

On Earth, As In Heaven

1. Warm-up question: What's your favorite (or least favorite) thing about Fall?
2. Sunday was Global Missions Day at LJC. Doing good in this world is not just a nice thing to do; it's integral to our discipleship. The Gospel message that Jesus came to share with us has both a personal and social aspect. Yes, Jesus calls each of us personally to be "born again," *i.e.*, to enter into a process of personal spiritual transformation. But his message wasn't just personal, it was also social. He didn't come only to change you and me, he also came to change the world, as he made apparent when he announced his public ministry. Read Luke 4:14-21.
 - a. What do you take away from the words Jesus chose to announce his ministry? What's the gist of what you hear him saying?
 - b. Read Luke 14:12-14. What point is Jesus trying to make in this passage? He probably doesn't mean that we should never invite family and friends to dinner. So what's his point, and what does that tell us about the priorities that we who follow him should have?
3. Sunday's interview sermon was divided into three parts – global outreach, local outreach, and seeking justice. Let's talk about each. Globally, LifeJourney supports ministries in South Sudan, Uganda, Guatemala, the Navajo Nation (New Mexico), and the Appalachian Mountains. One of our Global Outreach Board members, Leticia Latinovich, told us about our recent missions trip to Appalachia and next years planned trip back to Guatemala.
 - a. On our Appalachian trip, we helped restore the home of an impoverished elderly woman and her family. On our last Guatemalan trip we made improvements to a medical clinic that serves impoverished Guatemalans. Have you ever been on a missions trip? If so, what was it like and what did you learn from it?
 - b. Do you think it's important that our church sponsor missions trips? If so, why?
 - c. Our global work is not limited to missions trips. We provide ongoing financial support to a girls' school in South Sudan, to the medical clinic in Guatemala, and to elderly Navajos, as well as school-age Navajo children. Some people might say, "We've got enough problems right here in Central Indiana. We shouldn't be sending money all over the world." What would you say?
 - d. In Uganda, we provide financial support for an organization called Crossing Lines Africa that is devoted to building inclusive churches that welcome people from all African tribes and treat women and LGBTQ people as equals. Crossing Lines is renovating a facility to provide emergency housing for gay and trans youth and adults who have to flee their homes. In Uganda you can be executed for being gay and imprisoned for advocating for gay and trans people. The leader of

Crossing Lines (a straight pastor) could easily be arrested, yet he persists. When you hear this, what are your thoughts and feelings? As Jesus looks down on what's happening in Uganda, what do you think he feels and thinks?

4. The second interview segment focused on what we're doing to help those in greatest need here in Central Indiana. We are a key partner for the Dayspring Center, which provides transitional dormitory-like housing for homeless families. At any given time, there are 30-50 homeless kids and parents at Dayspring. We purchase, prepare, and serve breakfast there each Saturday morning.
 - a. Have you ever been homeless or known someone who was. What circumstances led to their homelessness? Did they ever manage to get back on their feet?
 - b. As best you understand, what are the primary causes of poverty in the United States? Sometimes people fall into poverty because of bad choices they make. Should we still help them? If so, why?
 - c. Who is the poorest person you've ever personally known? How did their poverty affect them?
 - d. Why do you think Jesus was so passionate about helping the poor?
5. The third interview segment focused on the justice work we're doing. Jesus came "to set the oppressed free." Luke 4:18. The Old Testament prophets teach us that God expects us to stand up for justice for all. On Sunday, Pastor Robert and Karen Steiner told us about two key justice initiatives.
 - a. Robert told us about the work that the LifeJourney Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Board has begun doing to help our church live more fully into being an anti-racist church. (Note: Being anti-racist means actively working to heal racism.) What are some subtle (or not so subtle) ways racism can still manifest itself even in a church like ours? What are some ways we as individuals in our church (and in our social circles) can work to heal racism?
 - b. Karen told us about our Transgender Justice Initiative, which has three parts: (1) better educating ourselves as a congregation; (2) opposing anti-trans legislation; and (3) helping to change public opinion via a billboard campaign that will occur in January when the new Indiana legislative session begins. Based on lots of congregational input, the message on our billboards will be, "**Love Trans People – Jesus Did! Matthew 19:12.**" Imagine the double take hundreds of thousands of people will experience when they see our billboards. Each billboard will invite folks to our website for a fuller discussion. How do you feel about this effort?
 - c. How do you feel about being part of a church that's engaged in all the social justice initiatives we've discussed today? Does it feel like we're doing what Jesus would want us to?

Luke 4:14-21

14 Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. 16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'

²⁰And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

Luke 14:12-14

12 [While at a dinner to which he had been invited,] Jesus said to the one who had invited him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. ¹³But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'