

Loving Your Neighbor with God's Love

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Date: 18 May 2008

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Luke 10, beginning in verse 25 and reading to verse 37. Please stand together with me for this reading from God's Word. On one occasion, an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus.

! Teacher, he asked, What must I do to inherit eternal life? What is written in the law? He replied, How do you read it? 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.

You have answered correctly, Jesus replied. Do this and you will live. But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, And who is my neighbor? In reply, Jesus said, A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell into the hands of robbers.

They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

So to a Levite, when he came to the place, saw him pass by and saw him pass by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was, and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

[1:18] He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins 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. Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?

The expert in the law replied, The one who had mercy on him. Jesus told him, Go and do likewise. There is no more staggering reality in the universe than this, that the God of heaven and earth has loved me and given up his son to be damned in my place.

And can it be amazing love that thou, my God, shouldst die for me. Now we've got several weddings coming up here at Grace Fellowship Church this summer.

And perhaps you've noticed when a young couple are in love, and I mean really smitten, that it does strange things to them. Uncivilized men actually become more civil.

[2:38] And they take on new interests, and they do things that they otherwise would never do. And all for love. They're in the grip of love.

There's a power in love to change us. And what's true on the level of human love is just a shadow, a faint echo of what is true about God's love.

It's a most powerful thing. It's transforming. When we taste the saving love of God in Jesus Christ and come to know that he loved me and gave himself for me, this love changes us.

And so we've been looking at some of the ways that love changes us. We're studying the attributes of God. It's been over a month since we've been studying the attributes of God. And we've been on the love of God.

And we've seen God's great love to us in Christ. And now we're looking at applications of that love. If God so loved us, what should we be and do?

[3:43] How does his love change us? Well, we saw that Christ's love compels us to no longer live for ourselves, but for him who died for us and was raised again. And that means we have a new reason to live.

Every day we wake up to a new reason to live. For him, not for myself. And his love moves the Christian to meditate on God's love for us.

We enjoy thinking about God's love for us. We give thanks for it. We rejoice in it. We sing of it. We tell others about it.

We rely upon it. This love that God has for us. We find in the love of God for us a solid rock. Something that will not move.

That no matter what is happening to me, God loves me. And that makes the scene different. And then we saw that it evokes love for the Savior in return.

[4:45] That we love him because he first loved us. And he wants us to love him with first love. With that love that we had when he first drew us to him.

So today we want to see next how the love of God should affect us. And what we'll see is that God's love moves us to love our neighbor with God's love.

God's love makes us lovers of others. It both obligates us and motivates us to love our neighbor. Now this connection between God's love and our love for others is found in many places in the scriptures.

I want you to turn to 1 John chapter 4. No one biblical writer records more on this connection between God's love and our love than John who has been called the apostle of love.

And here in 1 John chapter 4 we'll see the first thing that he has to tell us about God's love. And it is this that God's love for us in Christ makes us love others.

[6:00] Here's his argument. God is love. And when someone comes to know this God personally through faith in Jesus Christ they cannot help but love others.

They become a person who loves others. For the love of God melts their selfish heart and turns it outward toward others.

being born of God we're made to bear the likeness of our heavenly father who loved us and gave his son for us. We're made like the Lord Jesus who loved us when we were unlovely and gave up his own life for us.

You see the new birth then plants a new principle of love in our hearts both for God and for man. Now this is something that always happens whenever someone is born again by the Spirit of God. It always happens. So consistently true is it that the Apostle John says this is how you know who has been born again. This is how you know who are true Christians.

[7:09] They love others. In fact John's willing to go so far as to say that no one is a real Christian who does not love others. Notice 1 John 4 verses 7 and 8.

Dear friends let us love one another for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

Whoever does not love does not know God because God is love. You see the argument? If you know God who is a God of love then you will love others.

Verses 9 and 10 he shows us what this love looked like. This is how God showed his love among us. He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

This is love. Not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. As a propitiation for our sins.

[8:16] As one to turn God's wrath away from us by bearing it himself. That's how God showed his love to us. He sent a Savior to bear his wrath in our place.

Verse 11 Dear friends since God so loved us we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God but if we love one another God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

You see again his argument if this God of love lives in you then you will love others. So that if I see you and your principle of life is that you love others I can know this God lives in you this God of love because love comes from God.

Back at chapter 3 in verse 10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are. Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

God doesn't have any children who does not love his other children. Verses 16 and 17 This is how we know what love is.

[9:37] Jesus Christ laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. You see God's love he laid down his life for us we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him how can the love of God be in him? It can't is John's point.

It can't. Dear children let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. Where God's love is it will run out in expression not only back to God but to our fellow man.

Well if you've tasted God's love for you in Christ you know the truthfulness of that. You find yourself loving others and all glory to God who gave you new birth and who loved you first.

the second thing we want to notice that God's love for us in Christ obligates us to love others. It not only makes us to love them and not only equips us to love them but it obligates us to love others.

[10:48] It's after speaking of God's love sending his son to bear his wrath in our place that John says in 1 John 4:11 dear friends since God so loved us we also ought to love one another.

We ought to love one another. Why? Because God has so loved us. You see his argument.

Receiving this love from God obligates us to show it to each other.

It's a debt we owe. Paul put it this way let no debt remain outstanding except the continuing debt to love one another. That's a debt that you'll never get to the end of.

And so have you been loved by God then you must love others. That's what Paul says in Colossians 3:12. Therefore as God's chosen people holy and dearly loved clothe yourselves with compassion and kindness and humility and gentleness and patience and bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another forgive as the Lord forgave you and over all these virtues put on love which binds them all together in perfect unity.

We're told to love each other as those who realize that we are dearly loved by God. We will not love others as we ought unless we remember how it is that God has loved us and given himself for us.

[12:24] It's no small thing to be loved by God in Jesus Christ. It obligates us to love others. Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Thirdly, we learned this morning that God's love for us in Christ is the pattern of our love for others. It's the pattern.

pattern. When you're sewing something and you have a pattern, you lay the pattern on the material and you cut around the pattern so that the material takes on the same shape as the pattern.

And as we think about loving others, we have a pattern given to us. It's God's love for us in Christ.

That love becomes the pattern that our lives are to take the shape of.

Now turn over to Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 1 where we see this stated so clearly. God's love for us in Christ becomes the pattern of our love for others.

[13:31] Ephesians 5:1 Be imitators of God therefore as dearly loved children and live a life of love just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Again we see the obligation is clear. Dearly loved children of God are to live a life of love. It's a command we're to walk in love. Your whole life is to be marked by loving others with the love that you've received from God.

Godlike love then is to permeate all you do, all you say. His love has reached you. His love has changed you. Now it's to flow through you on to others.

Love them like I've loved you is God's word. And in this matter of loving you need to be imitators of God. Be a copycat.

You know what a copycat is. You know what an imitator is. He's someone who acts like someone else. Children are good at imitating their fathers. There's dad out in the lawn and he's mowing with his push mower and junior is right behind him with his little red mower and blowing bubbles.

[14:53] And dad's got the cell phone clipped on his belt and junior does too. And when dad stops to wipe his brow, junior stops to wipe his brow. He's mowing with one eye on his dad and he's seeing what he does and he does exactly the same thing.

Children, imitating their fathers. And that's what we are to do. We are to live a life of love with one eye on how God in Christ has loved us.

And that's how we're to love others. Now that should cause you to gasp because it's not an easy love we're called to imitate. And we've dealt with that love and that's been over probably two months ago and I'm sorry that our application is following so far behind the exposition on God's love for us in Christ but you'll remember the cost of that love.

You remember that love that God had for us in Christ. He speaks of it here just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.

Isn't it interesting? He tells us to imitate God's love and then he talks about Christ loving us and giving himself up for us. Christ's love is God's love.

[16:17] Jesus Christ is God and in him God's love has been expressed to us. The love demonstrated at Calvary where Jesus gave himself up as a sacrifice to God.

That's the love you're to imitate. Now we can't save sinners by dying on a cross for them but the principle is this that the spirit of sacrifice was part of Jesus love.

He was willing to give himself up in the love of his loved ones and you are to imitate that. The willingness to give yourself up. That voluntary self sacrifice.

There must be self giving in our love to others. Jesus put our interests above his own. If we were to live he would have to sacrifice his life.

And so he dies that we might live. He gave himself up. He sacrificed his life for us. So in loving others you must put their interest ahead of your own.

[17:28] love. We're not imitating God in his love if we are not sacrificing in the expressions of our love.

Paul's going to go on and apply this very word specifically to husbands a few verses later in verse 25. Husbands you're familiar with it. Husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Same idea isn't it? Imitate God's love in Christ. You love your wife just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up. Unless you're giving yourself up for your wife you're not imitating Christ's love. Men that means if we interviewed your wives what would they tell us that you've given up for her lately? What would they say yes he gave this up for me lately?

That's the love that's the amazing that's the radical love of Jesus Christ for us. If we interviewed your neighbor what would he say that you gave up for him?

[18:49] love the love of Christ is the pattern for our love we see it here in Ephesians 4 in verse 32 be kind and compassionate to one another forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you again the pattern is held before us God has forgiven you in Christ that's how he's loved you now someone has done you wrong and what they did was wrong it's so wrong and Jesus says just as I have forgiven you now you forgive them how has God in Christ forgiven you well very freely hasn't he hasn't made you deserve it earn it he's forgiven you freely he's forgiven you generously the whole mountain of your sin if you're in Christ it's gone my sin not in part but the whole nailed to his cross and I bear it no more he's forgiven it all generously repeatedly over and over he forgives me 70 times 7 times a day he forgives me wholeheartedly not reluctantly well

I guess if I have to no it's never that way it's always wholeheartedly he loves us freely eager to put it behind him and he says to us I have loved you this way I have forgiven you now you imitate me you love you forgive in this way my love keeps no record of wrongs don't let yours don't hold any grudges don't be bitter no bringing up this sin again no withholding love because of it this is to imitate God's love for us in Christ and he would say to us my love is patient and kind is your love known for its patience is your love known for its kindness my love is not self seeking my love always perseveres my love never fails imitate this love I love my enemies I cause the sun to shine on I send the rain on their fields imitate my love love your enemies love you see the love we're called to imitate is a radical amazing love it's the love that nailed the son of God to the cross in our place and we've not begun to imitate that love unless we have been willing to give ourselves sacrificially to another it's impossible really isn't it now let's just be frank let's just be real honest with each other this love is impossible to imitate we don't have it in ourselves by nature we're selfish we're self-centered self-serving so if we are to have this love it must come from God and that's John's point throughout his epistle that this love comes from God and we receive this love from God and the Holy Spirit lives in the people that have been born of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit is love and so this love comes from

God and flows through us this love that we imitate is all received from God so someone's following you around all week long what resemblance do they see of God's love for you in Christ he's a chip off the old block we say of a son who looks like his father he's got his father's eyes he's got his father's heart of love same love same God within isn't that what Jesus said would mark out his disciples a new commandment I give you John 13 love one another as I have loved you so you must love one another by this all men will know that you're my disciples if you love one another there's the pattern as I have loved you that's what makes it a new command this command was old it's in the old testament to love one another but what made it new was as

I have loved you the love expressed by Jesus that's the kind of love that we are to have for each other and that becomes a badge that's what marks us out as different there's nobody in love like Jesus the loved ones of the Savior major on love we saw that God's love for us causes us to love God in return the love that Jesus has for us is awakened in our hearts a love for him in return and

now he would say to us as we would say we love you Jesus he would say well then you go love my people there's Peter and he's on the seashore of Galilee he's already denied Jesus three times Jesus has risen from the dead and he's met privately with
[24:10] Peter and squared things away with Peter and now they're on the seashore they'd gone fishing and Jesus shows up on the shore the miracle!

the catch of fish and Peter is on to the shore and there he is with Christ there sitting around the fire now some of the disciples are there and Jesus turns to Peter and says do you love me more than these and Peter says well Lord you know that I love you and he says feed my lambs sheep and the third time he asked do you love me Lord you know all things you know that I love you then feed my sheep do you catch it there are a lot of things going on here we don't have time to draw out but don't miss this point that Jesus is directing our love to him to be expressed toward our love for his people and our serving his people do you love me

Jesus is saying to you this morning do you love me for what I've done to! then care for my people pour out your love on them if the Lord Jesus Christ were physically present here today I'm sure every one of you Christians would be at his feet serving him gladly lovingly but since he isn't here physically he tells us whatever you do for one of the least of these my brothers you do for me do you love me then love them serve them and in loving and serving his people you're loving and serving him look at Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 10 this is the principle that comes out in these passages Hebrews 6 and verse 10 God is not unjust he will not forget about your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them when you help his people you are showing love to

Jesus Christ did you see that if you love me help them and God is not unjust he will reward you for the way you shown your love to him by helping his people so we come to that parable of the good Samaritan and in this parable the Lord Jesus teaches us who our neighbor is and what it means to love our neighbor as our self and you remember the story of the man that was robbed along the way I wonder did you see him this week the needy needy neighbor along the road of life did you see him this week did you stop and help him or did you walk on by the other side you say well John I didn't meet any half dead men I didn't meet any bloodied and beaten men this week well there's more than one kind of neighbor in need isn't there maybe he is in need physically maybe he has been stripped of good health by some sickness or disease maybe he is in pain and you could help him in some way but maybe it isn't physically maybe it's emotionally he's beaten and broken she's broken hearted she's grieving she's worrying she's depressed and despairing she's in need of the love of

Jesus and you could show it to her maybe it's socially maybe it's someone who has been rejected in an ugly divorce maybe it's a lonely person a shut in a widow a displaced person far from home maybe it's a Hispanic and you're coming alongside of them to talk and to take a genuine interest in them is what it means to bandage their wounds and to pour in oil and wine needy neighbors you see come in all kinds of conditions maybe it's economically broken going through a difficult time financially hurting and in need taking care of someone's expenses is the love they need from you love not merely in word but in deed and in truth that's the love of

[29:17] God that gives maybe it's spiritually have you thought about that maybe the neighbor in need is one who is broken spiritually lost without God and without hope in this world guilty more than half dead spiritually dead toward God you thought that evangelism is loving your neighbor seeking his greatest good to meet his greatest need his greatest need is to have his sins forgiven he might have all the money he needs he might have scads of friends he's not lonely might be full health physically might be happy go lucky guy he's not depressed but he's guilty before God and greatly in need of your savior he's a breath away from eternal torments and he may not even know it he needs your savior and you have the answer to his need it's not loving your neighbor to pass by on the other side of the!

love him with the gospel love him with the good news about the Lord Jesus Christ you see these are the walking wounded they're not lying half dead on the road granted but they are broken and wounded people and that's how Jesus saw the multitudes isn't it as harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd and so he had compassion on them he loved them he moved to them to answer their need now that's how I must see them not as inconveniences not as irritations not as interruptions to my schedule but as neighbors in need of my love we did meet them last week didn't we and we will meet them again this week did we stop and help will we stop and help may

God help us to be on the lookout for them the person in some kind of need across your path is your neighbor that's what Jesus teaches us in this parable may not be at all like you might be someone from completely different background from you but if he's in need he's your neighbor and meeting their needs and doing something practical to help them is what it means to love your neighbor as yourself have you thought that it's not a coincidence that the needy person is along the road that you're traveling on that there is a divine appointment here that they work where you work not just coincidence that they live where you live that they sit in the stands beside you at the same ball game the needy person alongside the road of life and we may not be able to do everything and we may not be able to meet all the needs but we must do something and the love of God in us will not let us do nothing here the priest and the Levite pass by without stopping to help do you suppose they had their reasons!

I'm sure they did they had things to do places to go people to see and we have our reasons too why we do not stop and minister the love of Christ to needy people could I suggest that the three top reasons perhaps for us number one we're too busy and number two we're too busy we're too busy we've got important things to do we're making money to keep this ship afloat we're raising children and all the activities involved with that we're housekeeping we're taking care of the house and the cars and the yard and our days are packed full from morning till night we are a busy people and all that Jesus would say to us this morning is that if you are too busy to really love your neighbor as yourself then you're just too busy you're too busy something must go this is a non negotiable and I believe the

[34:04] Lord Jesus would put his finger on the real reason beneath all of our excuses behind the too busy is a lack of love after all Jesus is applying the command to love your neighbor as yourself that's what he's talking about so to pass by on the other side is a failure to love it's a sin against the second greatest commandment the command to love your neighbor as yourself and I believe the passage bears this out that at the bottom it is a love problem at bottom it's a love problem all three of the men saw the half dead guy didn't they they all three had eyeballs that saw him there he is but it's only said of the Samaritan that when he saw him he took pity!

him pity is a form of love pity is compassion are we to think that the Samaritan had nothing to do that day you think he was just meandering about just cruising the street between Jericho and Jerusalem with nothing to do nobody to see no he had plans he had a schedule he had places to go and people to see but he also had something the other two didn't have love he had pity he was moved the cords of love were vibrating in him as he saw that man in need and pity is the desire to move toward him to do something to relieve the need that's what he had he had love the same kind of love that God in heaven had as he looked down upon us in our slavery to sin helpless kicking in our blood and there was pity there!

compassion to move him to come to us in Jesus Christ and to answer our need that's the love that we're to show to our neighbor didn't come and say be warmed and filled his love took action may I say that something on your list of things to do today is going to have to be sacrificed if you care enough to stop and help a neighbor it's going to have to be bumped down a notch or two something on your list of things to buy is going to have to be put off if you invest your money in helping others in need something is going to have to be sacrificed your ease your comfort your entertainments your schedule your money your time but keep one eye on the pattern that we're to imitate the one who sacrificed his very life on the cross for us that's the love for imitating as

I have loved you so you must love one another so the challenge I trust is clear from the passage I just challenge you to be on the lookout this week for the neighbor in need he's closer than you think and to love them by giving yourself sacrificially for them and may God's amazing love in you cut a new channel this week flowing from you to another khalin kamal salim grew up as a radical muslim in beirut lebanon and at age seven he was recruited any seven year olds this morning yeah I see one there at age seven jeremiah he was recruited by the plo and the same year carried out his first mission into israel the plo camps taught him to hate jews and christians the people of the book were regarded as infidels in the land and many years of terrorist training made kamal well qualified in every form of terrorism!

fought for many years with the! for the liberation of Palestine and then he came to the United States on a mission to convert as many Jews and Christians to Islam and so to recruit and train terrorists for the cause but in 1985 Camille had his world turned upside down he was traveling through Oklahoma when he was seriously injured in a car accident a Christian man was driving along that

day came upon the accident quite early and he didn't drive by on the other side he stopped and he went to Camille and he lovingly comforted him and assured him and secured the medical attention that he would need and was with him until the help came and the orthopedic surgeon and the physical therapist also turned out to be

[39 : 39] Christian men over a period of several months they ministered the love of Christ to this man as he recovered one of them even took him into his own home that he might live near the hospital and receive further treatments as he was recuperating so the very ones that Camille had been taught to love were now showing him or taught to hate were now showing him love at great cost to themselves now he had been trained in hatred in violence and he could handle any argument that came at him but he didn't know what to do with this love this warm love this sacrifice self giving love it disarmed him and he became a Christian and he's now recruiting disciples of Jesus Christ from among Muslims

I say the love of God is a powerful thing it's an amazing thing it is the most stupendous staggering thing in the universe and I'm asking you is it flowing unclogged through your life Christian or is it being stopped up by selfishness and busyness is it being tamed by the selfish limits that we place upon it this far and no further I won't do that nothing too radical nothing too inconvenient and so we tame and dilute this shocking love of God that he has for us and we present a weak caricature of it to the world what is there about your love for others that would indicate that God's love for you is indeed amazing it's amazing can observers learn anything of the greatness of God's love by the way you love your wife your husband your children your neighbor your enemy anything arresting anything supernatural anything radical about your love anything sacrificial self-giving freely giving gracious practical generous dear friends since

God has so loved us we also ought to love one another we don't have this love as I said up our sleeve we don't produce this love this love comes from God and so we're brought back to him back to the source back to the fountain if you grow in love to your neighbor spend much time at the source of God's love for you may the love of Jesus fill us as the waters fill the sea his love so shed abroad!

in our hearts that it moves us to love here was an expert in the law who's showing up and going to trick Jesus what must I do to inherit eternal life Jesus says what does the law say that was their Bible of the day what does the Bible say you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and all your strength and your neighbor as yourself Jesus says you've answered correctly do this and live do you hear that if you can love God with all your soul all your mind all your heart all your strength and can love your neighbor as yourself you will live forever you will inherit eternal life that should have sent this man running to

Jesus for mercy but I haven't loved my neighbor as myself I haven't loved God with all my heart is there any hope for me he would have heard the sweetest words of the gospel from Jesus but you know what he wanted to justify himself the Bible says he wanted to measure up to this standard and so he he says well who is my neighbor as if to get technical about just who neighbor is that I must love and then Jesus doesn't go for it and he says listen any man you meet in need is your neighbor and you haven't loved him as yourself there's only been one who's loved God perfectly and loved neighbor perfectly that means we're all guilty before this God we've not loved him as we ought we've not loved our neighbor as we ought we deserve his judgment we deserve his eternal punishment but the good news of the gospel is if we will not justify ourselves if we will not proudly self righteously try to make ourselves good enough in

[44 : 47] God's sight but will come with nothing good to say but Lord Jesus have mercy on me save me I don't deserve to enter eternal life but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord oh then come to this love him with all your heart and haven't loved neighbor and be saved by him be put right with him have your guilt removed and have your heart overflow with this love for you and then go and do likewise go and love your neighbor as yourself let's pray together oh our God we do pause and thank you for your love for us it is a!

powerful thing to be loved in Jesus Christ would you so stir up our hearts with that love and shed it abroad in our hearts that we might see it for what it is and stand amazed and then go and love our neighbor even as you have loved us how we thank you that salvation and eternal life is offered to us freely as a gift through the Savior and his keeping of the law will bring sinners to rest in his work and send us then with a sense of wonder of the free grace of Jesus into our world to love sinners radically even as we've been loved we ask for Jesus praise amen to to