

Sermon Notes:

- We know that God is our “refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble” (Ps. 46) but...how do we weigh our commitment to various biblical commands to care for the vulnerable with our natural desire to safeguard our own security?
- When speaking of the refugee crisis, it is first helpful to define terms.
 - * **Refugee:** An individual who has fled his or her country of origin because of a credible fear of persecution on account of their race, religion, political opinion, national origin, or social group.
 - * **Internally Displaced Person:** A person who has fled his or her home but stays within the boundaries of their country.
 - * **Asylum Seekers:** A person who flees their country for the same reasons as a refugee but does not prequalify their claim. Instead, they file a claim for asylum after they arrive in their destination country.
 - * **Migrants:** Those who leave their country due to poverty, natural disaster, general violence, or opportunity.
 - * **Undocumented Immigrants:** Those who live in another country without legal authorization
- How can we think biblically about the refugee crisis as Christians?
 - * **The Hebrew word “ger”:** Translated into English variously as foreigner, sojourner, stranger, or immigrant—appears 92 times just in the Old Testament, often in the context of God commanding his people to love and welcome those who came as foreigners into their land.
 - * **Refugees in the Scriptures:** Many of the heroes of our Christian faith—David, Elijah, Daniel, Esther, Abraham, John, even Jesus himself—had to flee persecution from tyrannical governments seeking to do them harm.
 - * **Hospitality:** The New Testament repeatedly commands us to “practice hospitality” (Rom. 12:13), which literally means to practice loving strangers—with the hint that, by doing so, we may be welcoming angels (Heb. 13:2).
 - * **Welcoming the Stranger:** Jesus commands His people to welcome the stranger for “whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:31-46).

(Over please)

- * **Great Commandment:** Welcoming refugees is a tangible way to love our neighbors, part of Jesus' Great Commandment (Luke 10:27), and to practice the Golden Rule (Luke 6:31), treating others as each of us would hope to be treated if we were to find ourselves in a desperate situation, forced to flee to a foreign land.
- * **Caring for the Persecuted:** Welcoming refugees also presents an opportunity to stand with our brothers and sisters in Christ who are persecuted for their faith—which includes a significant number of refugees from various parts of the world (Hebrews 10:33-34, 13:3).
- * **Good Samaritan:** Jesus makes explicitly clear in the Parable of the Good Samaritan that our “neighbor” cannot be narrowly defined to include only those who share our nationality or religion; the Samaritan showed compassion and love to someone in need—even putting himself at risk and expending his own resources—and we are to “go and do likewise” (Luke 10:25-37).
- * **Jerusalem, Judea, & Samaria:** Mission is not only to the “ends of the earth.” Mission is on our doorsteps. Jesus' last words to his disciples included a commissioning of them to be His witnesses in their city (Jerusalem), their country (Judea), and communities culturally and religiously different than theirs (Samaria) (Acts 1:8).
- * **Love Your Enemies:** Jesus ties our identity as “sons of [our] Father in heaven” to how we treat our enemies and commands us to “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Romans 12:17-21).

