

January 15-21

For personal devotion:

As you reflect on this passage this week may it help to root yourself in the words of Jesus and prepare for the final week of our series.

Matthew 22:24-40 (NIV)

³⁴Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

³⁷Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’

³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

- What stands out to you as you read this passage?
- In what way does this passage challenge you personally? Where in your life are you in sync with Jesus’ teaching? Where are you not?
- Spend some time reflecting on verse 40. What do you think Jesus means that all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments? How might it inform our consideration of same-sex relationships?

For personal reflection: ELCA

Below is a quote from the Evangelical Lutheran’s statement on human sexuality.

- Do you find it helpful? Unhelpful? Why?
- How might this be instructive for us?

Although at this time this church lacks consensus on this matter, it encourages all people to live out their faith in the local and global community of the baptized with profound respect for the conscience-bound belief of the neighbor. [The ELCA] calls for mutual respect in relationships and for guidance that seeks the good of each individual and of the community. Regarding our life together as we live with disagreement, the people in this church will continue to accompany one another in study, prayer, discernment, pastoral care, and mutual respect.

Valuable reading this week:

Here are resources to read/watch this week. You may or may not agree with it the resource, but our hope is that they will inform, challenge and push you to think deeply about this issue.

1. Go to: <http://www.respectfulconversation.net/>
 - Scroll down to **Topic #8**. All essays in this topic are worth reading, but if time is short, make sure to read Tim Otto’s.
2. Two videos that give counter arguments for this issue.
 - Affirming: <https://goo.gl/hvmyGh> Start at 11:15 to skip introductions
 - Historic: <https://goo.gl/Ga4T93> Videos under Part 3 for the historic view