While they're loading this video. He's doing terrible this year by the way. So this. The timing of this couldn't be worse for me. But in theory. He's won 45 PGA Tour events.

[11:24] Six championships. And three at the Masters. That's three green jackets. Right? That sounds like a goat. Yeah? What's that? Yeah. So.

Three demonstrations of excellence. If you want to think of it that way. Three proof points of. Right? His reputation. His ability. So cue this up. And I just want you to think about a level of greatness on display.

As you kind of see this interview with Phil. Go ahead. You've always thought that way. Very analytical. There's a lot that I process on every shot. And there's a lot of detail. Do you want me to touch on it? Or is it really? Hey. Tell me about it. Well, in my practice I build a reference. So I hit the same shot. I hit the same shot. I hit the same shot. I hit the same shot. I hit the same shot. I hit the same shot. I hit the same shot over and over. Building a nine iron that goes 145 yards.

Let's say. Now that will vary based on temperature and altitude. And which will change with time of day and whatnot. As well as wind. And those effects. But one of the things people will say is I hit my.

[12:21] I hit my wedge. You know. 120. Well you might hit a 120 under certain conditions. But in the morning. Ball's not going to go 120. Maybe in the afternoon when it's warmer. And the ball heats up. But it's going to go five to ten yards shorter in the morning.

People don't factor that in. If you get a little bit of water in between the club face. And the ball. People don't know. It actually increases spin. Causes it to go shorter. The first cut always comes out six to eight yards dead. If the grain is into you.

It's going to launch. And hit lower on the face. Launch lower. Have more spin. If it's down grain. The club slides a little bit quicker. You'll get more out of it. If it's sitting up on zoysia. Or off of a tee. Always goes five yards farther with each iron.

Based on the fact that the center of gravity is underneath the ball. And it launches higher. A little bit less spin. All these things I have to factor in when I look at the lie. Okay. How is the lie. And how is the ball going to come out relative to my 145 nine iron.

Now. That's ten off a stock. So I have a normal sway. Right. And then I have a second swing for every iron shot. And that's. It's a little bit shorter backswing with the same acceleration. So I have a 145 and a 155 yard shot.

[13:21] What is the lie going to do. What's the temperature. What's the wind. How do I want the ball coming into the green. If you choke down an inch. Three yards comes off of it. One degree aloft is three yards. So if you open the face a degree.

That's three yards. So if I have a reference of 145. I wanted to fly 142. I can choke down an inch. It'll come in a little bit lower. A little bit flatter and release. Or I can just open it up.

I love David Perry here. That'll be three yards. But it'll back up. All these variables. Like I'll process. Yeah. Like that. When I look at the lie. And assess the situation. See what kind of grass it is.

And those are the nuances. That allow me to be so precise with my wedges. And my short irons.

And my distance control. And that's why iron play has been such a strength for my game.

Is that I'm able to be precise to within a yard or two. And in my practice sessions. Because I hit 1500 balls every month. To those specific numbers.

[14:16] My reference is pretty on. You can probably kill it there. That's good. Hit a shot. All right. So I think you get the point. Right. Imagine. Imagine. You know.

Just that level of knowledge and expertise. And you know. There's a few golfers in the room. I enjoy golf. I like to practice. I enjoy the feeling of feeling like I've gotten a little better at golf. More than anything else.

Maybe over the past five years. I've transitioned from absolutely terrible. To not entirely awful. And I think as the golfers. You probably appreciate that spectrum. Right.

If you've ever played the game. But just imagine. Right. Imagine someone like me. Gets paired with someone like Phil. At the tee box. Right. My best rounds are still.

You know. Eight to ten over par. I feel great about that score. Right. Imagine I lean over to Phil at the first tee box. Feeling pretty confident. I say. Phil. There's something I've got to get off my chest.

[15:11] You know. I. I just don't think you have what it takes to beat me today. In fact. I don't even think you really know this game. I've seen the highlight reels.

I've seen the miracle shots. But I. It's. It's fake news. So. You sir. Are an imposter. Can you imagine. Me saying that to someone like that. After his level of practice.

His commitment to the game. His understanding of the mechanics. Right. The arrogance of that charge. How insulting. You know. The rest of the force. Like. Dude. What.

You're just lucky to be in the room with him. You know. What would he say to someone like me. Would he even waste his time responding. Probably not. Just. Let's tee off.

And then talk. You know. That's the essence of what I felt like. Matthew 22. What we can't quite appreciate. Is just how. The great chasm. Between these accusers. These challengers.

[16:06] These trappers. And the son of God. Does that make sense. And to challenge Jesus. Jesus may not have golfed much. He could still whoop any of us.

Right. But to challenge him. On the subjects of the law. And the things of God. I mean. He wrote the book on it. Right. Exodus 31. Exodus 31. It says. And he the Lord.

Gave unto Moses. I mean. We're talking about. He was there. They're asking him questions. About something that he. Wrote. And shared. With mankind. The irony there. Right.

But here. Here's what I was thinking about in that. Because it's easy to read something like this. A familiar story. And just think. Oh. You know. But the patience. Of the son of God.

To even. Look these guys in the eye. And just offer them a response. Right. The grace of Jesus. To. To set aside. All of his validation. Like he could have just undone.

[17:03] Anything that they would have been. Unexpected. Right. His vindication didn't matter. His pride didn't matter. His. Personal. Flair. Or anything. Didn't matter to him.

He wasn't going to let that get in. Right. And so that's kind of where we land today. As we look at verse 34 in the end. And we get this question. And hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees. Right. They get together. They huddle up. And they come up with this new scheme. Mark chapter 12.

If you go there. Actually we are going to go there in a second. Mark chapter 12. Captures this same event. But it does make it seem like all of this happens on the same exact afternoon. I can't help but relate to that as a parent.

Like you know when you. Do something with one kid. Or you've got something else going on. And someone immediately brings you another problem. And then there's another problem waiting for you when you get home. You're like oh my gosh. Give me a moment. Right.

[18:01] But I think that's part of the tactic. So I do think this is all happening at the exact same time. If you look back at Mark chapter 12. But here's what it comes with. Right. Verse 35.

They send their knowledge champion. Some of the translations say expert in the law. Some of the translations say a lawyer. But here's their next attempt.

It says he tests them with a question. And says teacher. Which is the greatest commandment? There's something else I think really refreshing about this encounter.

And it has to do with the sovereignty of God. And it has to do with how God preserves scripture for us. And how he allows these things to make its way to us in history. But that Jesus could use the sin and the arrogance of these men.

To deliver us insight and truth. Is just marvelous. You know. Not reacting in anger. Not judgment or emotional outburst as I would. But redeeming control of the situation.

[19:02] How neat is that. Right. There's a whole application in that in and of itself. And I started going down the rabbit trail. I was like no that's. We'll save that for another time. But just that God could take that. This super annoying encounter.

Right. At minimum it's annoying to Jesus in probably a way. But that he could grab that. And then speak truth to us. Is beautiful. Now let's consider the substance of what Jesus responds with.

It says after all. I mean if Jesus is going to call this great. Right. Isn't it worthy of our time? So he answers. In verse 37. He says love the Lord your God.

With all your heart. And with all your mind. With all your soul. This is the first and greatest commandment. The heart. The heart. The heart. The heart. Meaning like.

Our emotions. Our desires. Our spiritual devotion. The mind. Our intellectual engagement. And our understandings. Our pursuits. This is one of those points in the message. Where I started thinking about. You know. I would love to be a better example of this.

Again, Teddy, I appreciate the message on the how, you know. It's such a practical moment in thinking about scripture and Teddy was taking us through, you know, the rationale on, you know, how do we take certain things?

And we read what we're supposed to do but then what does it go with from there, right? And I was just thinking about this command and Jesus' intentions and everything behind it and I thought about what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 5.

He says, And that is, without a doubt, something that I need to do more often.

[25:28] I think, when I start thinking about my own will, when I start thinking about all those other shortcomings, I think, it's easy to not do those things. It's easy to not rejoice.

It's easy to not give thanks in all circumstances. But to seek and prioritize God's will for our lives and not ourselves. That's the emphasis of what Jesus is leaning into.

Tom Grass will appreciate this. I was in Boston for work last week. You were talking about being distracted, right? You were talking about this morning. And I was sitting in a boardroom and I was listening to a presentation and some commentary and someone gave this statistic.

They said, In 2005, the average attention span of an adult human was 12 seconds. That seems low, right? You're like, gosh, 12 seconds.

And again, that's adults. It's not school-aged kids. And then, they fast forward and this is in the context of delivering HR technology and learning and changing behaviors and all that.

[26:31] Fast forward to 2024 and the statistics show that this has dropped to eight seconds. Eight seconds for an adult. And they used, this was great, by comparison, the average attention span of a goldfish is 8.9 seconds.

So, that reality sets in, right? And I realize that bodes very well for me standing here today and trying to end on time.

But I thought about that and I was thinking about just the trip and this message and this assurance came over me or this feeling of like relief that Jesus knows us better than we know ourselves.

He knows that we live in the most distracted time in history. He understands that we're struggling with things and working our way through priorities and self, dealing with a religion of the time, right?

Just like they may have been back then.

But he knew we needed something clean and simple. Something you could re-read in under eight seconds. And I love how simple the message is from today, right? To avoid the temptations of man and what these Pharisees are wrapped up in, loving self, prioritizing self, looking for their own protection of status.

[27:47] Isn't it interesting that Paul writes the same thing to the Romans? Romans 13, 8. It says, Owe no one anything except to love each other for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

It sounds a lot like the words of Jesus, right? And I was looking across other texts and just thinking about how much does this simple message translate? And it's interesting, Peter says the same thing in 1 Peter 4, 8.

He says, Above all, keep loving one another earnestly since love covers a multitude of sins. And then I found that so does John in 1 John 4, 11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another.

And it came to be pretty obvious that whoever said the Bible lacks consistency probably struggles with attention span, you know? Because this simple message of don't love yourself necessarily is a priority, right?

It's all over the place. It's consistent. Jesus outlines this. He lives it. He declares it that our perspective and our focus should be about loving and honoring God and then looking outward.

[28:52] And it's impossible to miss is the point. Making sure we're going to finish on time here. So, one of my favorite phrases to use in the business world lately are new favorite phrases.

There's a thousand buzzwords out there and things to do and say and people will discredit you immediately, but one that I've kind of grown to like is the phrase let me share something with you that you probably already know or let me tell you something that you've probably heard before.

You know? It's disarming. It's reinforcing. It kind of assumes that whatever I'm about to say is general consensus or non-controversial, right? And it isn't.

But, I get the same sort of feel from the conclusion of this text, right? This isn't a deep study where we're really unpacking like something new that Jesus shared.

It's not a revolutionary answer. It's not something that, you know, we're not digging into a mystery, right? Jesus quoted scripture that these folks already knew by heart.

[29:51] I started thinking about that. Like, all he's telling them is something that I guarantee you they already knew. That we ought to love God with everything that we are. But what makes this command timeless?

We talked about greatness. What makes it the greatest? I mean, we live in such a different world, right? Does it still matter? Is that still the command? Is that what we should be focusing on?

Our communication is digital. Our currency is digital. Our schedules are digital. We have the busiest generation in history, but we have great flexibility and assets. Our work is reasonable.

Our traffic is relatively painless. Unless you drive 270, I suppose. But in this era of individualism, it's still a challenge. It's still hard. It still doesn't come first nature, at least not for myself.

And the world is pushing us to worship self, to love self, every day. But it's not actually that complicated. That's kind of the message I was hoping to wrap up with.

[30:53] It's really not. It's really quite simple. It's just less of self. For those of us who believe in the death and the resurrection of Jesus as a payment for our sin and who would seek to honor God with our life, it's just a reminder.

That's the greatness we should aspire to. So I wrote this down. I feel like this text, because it was so simple or straightforward and in a lot of ways it just forced me to do a lot of introspection and at a time when I've been traveling and work's been a challenge and some other things just going on, it always seems to go that way, right?

But here's what I wrote down. This is just, this is David Vineyard notes from the text. It says, when I stand before God and he reminds me of all that he gave me, all the blessings of time and the resources and the networks I was a part of and the things I got to do, what will I answer for how I was engaged?

Did I love? Did I seek his will first and foremost? Did I walk in love towards others? Did I reach out? Did I offer? Did I give? Did I help?

Did I serve? Did I actually listen? Was I patient with the confused? Did I answer tactfully with the truth? Or was I focused on self?

[32:16] Was I inviting? Was I generous? Was I hospitable? Did I share that with others or was I too bothered with my own priorities? Did I value comfort? How about this?

When I prayed, was it just about me? Or was I concerned with other people? You don't have to answer those questions. I have a hard time answering them openly.

But that's what I was thinking about. I think the Pharisees, right, at least one of them was cut when Jesus answered. I think he saw it. I think he felt it. And Jesus says, you're not far off, brother.

But most of them had lost sight of the very matter. We'll close today with a number. We'll close with the number 613.

You guys have a lot of Bible knowledge in here, so I'll ask the question. Does anybody know what that number means? 613. It's the estimated total number of laws in the Old Testament.

[33:14] And so when Jesus says something like this at the very end, when he says, all the law and the prophets hang on these two commands, it really puts that into perspective, doesn't it? And so here's, we're going to end with a song that the band doesn't have to play.

I figure we give them the night off. Here's the question to consider. Who and what do you love? What do you love and why?

What's stopping you or me from fully aligning to Jesus' answer? That we might worship and focus on the will of God and to love others first.

That we might avoid the futility of the Jewish leaders. The temptation that comes from chasing that affirmation from men. This is the last reference, I promise.

There was a lot of material here that I tried to cut out for the sake of time. But something that always stands out to me, if you remember the story in Luke chapter 7 where Jesus is sitting with his followers and the woman comes in and washes his feet.

[34:18] What was the lesson that he shared? They're all confused by it. They're all working through like, what's going on? He says, to those who have been forgiven much, or sorry, those who have been forgiven much, love much.

So I can assure you today, if you're a believer, you've been forgiven much. I've been forgiven much. So what's the excuse? Right? If we aspire to greatness, let it be the honor and love of God and his people.

So let's play this song to close and then I will give thanks for the food to follow, if that works. Let's pray. God, I thank you for this morning.

Thank you for the sense of humor that you keep using me to give messages on things that I'm terrible at. And just thinking about loving people and forgiveness and patience and God, I appreciate that.

I appreciate the chance to grow. I appreciate the chance to share. I think of your example and just the ways you persisted with those who would accuse you. I think, if anything, that's where I'm the shortest.

[35:24] And I appreciate that example of your grace and patience with men and just that you would show love, that you would not only love us here in the life that we have, but love us enough to redeem us.

I just thank you for that, God. I thank you that you've established a pattern, and you've given us the reasons and you've helped us to see the how and just lift that up to you today. Help me to be more loving.

Help this group here to just look for ways to be like you, to be more of the things that you've called out as the greatest. So we thank you for that. We thank you for this food. Pray for this afternoon with the other activities and just that you would allow us to take this with us.

Amen. Amen.