

# Reclaiming Neighboring

Luke 10:25-37

Ben Deaver at Tallgrass Church on April 29, 2018

## Maris does Announcements:

- Intro yourself! What are you excited about with Tallgrass Church?
- Heart for helping women get into the Word of God!
- Guys After Party TONIGHT at our house (1230 Houston).
- ManCamp rescheduled for May 19. Get details on Facebook or our website.
- Lord's Supper next week.
- And, next week, Taco Bar after Central Gathering. Details forthcoming.
- Tallgrass KIDS staggered pickup
- Serve at Tallgrass
- Keep going to our website—tallgrass.church
- Mingle question: Tell each other about your neighborhoods.

## Don't forget:

- Put Bibles out.
- *The Neighboring Church*
- Connect with kids in our neighborhoods!
- Brief on big picture vision. Long on specific families living this out.

## Announcements:

- Honoring Professor Linder—University Distinguished Professor Robert Linder will be honored for his fifty years of service in the history department at a retirement celebration Friday, May 4 at 3:30 pm. At that time K-State will plant a tree to honor Prof. Linder in the common area behind Eisenhower Hall with a reception following on the top floor of Calvin Hall. If you have been touched by his life or have been touched by someone Prof. Linder has influenced, his former graduate students would like to invite you—especially Tallgrass folks!—to this unusual event. For more info, email Liam Atchison.
  - History of the Reformation, History of Baseball, World leader on the History of the Church in Australia

## Tallgrass Mission:

Because God first loved us, we exist to love God and love our neighbors.

## Recap

- Reclaiming Tallgrass
- Reclaiming the Love of God
- Reclaiming Love for One Another
- Reclaiming Neighboring
- Life Together

## Pray!

# Inheriting Eternal Life

## How do I inherit eternal life?

<sup>25</sup> *And behold, a lawyer (expert in Old Testament law; religious leader) stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"*

- Lawyer – Question 1
- Assumptions:
  - There is an afterlife.
  - You can do something to get it.
  - You can beat Jesus in a debate.
- However, this question is inherently a wrong question. You cannot earn an inheritance.
- The way you inherit eternal life is by getting into the family of God!

<sup>26</sup> *He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?"*

- Jesus – Question 2
- This shows Jesus masterful way of working with people, responding to questions with questions.
- "You're the expert. What do you think?"

<sup>27</sup> *And he answered, "You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself."*

- Lawyer – Answer to Question 2 (What is written in the Law?)
- **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** <sup>4</sup> "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup> You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."
  - This was known as the Shema and would have been recited by Jews daily.
- **Leviticus 19:18** "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD."
  - *The Neighboring Church* quote on page 30
- The combo of these two passages equals the Great Commandment.
- ALL ALL ALL ALL – Love God with everything, all the time!
- AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF!

<sup>28</sup> *And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."*

- Jesus – Answer to Question 1 (What shall I do to inherit eternal life?)
- DO THIS! Just do it! Do the Law!
- Don't just know this.
- Don't just have good intentions to do this.
- Don't just do this sometimes or even most of the time.
- Don't have some backup plan to make up for the times you don't do this.
- Do this. Do the Law...perfectly...and you will live!

## Looking for Loopholes

<sup>29</sup>But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

- Lawyer – Question 3 (What is the limit to who I must love?) – Who is my neighbor?
- The lawyer assumes he's loved God with ALL his heart and ALL his soul and ALL his strength and ALL his mind.
- He wants to draw firm lines around the definition of neighbor.
- There was debate as to who counted as a neighbor.
- Find a loophole and you'll be good to go.
- **Wisdom of Sirach 12:1-7** (Good News Translation) <sup>1</sup>When you do a good deed, make sure you know who is benefiting from it; then what you do will not be wasted. <sup>2</sup>You will be repaid for any kindness you show to a devout person. If he doesn't repay you, the Most High will. <sup>3</sup>No good ever comes to a person who gives comfort to the wicked; it is not a righteous act. <sup>4</sup>Give to religious people, but don't help sinners. <sup>5</sup>Do good to humble people, but don't give anything to those who are not devout. Don't give them food, or they will use your kindness against you. Every good thing you do for such people will bring you twice as much trouble in return. <sup>6</sup>The Most High himself hates sinners, and he will punish them. <sup>7</sup>Give to good people, but do not help sinners.
- **Qumran (1QS 1.9-11)** love all the sons of light...hate all the sons of darkness
- He wants to limit way of God to humanly keepable niceness. Which is what any person with any religious text can convince themselves of doing!

## Who is my neighbor?

## Storytime with Jesus!

<sup>30a</sup> Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho..."

- Jesus tells a Parable—an earthly story with a heavenly meaning that packs a gut punch!
- Elevation map—Change in elevation of 3365 feet!
  - 17 miles apart; Jerusalem rests at 3000 feet above sea level while Jericho sits on land 1000 feet below the level of the Mediterranean; the road descended sharply through mountainous territory; thieves could easily hide, strike and escape; known as "the bloody way;" would be similar to a "dark alley" today
- Rocky terrain with caves image
- Map showing route around Samaria through Jericho
  - This is the route Jews took to stay out of Samaria, even though this route was very difficult and dangerous.
  - This is the road Jesus was on when he met the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4.
  - Jesus was rejected by the Samaritans in Luke 9:52-55. And his Jewish disciples wanted to call down fire on them! Jesus was like, "Nah, don't do that. That's not how we roll, fellas!"
  - Talmud (m. Seb 8.10) "He that eats the bread of Samaritans is like to one who eats the flesh of swine"
- History of the Samaritan/Jewish conflict
  - 722 BC – Northern tribes scattered
  - 700-500's – Samaritans emerge as half-breeds
  - 500's-400's BC – Samaritans oppose rebuilding
  - 400 BC – Samaritans build temple on Gerizim
  - 100's BC – John Hyrcanus levels Gerizim temple
  - 9 AD – Samaritans desecrate Jerusalem Temple
  - 50 AD – Samaritans murder Galilean pilgrims

<sup>30b</sup> *...and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead*

- Robbers – Steal and Injure – Sin of Commission
- They leave the man naked and unconscious; language, accent and dress are gone given no indication of race, social standing, etc. This man is just a man, a human in need.
- This man needs a miracle!

<sup>31</sup> *Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.*

- Priest – See and Do Nothing – Sin of Omission
- Priests were the mediators between man and God. He was a holy man.
- Perhaps he felt he had already checked his religious box for the day.
- What an inconvenient situation. Perhaps the Priest prayed for this man. That’s good, right?
- “They need a program to help these kind of people. Maybe I can give to that program.”
- “The government needs to send more police down here to take care of this dangerous place. People are dying down here!”
- He would have been riding because he would have been wealthy.
- Don’t touch a dead person or else you will be ceremonially “unclean” for seven days. This is their **schedule**. See Numbers 19:11-16.
- **Leviticus 19:34** “You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”
  - This is their **purpose**.

<sup>32</sup> *So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.*

- Levite – See and Do Nothing – Sin of Omission
- The Levite functioned in the temple as an assistant to the priests. He didn’t want to show up the priest who went before him.

This is quite a religious conundrum!

- Their schedule and purpose are at odds.
- What will happen? What’s the rest of the story? Who will show up next? Perhaps a lawyer, a religious expert on the law will show up to save the day.

## PAUSE!

<sup>33a</sup> *But a Samaritan... DUN-DUN-DUUUUN!!!!!!—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bW7Op86ox9g>*

- There was great hatred between Jews and Samaritans. He should have stepped on him, not just over him. Samaritans were seen by Jews as racial “half-breeds” and religious heretics; they were enemies of one another.
- Good Samaritan today
  - Samaritan’s Purse or Samaritan’s Ministries or Samaritan Hospital—Sounds good!
  - This was an oxymoron at this time...big time. The Good Nazi; Terrorist Hospital; Jumbo Shrimp; Seriously Funny; Etc.

<sup>33b</sup> *...as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him...*

- What would the expectation be here?
- He rejoiced greatly! “That’s what you get for rejecting my people, and destroying our temple. For distorting the Scriptures.” And then he went over and kicked the man. And spat on him.
- The suspense is killing me!

<sup>33c</sup> *...he had compassion.*

- Samaritan – He came to where he was, he saw him, he had compassion
- Presence, Sight, Emotion moved to action!
- Are you present with people? Are you present in your neighborhood?
- Do you see people's needs? Do you see the needs of your neighbors and your neighborhood?
- Do you have compassion? This is my Word of the Year this year, compassion. Splagchnon. Do you feel compassion for people in your guts?
- A love that is present.
- A love that sees.
- A love that feels.
- A love that takes initiative.
- A love that is sacrificial.
- This is the high point of this parable.
- This is the Gospel, the Good News, part of this parable. This man could do nothing to save himself and the Samaritan saved him at great expense to himself.
- Remember, the man had been robbed and beaten right at that spot. Perhaps the thieves were still around. This was a VERY dangerous road. There was no road side assistance. No cell phone to call for help. People faced dangers back then just as we do today.
- We need an experience of compassion so that we can offer compassion to those in need!

<sup>34a</sup> *He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.*

- Treat Wounds – Overcame the Levite's Failure

<sup>34b</sup> *Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.*

- Transport the Man – Overcame the Priest's Failure
- This was very risky to the Samaritan, to bring this man, most likely Jewish man, to a probably Jewish inn, all beat up. What if they thought he did it? Very risky move. God honors our risk-taking to care for others!
- *Landscape with the Good Samaritan* painting by Rembrandt

<sup>35</sup> *And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'*

- Spend Money on Him – Overcame the Thieves' Failure
- *The Good Samaritan* painting by Rembrandt

<sup>36</sup> *Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?"*

- Jesus – Question 4

<sup>37a</sup> *He said, "The one who showed him mercy."*

- Lawyer – Answer to Question 4, "Who proved to be a neighbor?"
- The religious leader couldn't even bring himself to say, "The Samaritan proved to be a neighbor."
- Remember the challenge to love the "difficult people" from last week? Whoever that is, that's your neighbor!

<sup>37b</sup> *And Jesus said to him, "You (Jewish lawyer) go, and do likewise (love your neighbor who happens to be the Samaritans)."*

- Jesus – Answer to Question 3, "Who is my neighbor?"
- Go, love your Samaritan neighbor and you will inherit eternal life. This was an impossibility for this religious leader apart from the transformative grace of God through Jesus Christ.
- We don't know what happens to this religious leader but we know what he should've done. He should've gone and sat at the feet of Jesus for the rest of his life...just like Mary does in the very next story in Luke.

## PAUSE!

Jesus of Nazareth is the Great Samaritan to whom the Good Samaritan points. You go, and do likewise!

- Then Jesus Himself goes and does exactly what He instructs this religious leader to do. Love His neighbor, even His enemy.
- **John 1:14** (The Message) The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.
- Jesus sacrificed greatly. He moved into our neighborhood. He gave his life. He made adoption into the family possible. I will now inherit eternal life. Because I am adopted into the family, I will sacrificially expend my resources to expedite others' adoption into the family, no matter what their background.
- Jesus neighbored us while we were His enemies.
- Jesus sets the example as a good neighbor.
- **Romans 5:10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
- First, you inherit eternal life by receiving the love of God through Jesus Christ. Jesus was like the man in the story who was bloodied and beaten even though He had done the Law perfectly. He was left half dead on a cross between two thieves. And then He died...so that we can live. The most important thing in your life is to respond to Jesus' invitation to inherit eternal life in Him. Have you done that?
- Then, because of the Gospel, because of God's love, I am to love God in return and love my neighbor as myself. Because of the Great Samaritan, I am to become a Good Samaritan.

## How do we love our neighbor?

Let's actually love our neighbors who are in our neighborhoods!

- The standard set by Jesus is way up here. We're trying to put on the training wheels of neighboring and just do basic neighboring...which is ok. Maybe that's where we're at. Maybe this is an awesome time to learn neighboring from Jesus.
- What if God is asking us to love our ACTUAL neighbors as ourselves?
- What if God is asking Tallgrass Church to be known as the church that is full of people who are really great neighbors?
- What if we were the best neighbors our neighbors ever had?
- We struggle to be decent neighbors. Are you more like a commuter to your home or a neighbor?
- These are basic things to being a good neighbor. We want to take neighboring to the next level...get it closer to the second greatest commandment of all time, "Love our neighbors as we love ourselves."
- We want to learn our neighbors' names.
- We want to learn our neighbors' histories.
- We want to learn our neighbors' hopes.
- We want to learn our neighbors' hurts.
  - It's very difficult to be present with our neighbors, and to see their need, let alone meet their need.

Jesus says to us, "You go, and do likewise!"

## *The Neighboring Church: \$10—put book in the memo!*

*Getting Better at What Jesus Says Matters Most* by Brian Mavis and Rick Rusaw

- Neighboring is an incredibly comprehensive ministry model. In fact, it's 100% comprehensive.
- Not everyone can be a pastor, teacher, elder, singer or musician, but everyone is a neighbor. No one can opt out. Neighboring fits every demographic: young, old, single, married, adults, teenagers, apartment dwellers, soccer moms, CEOs, baristas, bachelors, grandmothers, and retired couples.
  - Neighboring is NOT just for extroverts. Jesus was probably an introvert. He was always looking for opportunities to get away and recharge his batteries.
- Pastoral care, divorce care, children, youth, women, men, discipleship, prayer, Bible study, sports...everything is encompassed in neighboring.
  - No wonder Jesus said it was the Great Commandment.
- "Your home is the number-one place for discipleship, evangelism, and fellowship." p. 65
  - How much square footage of ministry space do you think is represented in this room right now?
- "Jesus came to move us out of a place of religious complexity and into a place of relational simplicity." p. 71
  - Refreshing simplicity! The complexity will come in how we engage in the specific needs of our neighbors.
- "The goal is to grow. We have been programming people for comfort, not growth. We have done the opposite of what we set out to do." p. 75
- "Neighboring is quite possibly the best spiritual formation process a church can initiate." p. 77

### *Handout 50 Neighboring Ideas*

- Underline or circle a couple practical ideas that you can run with this week.
- Start small. Little by little, one travels far. Neighbor with other neighbors!
- Conversation with a sister in Christ who's involved in a different church. She was spurred on to be bold and engage her neighbor. The Spirit was already at work!

### How will we love our neighbors at Tallgrass?

#### Tallgrass Central Gathering (50-???)

- Vision Casting, Teaching, Stories, Celebration/Worship
- Participation over performance

#### LIFE Groups (15-30)

- Increasingly moving towards geographical focuses (foci).
- However, feel the freedom to be a part of a LIFE Group that's not near you, especially if that's where the relational connectivity is.
- Manhattan, KS with the surrounding communities is a wonderful place to reclaim neighboring.
- Our LIFE Groups are our beachheads in our neighborhood. They are places from which we send out the troops to save those who need rescuing.
- LIFE Groups as inns/hospitals for the hurting.
- LIFE Groups are stewards of the neighborhoods where they meet!

#### Discovery Groups or something similar (3-5)

- We want to grow through multiplication on many levels—discipleship, Discovery Groups, LIFE Groups, Central Gatherings, churches

## Neighborhoods!

- SoPo – South of Poyntz
  - 1414 households
  - Four households for sure who are part of Tallgrass Church plus others involved in other churches.
  - There are great opportunities for Kingdom partnership in our neighborhood.
- Capernaum had 1500 people in Jesus' day. That's smaller than my neighborhood, SoPo, which includes just over 1400 households.
  - Jesus moved into Peter's house in Capernaum. That was His base of ministry. See Mark 1:29-34.
  - There's a Byzantine synagogue on top of the synagogue that Jesus taught in.
  - This was 100 feet away from Peter's house! Jesus could've rolled out of bed and went straight to teach at synagogue!
  - Jesus cast out demons here.
  - Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law here.
  - Jesus lived with Peter here.
  - Jarius' daughter was probably raised from the dead here.
  - The centurion's servant was healed here.
  - Much, much, much more happened here.
  - This is where Jesus neighbored!
  - Jesus heart was broken for his hometown, his neighborhood. See Matthew 11:20-24.
  - Pray for Manhattan, KS! Do I have a broken heart for my hometown, for my neighborhood?
- We want to orient the rhythms of our church around opportunities to engage our neighborhoods.
  - Holidays:
    - Friendsgiving Feast, Halloween, Christmas, Easter, Etc.
  - Sportsball Events:
    - Wildcat football and now also Wildcat basketball! NCAAAF Championship Game, March Madness, NBA Playoffs, College Football, Super Bowl, Etc.
  - Community Activities:
    - What's already planned for your neighborhood?
    - Festivals, Parks, Etc.
    - Tulip Festival, Nothing Festival, Arts in the Park, Etc.

## Upcoming!

- Guys After Parties and Ladies After Parties
- Tallgrass Meal Nights, Taco Bar NEXT Sunday (and first Sundays of the month in general)
- ManCamp on May 19 and stuff like that
- Memorial Day Picnics on May 28 and 4<sup>th</sup> of July Picnics on July 4<sup>th</sup>
- Fall Tallgrass reLaunch Party on Saturday, August 25

## Scary Steps of Faith Towards Reclaiming Neighboring:

1. Who will you have compassion for? Ask God for eyes to see the needs of your neighbor. Ask God for compassion for your neighbor.
2. How will you meet their need(s)? Ask God for the strength/ability to meet those needs. You go, and do likewise!
3. How will you learn neighboring from Jesus? Sit at the feet of Jesus and learn from Him.

*What might God do through our church if we learned to neighbor as Jesus neighbored?*

**PRAY!**



# Chopping Block:

## The Parable of the Good Muslim

A friend asked me the other day, “How can I get what I want from God?” I asked him, “How do you think you can get what you want from God?” He said, “Love God. Love my neighbor.” I said, “Great! Do that and you’ll get what you want.” My friend wanted to make sure he was good to go so he asked, “Ok. Well, who’s my neighbor?” I said, “A man was headed west on I-70 from Kansas City to Manhattan when he was ran off the road by thugs who robbed him of everything and beat him to within an inch of his life. Barely alive, naked and unconscious he waited for a rescuer. A respected police chaplain was also headed west on I-70. When he saw the man stuck in the wreckage he kindly moved to the other side of the road and kept going (he had bigger fish to fry...something about daring kids to stay away from drugs). So also an evangelical family man who was an elder in his church was headed west on I-70. When he saw the man hanging on for life in his smashed car he led his family in prayer for the injured man and also politely passed on the other side. He was headed to a prayer meeting for missions at their church. Just then a suspicious-looking Afghan Muslim pulled over. His dark eyes were deeply set above his dark beard. After he had his completely covered wife move to the back of their van where his 7 kids were he gently laid the man in the front seat and took him to Mercy Regional Health Center. The nurses in the emergency room experienced a little anxiety as the dark-complexioned Afghan carried the battered man in. Their minds wandered to the worst-case scenario. However, after some explanation it was decided that the Afghan man would be the injured man’s benefactor until he had full recovery. In fact, he wanted to replace the man’s car with a brand-new Yukon. So the receptionist took down all of the Muslim man’s information including his passport number...just in case his story didn’t fully check out.” “Which one of these three proved to be a neighbor to the man in need?” My friend couldn’t bring himself to say that the Muslim was his neighbor but had to admit, “The one who showed him mercy was his neighbor.” I told him, “You go, and do likewise. Love your neighbor.”

## The Gospel, Gospel Truths, Gospel Behavior re: Hospitality

- **Romans 15:2-3, 7** <sup>2</sup> “Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. <sup>3</sup> For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, ‘**The reproaches (insults) of those who reproached (insulted) you fell on me.**’ <sup>7</sup> Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.”
- **Romans 15:2-7** <sup>2</sup> Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. <sup>3</sup> For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches (insults) of those who reproached (insulted) you fell on me.” <sup>4</sup> For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. <sup>5</sup> May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
- **Psalms 69:7-9** <sup>7</sup> “For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered my face. <sup>8</sup> I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother’s sons. <sup>9</sup> For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.”
- Inherit eternal life—The Jewish lawyer’s first question related to inheriting eternal life. This lawyer has much to offer his Samaritan neighbor regarding this question. If the Jewish lawyer can get the Gospel then he can take the Gospel to his Samaritan neighbors and truly love them as he loves himself, both in Word and deed.

## The Neighboring Church:

*Getting Better at What Jesus Says Matters Most* by Brian Mavis and Rick Rusaw

- See *50 Neighboring Ideas* handout.
- Neighboring is an Incredibly Comprehensive Ministry p. 64
- 100% comprehensive
- Not everyone can be a pastor, teacher, elder, Sunday school teacher, or usher, but everyone is a neighbor.

- No one can opt out.
- Fits every demographic: young, old, single, married, adults, teenagers, apartment dwellers, soccer moms, HOA presidents, bachelors, grandmothers, and retired couples.
- Pastoral care, divorce care, children, youth, women, men, discipleship, prayer, Bible study, sports...everything is encompassed in neighboring.
- No wonder Jesus said it was the Great Commandment.
- “Your home is the number-one place for discipleship, evangelism, and fellowship.” p. 65
- How much square footage of ministry space do you think is represented in this room right now?
- Neighboring is NOT just for extroverts. p. 66
  - Jesus was probably an introvert. He was always looking for opportunities to get away and recharge his batteries.
- “Jesus came to move us out of a place of religious complexity and into a place of relational simplicity.” p. 71
  - Refreshing simplicity! The complexity will come in how we engage in the specific needs of our neighbors.
- “The goal is to grow. We have been programming people for comfort, not growth. We have done the opposite of what we set out to do.” p. 75
- “Neighboring is quite possibly the best spiritual formation process a church can initiate.” p. 77
- **Belong, Grow, Serve** pp. 58-59
  - A **Belong Person**: Likes to have parties and connects to people, is highly relational and probably already knows the names of neighbors. The Party Thrower, social engineer.
  - A **Grow Person**: Likes Bible studies and personal devotions, may be a little less social, but likes being in groups and learning. The Teacher.
  - A **Serve Person**: Feels most comfortable when actively doing something or organizing something for others; likes to meet needs practically. The Servant.
  - “The Neighboring Church” Appendix

## Love Your Neighbor

- House of Hillel—Hillel the Elder (c. 110 BC – 10 AD),<sup>[25]</sup> used this verse as a most important message of the Torah for his teachings. Once, he was challenged by a gentile who asked to be converted under the condition that the Torah be explained to him while he stood on one foot. Hillel accepted him as a candidate for conversion to Judaism but, drawing on Leviticus 19:18, briefed the man: “Do not do to another what you would not wish done to yourself; that is the whole Torah. The rest is commentary; go and study” — Shabbath folio:31a, Babylonian Talmud
- **Matthew 7:12** So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.
- **Matthew 9:13** Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”
- **Luke 10:25-37** <sup>25</sup>And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>26</sup>He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” <sup>27</sup>And he answered, “You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>28</sup>And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” <sup>29</sup>But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” <sup>30</sup>Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup>Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.<sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup>But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. <sup>34</sup>He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.<sup>35</sup> And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ <sup>36</sup>Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor

to the man who fell among the robbers?" <sup>37</sup> He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

- **Matthew 22:34-40** <sup>34</sup> But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. <sup>35</sup> And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup> And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."
- **Mark 12:28-34** <sup>28</sup> And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.' <sup>30</sup> And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup> The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." <sup>32</sup> And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. <sup>33</sup> And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup> And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.
- **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** <sup>4</sup> "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup> You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
- **Leviticus 19:17-18** <sup>17</sup> "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. <sup>18</sup> You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.
- **Romans 13:8-10** <sup>8</sup> Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup> For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>10</sup> Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.
- **Galatians 5:13-15** <sup>13</sup> For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup> For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>15</sup> But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.
- **James 2:8** If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.
- **Hosea 6:6** "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings."
- **Micah 6:8** "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"
- **Matthew 23:23-24** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. <sup>24</sup> You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!"
- **Luke 14:12-14** <sup>12</sup> He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. <sup>13</sup> But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, <sup>14</sup> and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."
- **Matthew 25:31-40** <sup>31</sup> "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will

answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?’<sup>38</sup> And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?’<sup>39</sup> And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’<sup>40</sup> And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

- **Hebrews 13:2** Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

## Heart, Soul, Strength, Mind

### Heart

- Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved. How long shall your vain thoughts lodge within you? ~Jeremiah 4:14
- For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. ~Matthew 15:19

### Soul

- And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. ~Genesis 2:7
- In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. ~Job 12:10
- What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? ~Mark 8:37

### Mind

- And he that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. ~Romans 8:27
- Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. ~Titus 1:15
- And be renewed in the spirit of your mind. ~Ephesians 4:23
- Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will you die, O house of Israel? ~Ezekiel 18:31

# 50 Neighboring Ideas

Adapted from *The Neighboring Church* Appendix by Brian Mavis and Rick Rusaw (pp. 171-175)

Let’s become the best neighbors our neighbors have ever had. Here are several ideas. What are your ideas? Share them with us. Let’s add to this list and then live it out!

1. Start with 1—Learn 1 name, pray 1 prayer, act 1 time in love. Every 1 counts!
2. Special dates are huge in neighboring. Birthdays. Anniversaries. Graduations. Learn and love!
3. Try to see your neighbors as Jesus sees them. What do you see differently?
4. A Plus One is anything you do for your neighbors that helps them experience the love of God.
5. Take some time today to think about one idea that could bring your neighbors together. Ready. Set. Go!
6. Pray for yourself today. Ask God to give you his heart for your neighbors.
7. It’s not all up to you. Be faithful to loving your neighbors. God will take care of the results. Trust him.
8. Think about how you have been loved by others. Find a way to do that for your neighbor.
9. Think about how God has loved you. How can you love your neighbor like that?
10. Loving your neighbor is linked to loving God. How do you need to grow in loving God today?
11. Throw a party for your neighbors this summer. If you need help planning it, let’s chat!

12. Have kids? Set up a lemonade stand and work it with them. Great family time. Awesome neighbor connections.
13. God put you where you live for a reason. Your unique qualities are needed in your neighborhood. Go love!
14. Want to learn how to share the story of God better?  
Check this out: [www.gcmcollective.org/story-training](http://www.gcmcollective.org/story-training)
15. Bring the backyard festivities to the front yard. It will make a huge difference.
16. If your neighbor is out, go out with them. "How are you doing?" "What are you up to?" will get the ball rolling.
17. See a need. Meet a need. See a need. Meet a need. See a need. Meet a need. Repeat.
18. Maybe you are the answer to the prayer you are praying for your neighbor. Love is an action.
19. Take a regular neighborhood walk with your family. Walk slowly and take time to meet and talk to neighbors.
20. Neighboring is easier when you do it with friends. Who around you would be a good partner? Find a person of peace. Team up! #havefunwithfriends
21. Connect! Connect! Connect! Facebook. E-mail list. GroupMe. Phone tree. Nextdoor.com. Neighborhood newsletter. Do it!
22. What do you love to do? Invite a neighbor to do it with you (camp, garden, sports, knit, cook, movies).
23. Set aside a meal or two a month to share with your neighbors. Plan it. Schedule it. Be intentional. Try doing Suppers of Six. Ask what it is and we'll tell you.
24. Pull together neighborhood sportsball activities with kids and/or adults.
25. Everyone loves receiving gifts. Find a way to bless someone through gift giving. Doesn't have to be fancy!
26. Stay in the know. The more you know the more you can step into the lives of others with love.
27. Love your neighbors in ways they won't ever see. Find ways to bless in secret. This matters too!
28. If your neighbor makes you mad. Pray for them. If you make your neighbor mad. Stop it!
29. Gospel means good news. How can your life be actual good news to your neighbors?
30. Walk you dog with neighboring intentions. Walk a little slower and stop to visit with neighbors as you pass.
31. Plan special events to invite neighbors to. Examples include Friendsgiving Feast, Easter Brunch, Trick-or-Treating, etc.
32. Use the existing infrastructure in your neighborhood to engage your neighbors. E.g. Parks, pools, schools, community centers, etc.
33. Neighboring is also about receiving. If you have a need, ask a neighbor for help. Great way to connect! Accept the local hospitality.
34. End your conversation with neighbors like this: "And if you ever need anything, just know we're here!"
35. We love our neighbors, not to make them Christians, but because we are followers of Jesus. Pure love.
36. Love your neighbors who are in the military well. Go to redeployments and other significant ceremonies on post. Care for families during deployments. Tell your story and don't leave the faith parts out. It's part of who you are. Share confidently and with humility.
37. Don't give up loving people. Sometimes love takes a long time to sink in. Keep loving people every day.
38. Make yourself present in the neighborhood. Make yourself an easy person to bump into.

39. Be completely you in front of your neighbors. There's no reason to put on any kind of mask. Authenticity is key.
40. Setup a neighborhood childcare co-op. Date night childcare swapping is also great. Get to know families and get childcare for your family too!
41. Pick up trash around your neighborhood while out on walks.
42. Be aware of nudges from God. When he nudges, listen. When you hear him, obey. God is the best neighbor! Follow the leading of the Spirit.
43. If someone invites you to their party, go! That means they like you. It's a good thing. Go love them!
44. You may not get anything in return for all your neighboring. Love your neighbors anyway.
45. A Plus One is anything you do for your neighbors that gives them a sense of good news around them. What good news can you see and share this week?
46. Jesus worked more at being interested in others than being interesting to others. This week, be interested.
47. Invite your neighbor to something. Manhattan, KS and the surrounding communities have lots of options that are already planned and paid for. Show up and bring a neighbor!
48. Be ready to offer hospitality at any time! Keep your pantry stocked with snacks. Keep your fridge stocked with beer. Keep a couple bottles of wine on hand.
49. Throw a block party. The City of Manhattan will put up a barricade for you for twenty bucks!
50. Ask your kids what ideas they have to neighbor well...and then go for it...with them!

What other ideas do you have? Let us know! Let's keep the ideas coming and then act in response to the Spirit's prompting.

### ***Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer:**

- "It is not simply to be taken for granted that the Christian has the privilege of living among other Christians. Jesus Christ lived in the midst of his enemies. At the end all his disciples deserted him. On the Cross he was utterly alone, surrounded by evildoers and mockers. For this cause he had come, to bring peace to the enemies of God. So the Christian, too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes. There is his commission, his work. 'The Kingdom is to be in the midst of your enemies. And he who will not suffer this does not want to be of the Kingdom of Christ; he wants to be among friends, to sit among roses and lilies, not with the bad people but the devout people. O you blasphemers and betrayers of Christ! If Christ had done what you are doing who would ever have been spared?' (Luther)." (pp. 17-18)
- "'I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries' (Zech. 10:9). According to God's will Christendom is a scattered people, scattered like seed 'into all the kingdoms of the earth' (Deut. 28:25). That is its curse and its promise. God's people must dwell in far countries among the unbelievers, but it will be the seed of the Kingdom of God in all the world." (p. 18)
- "The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer." (p. 19)
- "Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. No Christian community is more or less than this. Whether it be a brief, single encounter or the daily fellowship of years, Christian community is only this. We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ. What does this mean? It means, first, that a Christian needs others because of Jesus Christ. It means, second, that a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. It means, third, that in Jesus Christ we have been chosen from eternity, accepted in time, and united for eternity." (p. 21)
- "The Christ is in his own heart is weaker than the Christ in the word of his brother; his own heart is uncertain, his brother's is sure. And that also clarifies the goal of all Christian community: they meet one another as bringers of the message of salvation. As such, God permits them to meet together and gives them community. Their fellowship is founded solely upon Jesus Christ and this 'alien righteousness.' All we can say, therefore, is:

the community of Christians springs solely from the Biblical and Reformation message of the justification of man through grace alone; this alone is the basis of the longing of Christians for one another.” (p. 23)

- “Those who love their dream of a Christian community more than they love the Christian community itself become destroyers of that Christian community even though their personal intentions may be ever so honest, earnest and sacrificial. God hates this wishful dreaming because it makes the dreamer proud and pretentious. Those who dream of this idolized community demand that it be fulfilled by God, by others and by themselves. They enter the community of Christians with their demands set up by their own law, and judge one another and God accordingly. It is not we who build. Christ builds the church. Whoever is mindful to build the church is surely well on the way to destroying it, for he will build a temple to idols without wishing or knowing it. We must confess he builds. We must proclaim, he builds. We must pray to him, and he will build. We do not know his plan. We cannot see whether he is building or pulling down. It may be that the times which by human standards are the times of collapse are for him the great times of construction. It may be that the times which from a human point are great times for the church are times when it’s pulled down. It is a great comfort which Jesus gives to his church. You confess, preach, bear witness to me, and I alone will build where it pleases me. Do not meddle in what is not your providence. Do what is given to you, and do it well, and you will have done enough.... Live together in the forgiveness of your sins. Forgive each other every day from the bottom of your hearts.”
- “God hates visionary dreaming; it makes the dreamer proud and pretentious. The man who fashions a visionary ideal of community demands that it be realized by God, by others, and by himself. He enters the community of Christians with his demands, sets up his own law, and judges the brethren and God Himself accordingly. He stands adamant, a living reproach to all others in the circle of brethren. He acts as if he is the creator of Christian community, as if his dream binds men together. When things do not go his way, he calls the effort a failure. When his ideal picture is destroyed, he sees the community going to smash. So he becomes, first an accuser of his brethren, then an accuser of God, and finally the despairing accuser of himself.” (pp. 27-28)
- “Even when sin and misunderstanding burden the communal life, is not the sinning brother still a brother, with whom I, too, stand under the Word of Christ? Will not his sin be a constant occasion for me to give thanks that both of us may live in the forgiving love of God in Christ Jesus? Thus the very hour of disillusionment with my brother becomes incomparable salutary, because it so thoroughly teaches me that neither of us can ever live by our own words and deeds, but only by that one Word and Deed which really binds us together—the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. When the morning mists of dreams vanish, then dawns the bright day of Christian fellowship.” (p. 28)
- “A pastor should not complain about his congregation, certainly never to other people, but also not to God. A congregation has not been entrusted to him in order that he should become its accuser before God and men.” (p. 29)
- “When a person becomes alienated from a Christian community in which he has been placed and begins to raise complaints about it, he had better examine himself first to see whether the trouble is not due to his wish dream that should be shattered by God; and if this be the case, let him thank God for leading him into this predicament.” (p. 30)
- “Christian brotherhood is not an ideal which we must realize; it is rather a reality created by God in Christ in which we may participate. The more clearly we learn to recognize that the ground and strength and promise of all our fellowship is in Jesus Christ alone, the more serenely shall we think of our fellowship and pray and hope for it.” (p. 30)
- “Because spiritual love does not desire (eros) but rather serves, it loves an enemy as a brother. It originates neither in the brother nor in the enemy but in Christ and his Word. Human love can never understand spiritual love, for spiritual love is from above; it is something completely strange, new, and incomprehensible to all earthly love.” (p. 35)
- “Speak to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...” (p. 59)
- “Let him who cannot be alone beware of community... Let him who is not in community beware of being alone.” (p. 77)

## Quotes related to John 13:34-35:

Bruce Milne, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of John*

- “This commandment is *new*, not because it is intrinsically different from the law of love of the Old Testament. Nor is it new because of Jesus’ redefining of ‘neighbour’ (Lk. 10:29-37), though that is certainly significant. The ‘newness’ lies rather in its being the law of the ‘new covenant’ which Jesus is to establish through his death, and which he has so recently proclaimed during the supper they have shared. The new covenant brings with it the new life in the Holy Spirit which will as never before enable the fulfilling of the law. It is ‘new’ also in the sheer depth and demand of the summons to love which Jesus issues. In the light of the cross all other descriptions and definitions of love pale into insignificance. Here indeed is love ‘so amazing, so divine’ (Isaac Watts). Yet according to Jesus this is the norm for Christian community.” – Bruce Milne, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of John*, 206.
- “We also note *the evangelistic power of love*. A loving community, says Jesus, is the visible authentication of the gospel. Love is the ‘final apologetic’ (Francis Schaeffer). Jesus places no limit on this demonstration; *all* will recognize and know it. Unlike other associations which are based upon common interest or outlook, the church is to be marked by an inclusiveness which echoes the universal appeal of Jesus. It is designated as a community which welcomes all people, irrespective of background, age, gender, colour, moral history, social status, influence, intelligence, religious background or the lack of it. To love like Jesus is to love inclusively, indiscriminately and universally. When that kind of love flows within a congregation the world will take note that ‘they have been with Jesus’. Nor need this standard daunt us. Tertullian reported in the late second century the comment of the pagans in his day: ‘Behold, how these Christians love each other! How ready they are to die for each other!’ Their mutual love was the magnet which drew the pagan multitudes to Christ. It has the potential to do so still.” – Bruce Milne, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of John*, 206-207.
  - If you want to love your neighbor well then love your brother and sister in Christ well. That’s how your neighbor will know you follow Jesus.

D.A. Carson, *John*

- “The new command is simple enough for a toddler to memorize and appreciate, profound enough that the most mature believers are repeatedly embarrassed at how poorly they comprehend it and put it into practice: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. The standard of comparison is Jesus’ love (cf. v. 1), just exemplified in the footwashing (cf. vv. 12-17); but since the footwashing points to his death (vv. 6-10), these same disciples but a few days later would begin to appreciate a standard of love they would explore throughout their pilgrimage. The more we recognize the depth of our own sin, the more we recognize the love of the Saviour; the more we appreciate the love of the Saviour, the higher his standard appears; the higher his standard appears, the more we recognize in our selfishness, our innate self-centredness, the depth of our own sin.” – D.A. Carson, *John*, 484.

Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: John*

- “Jesus’ ‘new command’ to his followers to love each other as he has loved them constitutes the third major topic. This will be the mark of his disciples (cf. Matt. 5:43-48; Rom. 8:37; Rev. 1:5). The command to love one’s neighbor was not new. Love within the community was also highly regarded at Qumran (e.g., 1QS 1:10; cf. Josephus, J.W. 2.8.2§119), and neighbor love was emphasized by the first-century rabbi Hillel. What was new was Jesus’ command for his disciples to love one another as he has loved them—laying down their lives. This rule of self-sacrificial, self-giving, selfless love, a unique quality of love inspired by Jesus’ own love for the disciples, will serve as the foundational ethic for the new messianic community.” – Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), pp 423-424.

D.A. Carson, *The Supremacy of Christ and Love in a Postmodern World* at the Desiring God 2006 National Conference

- The “world” is all that is anarchic in the human domain, all that rebels against God. For God to love this world with the love that he has for his eternal Son is simply past finding out. The love of the Son for the Father,



though we understand so little of the Trinity, is comprehensible enough. But for Jesus to say to us, “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (13:34–35) — this is simultaneously incomprehensible and incalculably wonderful. We fall at his feet in adoration and worship; we are hushed, convicted, lifted up; we know ourselves to be immeasurably privileged, nothing other (to use Paul’s expression) than the sons of God by adoption.

- Doubtless many who read these lines are aware that much contemporary scholarship on John’s Gospel views this Gospel as irremediably sectarian. The dominant reason that is advanced is this: In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus’ disciples are told to love their enemies (Matthew 5:44), while here in John they are told to love each other, and the enemies are not mentioned. Surely (it is argued) this reflects a community that has turned in on itself, a community that must therefore be labeled sectarian. But since our love for one another within the church is to be modeled on the intra-Trinitarian love of God, would anyone be so bold as to suggest that God’s intra-Trinitarian love is sectarian? Contemporary sociological categories come nowhere near understanding what Jesus says in this Gospel.
- Or consider what many ecumenical voices say about John 17. These voices tend to read a selection of lines from this chapter, and then say that if we do not sign on to the ecumenical movement, bury all differences of doctrine, and simply love each other for Jesus’ sake, Jesus’ prayer will never be answered. We have an obligation, they say, to ensure that Jesus’ prayer is answered, “that they may be one.” Otherwise Jesus’ himself is frustrated by unanswered prayer. Such exhortations rarely wrestle with what this chapter says about God, about Christ, about Christ’s mission, about the place this chapter has on the way to the cross, resurrection, and vindication of the Son, about the nature of the love between the Father and the Son.
- Moreover, Christians reading these words toward the end of the first century, when this Gospel started to circulate, were not wringing their hands and wondering how they could help poor old Jesus by encouraging the ecumenical movement along. They were exuberantly thanking God that Jesus’ prayer was being fulfilled before their eyes, as men and women were being converted from many tribes and tongues and peoples and languages, and were loving one another for Jesus’ sake.
- Of course, this love is still far from perfect: nothing in these dimensions is perfect until the consummation. But Jesus’ glorious prayer “that they may be one” is manifestly being answered to a superlative degree in the confessional church around the world today, as Christians bask in God’s love and understand that all of our love is but a grace-driven response to the intra-Trinitarian love of God which has issued in the glorification of the Son by means of the cross, in the Son’s perfect obedience to his Father, all the way to the cross.
- Or what shall we make of postmodern voices that, in the name of love, deny the exclusive role that Jesus plays in mediating God’s love to us? Will their siren tones increase love, or even our understanding of love? Sadly, no: they merely restore idolatry under a new guise. These voices are among the least tempered and least loving of our time, especially with those who do not agree with their vision.
- Christian love is anchored in the Godhead, anchored in eternity, anchored in Christ, anchored in the cross. Other New Testament Christians, apart from the initial readers of the Gospel of John, understood these things, of course. “I live by faith in the Son of God,” Paul writes — and then he cannot restrain himself, but adds, “who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). Again, we read, “We love, because he first loved us” (compare 1 John 4:7–12).