

Happy Valentine’s Day! As we celebrate this Valentine’s Day, the day of love, I’m reminded that as followers of Jesus we are called to love with the Bold love that Jesus first showed us. It is a sacrificial love of laying down our life for others.

Boldly Love Each Other

John 15:9-17 9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

How do we remain in Jesus’ Love? **10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love.** (This isn’t about earning Jesus’ love but it’s about relationship.)

11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

(Remember on Team Draft Day we read Matthew 25:23 “...Well done, good and faithful servant! Come and share your master's happiness!” (NIV) / (NKJ) “Enter into the joy of your lord.”” / (NLT) “Let’s celebrate together!””

12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. (there’s the qualifier, as I love you!)

13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit —fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

We can understand loving each other, the family of Believers, even though sometimes we are challenged in doing so. And for the most part, we love God in return as we receive His love for us.

But we can’t just stay inward focused and bask in all this mutual love forever. We are also called to Boldly Love those outside of the family as well.

Boldly Love Your Neighbor

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?”

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.”

The expert of the law got it right. Everything begins and ends with a full love and devotion to God. The verification that we are truly loving God is that we begin to love our neighbor. The qualifier on how we are to love our neighbor is that we love them as we love ourselves.

But the expert of law wasn’t satisfied with his correct answer. And he asks a clarifying question.

Luke 10:29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

This question opened the door for Jesus to teach us all about Bold Love for our neighbor through a parable, an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

Luke 10:30 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 Priest (No problem here comes a Priest to the rescue.) **Luke 10:31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.**

The Levite

Luke 10:32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

The Samaritan Luke 10:33-37

- 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.’

Jesus’ Question Luke 10:36-37

- 36** “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The Priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan? Who was the robbed man’s neighbor?
- 37** The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” The one who would help him in his time of distress and need was his neighbor. Then Jesus told the expert of the Law and all who were listening... **Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”** We are called to help our neighbors, those in need. We should love to them as we serve and minister to their needs.

Our neighbor is the person in need and the one who helps us when we are in need.

Serve the Boro

This is the premise for our church wide Serve the Boro Campaign. We know there are people in our community that desperately need to know the love and saving grace of Jesus. They are our neighbors. They need Jesus and they have various physical and emotions needs. We try to see their needs and meet their needs in Jesus’ name.

We call this “Servant Evangelism” which we do year-round, as well as during our Serve the Boro blitz. We share the love and message of Jesus Christ through intentional and practical acts of service and kindness.

A simple act of kindness opens an unbeliever up to the greatest act of kindness of all: The Gospel.

Many people in our culture today believe that the church is only concerned with getting something from them. By doing Servant Evangelism, the church is doing more than just being nice. It is breaking down one of the major barriers that keep people from experiencing the Gospel.

Servant Evangelism is a wonderful expression of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Bold Next Step: Today I will sign up to Serve the Boro in as many events as I can. I will show the love of Jesus to my neighbors as I serve them in Jesus’ Name.

What Kind of Neighbor Am I?

Who is my neighbor is a good question to ask, but shouldn’t we also ask: What kind of neighbor am I? And who do I need to be a good neighbor to?

Am I a neighbor of judgment or compassion?

This is the only parable Jesus that gives a specific location. The man in this story traveled on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho alone, and the road to Jericho was notoriously unsafe.

There is a good chance that Jesus’ audience would have felt very little sympathy for the victim.

Judgmentally they may have been thinking, “*He should have known better. He got what he deserved.*”

Jesus was hoping their hearts would be moved from judgement to compassion.

Often, our compassion meter is low for others in need as well. Especially if we perceive that they landed in their position in life due to their own doings, bad choices, and foolish decisions they made. When things are going good in your life, it's easy to be judgmental of others. Serving and helping people is important, but it must be done in the right attitude and motivated by compassion. Our job is to serve, not judge.

Am I a neighbor who is willing to confront my sin of indifference?

When Jesus says a priest and Levite see the robbers' victim but "pass by on the opposite side" of the road, what he is saying is they created distance between themselves and the beaten man left for dead.

Of all people, the Priest and Levites were commanded to love their neighbor.

Leviticus 19:18 "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD. But they distanced themselves by moving to the other side of the road, rather than showing love and helping the beaten man.

Jesus' point was those who would be expected to help, don't always help at all.

We, like the Priest and Levite, are also called to love our neighbor as ourself. But don't we find ways to look the other way, ways to move to the other side of the road, so that we don't have to confront the need?

We tend to create distance between ourselves and the people in need. We can sometimes be indifferent. We say, "that's not my problem, I've got enough problems of my own without taking on theirs." Or we say, "they don't belong to me, they are not my family, not my responsibility."

We need to see them as not only our own, but as ourselves. We are called to love our neighbor, "as ourselves". You don't and can't distance yourself from yourself. You are very aware of what's going on in your own life. We need an awareness of our neighbor's needs as well.

Luke 10:33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. Lord forgive us of the sin of indifference and help us see our neighbor's needs.

Am I a neighbor who is willing to give a little time to help others?

Maybe the priest and the Levite saw the need, but they were in a too big of hurry. Too busy to help. Maybe they didn't have the spare time to invest in the hurting man.

They had duties and responsibilities you know! They had a job to do for the Lord already.

Maybe they didn't want to become ceremonially unclean. That would hinder their important work for the Lord. These are all good excuses, right?

Does this sound like us? Are we just too busy to take one Saturday to help people, with Serve the Boro? Do we think that the work we do is more important than what everyone else has to do?

When it comes to serving others, some are acting more like the priest and Levite than the Samaritan.

Am I a neighbor who is willing to help people who are different or even my enemy?

"Good Samaritan" makes no sense. To us it does. We view the Good Samaritan as the hero of this story. We like the term "Good Samaritan" and we like to use it to describe those who do good to others. But for Jesus' audience, the word Samaritan didn't bring happy thoughts. It confused them and made no sense to them that a Samaritan could be good in any kind of way.

For the Jewish audience, a Samaritan was despised and considered an outcast. There was a strong prejudice and hatred between the Jews and Samaritans.

So, try to imagine, if Jesus were telling us this story to us, he probably wouldn't have called the loving, caring, rescuer a Samaritan. He would have called him the person or people group we hate most.

The kind of person that you despise and struggle to get along with. The last person on earth that you would imagine Jesus using in a favorable sense, or as one who was doing the right thing. Yet Jesus reminds us these people are our neighbors who we are called to love and serve. We need to put our pettiness aside and love like Jesus loves.

Am I a neighbor who is willing to spend a little money to help someone in need?

Luke 10:34-35 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.'

Ministry isn't cheap. Are you? Investing your money in efforts that bring people to Christ Jesus has got to be the best kind investments we can make.

Am I a neighbor who is willing to show mercy to others?

Just like the Samaritan showed mercy to the victim, we are called to extend mercy to others as well.

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

God declares the He is a God of mercy!

Exodus 34:6-7 (NLT) The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out, "Yahweh! The LORD! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

And Jesus tells us to be merciful just like our Father God.

Luke 6:36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Luke 10:36b Jesus told him (Jesus is telling us today), "Go and do likewise."