

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday October 3, 2021. "Terraform: Building a Better Life. The People."

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We're pushing through 2021, and in spite of the current spiking of cases, we're still fully committed to gathering in person. A growing group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. Our children's, youth areas and coffee spot have been fully open also and we're seeing a good response. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

II Recap.

Two Sundays ago we began a new series that needs some explanation and context. It's based on a book by hip hop artist and activist Propaganda. The basic idea of this series is we have agency, control, over how we live our life. Yes, there are external circumstances that affect us we can't always control. But we get to choose how we respond to those events, situations, and what we'll do with them in our life. The concept behind the phrase "terraform" comes from the science fiction world of bringing sustainable life to a dead planet. We began by asking these three questions.

What do you want out of life? Why?

What are you currently doing to help you get there?

What do you need to change, do differently, to get there?

This series will serve two primary purposes.

1. Lead us through what it looks like to cast our own **personal vision** working a process of 4 specific stages to build what we want our lives to look like.
2. Guided by the Holy Spirit, build a place to gather and experience God. Doing NEW and INNOVATIVE things to be a place, church, where other people can meet God.

The first Sunday we talked about writing a better story of our past. Last Sunday we talked about everywhere we find ourselves is sacred. Today we talk about practicing institutional neighborliness.

III Sunday.

Sunday we hit the third topic in our terraform series, and had a great conversation about what genuine neighborliness looks like. And we also got to listen to the testimony of a young couple, Stephen and Leah Watts, who have been practicing this where they live. If you have not watched this

service, check out our YouTube channel or our FaceBook page, and see how they live institutional neighborliness out regularly. You'll see they practice this truth well.

So, before we jump into the topic of neighborliness let's dive into it a bit.

What is your neighborhood like? Do you know any of your neighbors?

What makes living with neighbors a challenge?

What makes living with neighbors fun?

The passage was a super familiar one. Even if you don't have much of a church background. The label attached to this story has become an iconic phrase in our culture. It's the story of the Good Samaritan found in **Luke 10:29-37**. So read it and we'll dive into it.

What jumped out to you about this passage?

Did you happen to see anything new in it?

What are some of the elements of being a neighbor?

The classic, and most used interpretation of this passage, is that the priest and temple assistant represented the two primary religious groups. The Pharisees and the Sadducees. And the Samaritan who was despised, hated, showed more 'neighborliness' than did the two who were well versed in the law. The obvious truth Jesus was making was that **all of scripture calls us to radical love and compassion over a life of personal piety and following the rules**. We were not called to a life of personal holiness as a goal in and of itself. But as a path of personal growth towards holiness that forms us to be people of radical love and compassion. The Pharisees and Sadducees stopped at piety, and missed the greater truth of The Law. So, let's talk about this a bit.

What is the draw towards more of an emphasis on personal piety over radical neighborliness?

What could push us past stopping short in what calls us to?

Now let's throw a twist out here. We have enough other scriptural sources to make this connection. The Samaritan was described as "*despised*". In Isaiah we see that the coming Messiah would be "*despised*". And when Jesus was calling his disciples, one of them made the comment; "*can anything good come out of Nazareth?*". So, a fairly strong case can be made that the Samaritan was actually Jesus, who was living out this truth that radical love takes priority over personal piety. If this is true, then this would make the innkeeper...us. Which is a perfect picture of what intentional neighborliness looks like. We join Jesus in the work of actively moving towards, and providing care, for those on the margins of society. We place ourselves in pathways and spaces so God can guide and direct us to be used by him. We are joining the work of Jesus.

IV Challenge.

So, going with the premise that Jesus is actually the Samaritan showing the real truth in scripture. That God desires compassion over piety. Then we GET TO be the innkeeper making ourselves available to work alongside Jesus in this work of neighborliness. **In your neighborhood, how could you build relationships with the people around you to have opportunities to 'be a neighbor'?**