

Life on Mission Series – Part 2

Love Your Neighbor

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Good morning. Welcome to part two of our fall study series called “Life on Mission.” We believe that a life on mission flows out of the heart of God the father. So, our goal for this series is to connect to the Father’s heart and out of that relationship, discover how to connect deeply with people and steer them toward Jesus.

Because we are on mission, Christianity is not a spectator sport.

Because nothing is worse than having to deal with someone who is off task. Leave the house on time, clean the table after dinner, have your children go to bed.

The church can be like that, do not confuse activity with productivity. Jesus’s first words in the bible Luke 2:49 And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”

Luke 19:10

¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and he has not stopped or slowed down in his efforts. He is asking us to be his hands and feet to fulfill the great commission to go in to all the world and preach that gospel.

Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Last week Pastor Brian Fleweling launched this series in undoubtable the most appropriate way possible. He drew our attention to God’s heart for the lost. We looked at the three Parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son or the prodigal son. You may still have an image in your mind of the Father running to his son covering the shame of his filth and welcoming him home and calling for a celebration. I hope you have that image in your head of a shame-covering father. Some of us remember that image because it was the story told to us last week, and others because it is our story, your story and mine. Not only are we touched by our father’s heart for us in our lost state but as we grow in our relationship with Christ our hearts become more and more like his heart and we align ourselves more and more with the mission.

I want you to remember that moment of being found by him, and his rejoicing over you. It’s that emotion that the Father feels every time a lost person comes into the Kingdom. In fact the bible says all of heaven rejoices. The one who saved you it brings him great joy when others are saved too.

And so how do we partner with God to influence people's lives in such a way that they would come to know Jesus as their Lord and savior? How do we get on mission? Today I'd like to talk about a strategy for developing relationships, how to love your neighbor.

Luke chapter 10 tells a familiar story for some of us, of an interaction between Jesus and a Jewish lawyer. I believe this story will be useful for you as we discover a strategy for developing relationships and learning how to love your neighbor.

Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

²⁷ He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

³⁶ "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

That is the parable, Jesus often taught in parables or short stories to prove a point. Parables often have one very clear point.

Luke 10:25-37

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Interestingly this is the same question the rich young ruler, Nicodemus,

²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

Deut. 6:5, Lev. 19:18

²⁷ He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

It would seem here that the conversation is over. But it's not. Something must have taken place in Jesus's answer. Maybe he said, “do this and you will live” with a slight tone, like you have answered correctly, you should try to do that. We know something happened because now the lawyer wants to justify himself. Prove he is righteous; prove he is upholding the law. So, he asks a second question.

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Follow up question, clarifying question, who is my neighbor? Who do I have to love, if you were to read this with a little bit more of a critical eye you might say who don't I have to love?

As a Jew he would have been taught to love your neighbor but that would have only consisted of other Jews. This is why earlier Jesus was teaching to love even your enemies. This would have been a radical departure from Jewish teaching. We do it too. Don't help certain people, age, gender, color, nationality, political party, car with an opposing political party. It's okay to withhold goodness and mercy to certain people as long as it agrees with your personal prejudice and assumptions about their kind.

I think Jesus tells this story to paint a picture of what it means to truly love your neighbor. I think he tells this story to help this lawyer come face to face with his sinful condition.

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

[The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is eighteen miles long and descends about 3,500 feet. About two miles from Jerusalem it passes through the village of Bethany, and for the rest of the eighteen miles it passes through desolate mountain ravines without any habitation save the inn, the ruins of which are still seen about halfway to Jericho. This district from that time till the present has been noted for robberies, and Jerome tells that the road was called the "bloody way."]

³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

Listen to the similarities in the story. The same road, came to the place, He saw the man, saw him, passed by on the other side, passed by on the other side.

³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

Long list of accusations against Samaritans.

He wanted nothing in return. Buy whatever he needs, Love unlimited, extortion.

Don't go into relationships just to get someone saved or invite them to church. Go into them to have relationship. Jesus eat with sinners and tax collectors, Jesus a friend of sinners.

This is extravagant care for this man that he doesn't even know. He attends to his wounds, he loads the man onto his donkey, brings him to the inn where he apparently tends to his need throughout the night. Then the next day leaves money with the inn keeper.

According to some theologians two denarii is thought to be enough for a two month stay.

³⁶ **"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"**

³⁷ **The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."**

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

1. Love the Lord your God with all you are.

It really starts with him, knowing him loving him. Resting in him, being grounded in him.

God who do you want me to seek out? Where do you want me to invest my energy?

Be at peace with God and yourself.

2. See the people on your path.

The people around you, work, school, employees, co-workers, the children in your classroom, family members.

³³ **But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.**

Have you realized that there are other people on the path or is it really just all about you?

Are you taking the time to see people? Ask yourself the question, "Who are the people on your path?" Make a list of their names in order of closeness, family, friends, the people who live next to you.

Take advantage of new relationships. Someone new moves in the neighborhood or you are new to the neighborhood. A new employee...

Tell them things you wish you would have known about the job or the area. Welcome them with a gift. New neighbors, welcome basket.

3. Ask yourself, "what is my responsibility?"

Understand your responsibility to engage with the people on your path.

To be interruptible...birthday party the neighbor came over.

Creating margin...cutting down tree.

We are addicted to distraction

Non-anxious presence

Should I help them? How should I help them?

The first principle is to have the proper attitude.

He took pity on him.

How often do we think, they deserve it, they are probably an addict, or obviously made some really bad choices, it's their fault. Fault is funny, if we think that someone is a victim, we will move mountains to save them. But if it's their fault...someone else will help them, I'm late for an important... fill in the blank, this seems too dangerous.

Seeing the need, are we even looking, how do you feel when you see someone in need. (new shirt?) It's hard in America, we have really smart poor people. How do you help these people? Help them anyway.

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Go and have mercy, don't have judgement, or criticism, don't have superior knowledge or be an expert on everything, have mercy.

What's in your heart...mercy

What's in your mouth...mercy

What's in your actions...mercy

What's in your wallet...mercy

1 John 3:16-18

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

Luke 3:11

¹¹ John answered, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same."

His eye and heart and hand and foot and purse were all subservient to the law of God.]

"do"

I can love like that, I can't go and do likewise, we need forgiveness.

Closing