

Love Your Neighbor Summary

Here are the seven bullet points from yesterday's sermon that summarize the depth, width, and genius of Jesus' 2nd greatest commandment - to love your neighbor as yourself:



1) This is about proximity: It's about who is already

around you, with whom you interact frequently, and who you encounter, either planned or unplanned.

2) This is not about choice: We chose our family, our friends, our clubs, and our workplace. We don't choose our neighbors. As such, loving our neighbors isn't subject to the way human beings usually curate their love, or are selective with it.

3) This is about seeing: Do we see all of our neighbors, or just those similar to us, or those with whom we have some affinity? Our first instinct toward those who are near us yet different from us is often anxiety or trepidation: as St. Augustine put it, "Fear is the enemy of love."

4) This is about margins: Do we live in such a way that we have anything left over for our neighbors? Marvel at the willingness of "the good Samaritan" to reorder his life in order to carve out the time and resources to care for a neighbor (even an enemy, to be more specific; see Luke 10.29-37).

5) This is about wanting for your neighbors what you want for yourself: What do you want for yourself and your family? We can answer that clinically, and refer to taxonomies of basic human needs like Maslow's or lists of how human beings communicate and receive love, like Gary Chapman's Five Love Languages. But we can also answer this personally - what are your dreams, what energizes and refreshes you, what do you find most meaningful and satisfying in life, etc.? However we come at it, the bottom line is - we are to want those things for our neighbors as much as we want them for ourselves.

6) This is about the best possible kind of love: Jesus uses the same word for "love" in both the 1st and 2nd great commandment - that great word, "agape," meaning self-sacrificial, willed, giving, divine-like love. Catch the symmetry - most Christians would be comfortable describing their relationship with and commitment to God in this strong a word, but how about to their neighbors, which is a bigger category than just their church family?

7) This is indispensable - without it, everything else collapses: There are several independent occurrences of 2nd great commandment in the gospels, and three more in the epistles - when taking as a whole, you quickly notice that the single feature mentioned most often is that this commandment "fulfills the scripture," which simply means that the whole of the Bible (namely, the Old Testament) and its message can be summarized by the two great commandments. Without neighborly love, Christianity isn't Christianity, church isn't church, and the gospel isn't the gospel.

Love Your Neighbor This Week

1) Do you have a favorite non-profit or agency that tries to champion neighborly love around the world? Let Pastor Chris know - pastorchriskwpc@gmail.com. We'd like to donate up to \$2000 from The Blessing Fund this week to such causes.

2) Pray each morning that you'd love your neighbors throughout the day as you love yourself and your own. You can use the seven bullet points above to guide your prayer. Ask God to give you opportunities to encourage, care for, and support the people with whom you speak and interact, even if in small, specific ways.

3) Here are four of Gary Chapman's five love languages: words of affirmation, spending quality time together, giving a gift, and acts of service. Look for an opportunity to do each one at least once during the week to a different neighbor you encounter (a coworker, store worker, fellow customer, someone in your actual neighborhood, etc.)

4) Bible reading this week: Explore the three different references in the epistles to the 2nd great commandment. In each case, the commandment takes on a different hue, and is shown to be applicable in multiple situations:

[Romans 13.8-14 NRSVA](#)

[Gal 5.13-15 NRSVA](#)

[James 2.1-13 NRSVA](#)

5) A few short videos:

- A heartfelt, vulnerable story about not loving your neighbor: [Love Your Neighbor - Annie's Story](#)
- A contemporary Christian song about loving our neighbors: [Toby Ferrari - Love Your Neighbour](#)
- What does it look like when a church prioritizes freeing their attenders to love their neighbors?: [The Missional Church... simple](#)