

August 2, 2020

## Help Others Do the Same: Part 1

*RENEWED Series*

**Luke 10: 25-37**

Pastor Ryan Harmon

Well good morning, Church. For these past six weeks, Jeff and Josh and I have had the privilege of walking through what we've called a RENEWED Vision for us as a church. I'm talking about who we want to be as a church and walking through Scripture that highlights what we've said: "*We want to be a people coming together to know Jesus, become more like Him, and help others do the same.*" And as we get to these last two weeks here, Josh and I are going to talk about what it means to *help others do the same*. What does that call to reach out look like for us as a people?

I'm gonna be honest with you, though. Over this past week, I don't know about you, but as I was preparing, I just kept thinking, "Man, I feel discouraged these past two weeks." I don't know if anyone resonates with me on that, but this COVID moment we're in, I'm just gonna be honest, I feel like we took some steps back. It's kind of hard for me. I was just kind of discouraged. I know a few people that have it and it was discouraging to me. And as I was kind of sitting in that and thinking about reaching out, I came across an interesting statement. Of all places, it was on Twitter. And right now I know, if any of you are on Twitter, it can be a cesspool. It can be like the worst place on Earth. But if you follow some encouraging people, there can be some interesting and some encouraging thoughts that can be provoked there, and this tweet by a pastor on the West Coast challenged me. We're gonna put it up here on the screen. This guy (Jeff Vanderstelt) says, "The church we read about in Acts would not be set back by COVID. They would have seen it as an incredible opportunity for discipleship and Kingdom service to others. Let's learn from our ancestors during this time."

I think there's truth to that as I look at the way the church in Acts worked, and even as I read church history—those first hundred, two hundred, three hundred years the church was active. When there were plagues, the church was active. It was an incredible opportunity. And I got convicted, and if I wasn't convicted enough by that, he then followed it up with another tweet. I'm going to show you that one too. He says, "When vaccines are readily available, and a new normal develops, some churches will be remembered for loving their neighbors. Other churches won't be remembered at all." Now that might be an overstatement. Twitter's good for hyperbole, right? But it was still somewhat convicting to me. Will I be someone who, when I look back, says, "I saw COVID as an opportunity, saw that as a great moment for discipleship, for Kingdom service"? Am I walking through this moment treating it as kind of an annoyance or as an incredible opportunity for the gospel? That got me thinking. Could it be that what God is doing right now is He is preparing a people to begin to act in this moment, in the midst of a moment that is so confusing—so much information, misinformation, and political kinds of division everywhere we look—could it be that God is preparing a people, and He's calling us to be a people right now that takes this as an opportunity to let others know about the goodness of God and the love of Christ? That's what we want to think about this morning as we think about what it means to help others do the same.

In order to do that, we're going to look at a really familiar passage. If you have your Bibles, turn with me to Luke, Chapter 10. We're gonna be in verse 25 to begin. This is the *Good Samaritan*, a passage we're all very familiar with. But we're gonna walk through this passage and see what God's Word has to say to us today. So, starting in verse 25:

**And a lawyer stood up and put Him [that is Jesus] to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"** (\*NASB, Luke 10:25)

That's quite a question. And make no mistake, what's happening here with this lawyer, with Jesus, is something that we should be familiar with because it was happening all the time. The experts in the Law, the religious elite—the Pharisees, the teachers, the scribes—they were intent on always trying to find a way to stump Jesus. They wanted to catch Him in a question of the Law where maybe He would say something wrong. And their purpose in doing this was to invalidate Him as a teacher. They didn't want people following Him, so they wanted to find a way to invalidate Him. That's precisely what this lawyer is doing. Now a lawyer, of course, when we think of the word lawyer, we think of, you know, "L.A. Law" or something like that, right? Someone in a suit and tie. But that's not what is happening here. That's not who this person is. A lawyer, of course, is someone that's a specialist in the law of the day, and in this day, the law of the day was the Mosaic Law. This is an expert in the law of the land, of the Mosaic Law, the Old Testament. The person poured over it, tried to figure out how to apply it. What precisely does it mean? And then he asked this question, "*What may I do or what must I do to inherit eternal life?*" This is basically another way of saying, "Jesus, who is right and who is wrong? Who is 'in' with God and who is 'out' with God, and how do I make sure that I'm in the in-crowd?" That's his question. "Who is going to live with God forever because I want to know, and I want to get into that group." And Jesus, of course, as He so often did, doesn't answer straight away, doesn't give an answer. He instead asked a question. Verse 26:

**And He [Jesus is now speaking] said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" And he [this lawyer] 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." And He [Jesus] said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE." But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"**

(Vs. 26-

29)

So Jesus poses a question. The lawyer responds and his response is commendable. It's accurate. And Jesus says so. The lawyer says, "**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.**"

And that should be familiar to us. It should be familiar to us because in Matthew and in Mark, on different occasions—when the rich young ruler comes to Jesus, and when a different lawyer asked Jesus the question—this is precisely how He responds. He says it slightly differently. He puts the order differently. It's, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength, and love your neighbor as yourself." It should be familiar to us also because these are our commandments

that are found and rooted in the Old Testament. They would have been very familiar to every Jewish person living in that day. In Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, these commandments sit right there, and the Jewish people would look to these two commandments as a good way of summing up the law. When the law was so big, they were trying to figure out, “How do we consolidate it?” They looked to the Ten Commandments, and then they would look also to these two verses.

The lawyer answers and Jesus says, “Good answer. Good answer.” Jesus says, **“DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.”**

. . . meaning the person that's living in this way, the person that's walking with God in this way, will get to continue on with God. That's naturally what would happen. But, of course the question is in the details, isn't it? What does it mean to do these things: to love God this way, to love our neighbors this way? And that's precisely what the lawyer wants to know. “What's this mean for me?” So he asked Jesus a question, and he's trying to justify himself. He's still trying to figure out how my answer can be the right answer?

So what does it look like practically to love God and our neighbor in this way? The love God part, I feel like we generally have a sense of what that looks like. You know, we don't do it perfectly, certainly, but we kind of know, “Okay, that means to worship Him, that means to pray, do these things,” and we kind of have a category for thinking about that. But what does it mean to love my neighbor? This is a question that Jewish people and the teachers kind of wrestled over all the time. And the answer they typically came to was that to love your neighbor meant to love people like you. To love other Jewish people—that's who your neighbor was. Non-Jews, Gentiles—don't worry about them. The Pharisees took it a step further and they narrowed it down even more. They said, “You have to love Pharisees, but non-Pharisees, don't worry about them.” The common answer in the day would be, “Love your friends and hate your enemies.” There was actually a book of Jewish literature, of wisdom literature called *Sirach*. And in there it says this, “Give to the godly but don't help the sinner.” So, who exactly are we called to love? Who is my neighbor? And it's to this question that Jesus gives us a story we're so familiar with, the Good Samaritan. Verse 30:

**Jesus replied and said, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.”**

This road from Jerusalem to Jericho was a notorious road, notoriously dangerous. It was a common road but it was steep. It was long, seventeen miles long and it covered a great deal of elevation, and it kind of worked its way through ravines and through cliffs. It was a rocky road and so there were caves all along the road where robbers would love to hide; thieves would hide; bandits would hide. They would look for an unsuspecting, isolated, probably poor traveler, that didn't have the wealth to have a donkey or have a group with him or her. That's precisely what happened. They see this man traveling, and they jump him and surround him and beat him, and take everything of value from him, and leave him basically naked and half dead. Jesus continues, Verse 31:

**“And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.”** (Vs. 31-32)

Now to Jesus here, we need to understand that these two people were incredibly significant people in that culture. In a world that really revolves around the Law and around the Temple, the religious people were incredibly important. These are the elite in the society. The priest, of course, is the one who prepared and offered sacrifices, an important role that offered sacrifices for the whole nation. The Levite, that whole class of people, that whole tribe, was tasked with keeping God's house in order, making sure that everything was just right, so that it maintained purity, so everything was correct. These are people that are in the upper echelon of the culture, especially in religious terms. If we were going to do a modern-day retelling, we'd probably say something like a pastor or maybe a leader of a big Christian nonprofit, or perhaps maybe an elder, a set of elders in the church—people that you would think, if anyone understands what God expects, it is these people. But what do we see from them? They see the man, their fellow Israelite, and they *pass by*. They keep walking. Now, at this point, Jesus' listeners may have been somewhat excited. They might have been on the edge of their seat because, typically in these stories, we know something else is going to happen, and Jesus had a habit, didn't He, of criticizing the religious elite? He loved to call out the scribes and the Pharisees and perhaps if you're just your average Jewish man or woman, you're thinking, "Oh, this could be the moment that he calls out those guys," but then the hero of the story is someone just like me, just your average Joe. But that's not what Jesus does. As he continues, he surprises everyone that's listening. Verse 33:

**“But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on *them*; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.’”**

(Vs.33-

35)

At two thousand years of distance from this scene, almost makes it nearly impossible for us to feel any amount of shock here. But we've got to understand that Samaritans and Israelites, Samaritans and Jews, these were mortal enemies. Samaritans were considered half breeds, and Samaritans made claims that upset the Jewish nation. They claimed they were the chosen people, not Israel. They had their own holy city. They had their own temple, actually. They had their own set of traditions. These were people that were making claims that cut to the very heart of what Israel believed about itself. This got so bad, at one point, that the Jewish people went and ransacked the Samaritan temple. And then years later, when Jesus would have been about ten years old, the Samaritans went into the temple in Jerusalem and threw bones everywhere in order to desecrate the temple, during Passover of all times, one of the holiest days of the year. These are mortal enemies. And so Jesus, using a Samaritan, would have been absolutely shocking! But it wasn't just that Jesus says it's a Samaritan. It's also the way the Samaritan acts that would have been shocking, would have been offensive actually.

What did the Samaritan do? Well, first of all, **he felt compassion**. While religious authorities saw the man and walked by, the Samaritan, it says, felt compassion. He felt empathy. He cared. He entered in. He saw someone hurt, and he entered in. He felt compassion for the man, and not just any man. He felt compassion for his enemy. But he also entered in when he dove into the situation.

It tells us he **bandaged the man's wounds**. Now let me tell you, this guy, this Samaritan, wasn't rolling around with a knapsack, a fanny pack filled with band-aids. He didn't have a backpack with a Costco box of band-aids. This meant that he probably took his clothes, tore them—tore his own clothes—and bound them around the wound in order to help this man. He took his own clothes, took his own oil, poured it in the wounds to be soothing to these wounds, took his own wine and poured it in the wounds to be an antiseptic to clean the wound, took his own donkey and put the man on the donkey. In other words, he's got to walk the rest of the way. Then he gets to the inn, puts him in the inn, and gives the innkeeper **two dinarii**—two coins your translation might say. What we miss is that two coins—two dinarii— would have covered twenty-four days of lodging, twenty-four days of care. And then he says, “Hey, if this advance doesn't cover it, don't worry, I'll be back. I'll repay you.” Compassion...care...empathy. What the Samaritan did is, he entered in self-sacrificially. He sacrificed his money, sacrificed his clothes, sacrificed his reputation by caring for an Israelite. He did all of these things. It's a remarkable story and it would have shocked Jesus' listeners. How did the lawyer respond? Verse 36, Jesus said:

**“Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?”**

So, Jesus brings us back and brings the lawyer back to the original question. Remember, the lawyer asked, “Who is my neighbor?” and Jesus comes back to that question, but he alters it a little bit to make a point. He doesn't say, “Who is your neighbor?” he says, “Who *acted* like a neighbor? Who was a neighbor? Who proved themselves to be a neighbor?” It's a slight difference in the question, but the point is that it wasn't about who; it was about whether or not there was someone, whether or not “I”, whether or not “the lawyer” acts as a neighbor. It kind of moves the point from the outside, back to me. The question kind of becomes, “Am I a neighbor?” Then as this passage finishes in verse 37:

**“Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.”**

Who's my neighbor, Jesus? Jesus says, “Wrong question.” See, what the lawyer was trying to do is be economical with his response, right? Who do I *need* to care for? Who do I *need* to love? Can I put limitations on that? Can I know if I go this far, then I'm good with God? And Jesus changes that question completely. He says, “Be a neighbor. Be the kind of person that's filled with mercy and compassion. Be the kind of person that, wherever you are, when you see someone in need, you respond.” The point isn't, “Who is my neighbor?” The question is, “Am I a neighbor? Am I filled with God's kind of love? Am I willing, even if I see an enemy, to reach out? Am I willing to be a neighbor?”

Now the question for us, of course, is “How do we make this applicable to us?” How do we think about what this means for us? What does it mean to be a neighbor, not who is my neighbor? What does it mean for me to be a neighbor in this day, in this moment, in this world that is filled with chaos and confusion right now? What does it look like to be a neighbor? How do we as a church, when we're thinking about helping others do the same, come into this life with God that we're talking about? How do we be neighbors in this world?

This question has been something that our outreach team—Jason, Megan and Jacob—have been thinking about, really since this COVID moment began back in March. They've been challenging, especially us as the staff, but also the church, through videos and through Facebook posts to think about what it looks like to *reach out* during this time. What's it look like to be a neighbor right now? And I think sometimes, when we think about this, it's easy to get caught up in wondering “Who?”, a little bit like the lawyer. And so the outreach team has been thinking about, “Let’s just start with our neighborhood. Let's just start with the people that we live closest to because we're around them all the time.” Some of us have to be home all the time right now, so let's just start with those people. And let's start thinking about how we can be active in being a neighbor in this world that is hurt and broken and confused. They've actually turned it into a verb. They said, “This is called *neighboring*. We're going to be involved in *neighboring*,” and they've challenged me and our staff to figure out how we reach out.

In order to help us think about that, they put together a few videos. Now if you're on YouTube, you may have seen these videos, but I want to share three of them with you today. They've been calling them, “*Neighboring in 60 Seconds*” because they're trying to take this big concept of loving our neighbor, and they're trying to make it really practical. So we're gonna watch three of those “*Neighboring in 60 Seconds*” videos. The first one starts really simple. So let's hear Veronica's story:

*Hey guys, my name is Jason. I'll introduce you to Veronica, and this is “Neighboring in 60 Seconds”. All right, to inspire and challenge us to be better neighbors, I asked Veronica to share just a little bit about what she did in her neighborhood to reach those around her:*

*(Veronica) “I went and I got toilet paper, wet wipes, some tissues, and a little candy, and put them all in a bag with, “Hey neighbor”, and a written note that said, “My name is Veronica. This is my husband, Jethro, and my baby Roger. And we want to tell you that we are here for you. And if you need anything, just let us know. Here are our phone numbers.” And that was it. From there, I've had five or six neighbors call me or text me and just say, “Hey, I could use your help in this,” or, “Thank you so much for that. We also have a gift for you.” I'm hoping that as soon as all of this is over, hopefully it's very soon, and we are able to go out and about and I don't have to be afraid of being less than six feet away from people, that we are able to have an ice cream social at our backyard and be able to have people just come and go as they please.”*

(Ryan) Who's my neighbor? Wrong question, right? How do I be a neighbor? And this quick story with Veronica and Roger in those sweet shades (sunglasses). Gotta admit it, right? Super simple, right? Toilet paper? I don't know what I'd think if a neighbor gave me toilet paper, but I'd certainly think I want to talk to this person. First step in getting to know our neighbor and being a neighbor, being the kind of person that shows love and mercy and compassion to those around us. The first step is just being known, just letting people know who you are. Veronica and Jethro and Roger did this simple act.

I know other people that went around and just left cards that said, “Hey, neighbor, I'm here. I know this is a weird time. Just want to let you know I'm here.” And the challenge for me is that if I'm completely honest, there are times where I feel like pulling into my garage and putting down the

door and hoping no one else knows I'm home. But the challenge is: Am I present? Do people even know that I'm who I am? Am I a neighbor to them or am I merely the person that happens to live next door? How do I be a neighbor? First step: get to know people. Do something crazy like Veronica and Jethro and Roger there did. I think if you have a baby with sunglasses on, you can do quite a bit in your neighborhood.

I know someone else that decided, "Hey, you know what I'm going to do? I just want to do something tangible during these days, so I'm just gonna wave at every single person that I see in my neighborhood." And so, if you live in a neighborhood and there's an oddball walking around, waving at everyone, his name is Jeff Peterson. (*laughter*) He preached a couple weeks ago. I told him, "That's a little weird." But saying hello, saying "Hi", reaching out, giving people a wave, these are small little acts but, if they are done in faith, if they're done prayerfully, "God, I don't know, I'm just gonna wave. Would you take that small little thing? Would you do something with it?" Who knows what God might do? I've been trying to simply live more in my front yard than in my backyard, hoping that as I'm available on my street that maybe people will stop by. And a few people have. I met a new neighbor yesterday.

So the first question, and the first challenge is, "Do you know your neighbors?" If we're called to be neighbors and love our neighbors, do we even know who they are? Do you have neighbors right now that you think you know what, two houses down, but you've never talked to them? My challenge is, "Could you meet one new neighbor this week?" Could you do that prayerfully and just, don't be weird, right? Just go out and say, "Hey, I'm so and so. Just wanted to get to know you." And then prayerfully say, "God, will You do something with that?" So that's challenge number one: Meet a neighbor. It's the very first step. If we want to be neighbors, we've got to know them, right? But, as we get to know them, who knows what God might do? That's the question of faith. We don't know what God is going to do. Maybe He'll present a need. That's exactly what happened with Marlys. Let's watch her story.

*'Hey, guys, my name is Jason, and this is Marlys, and welcome to another episode of "Neighboring in 60 Seconds". All right, so each week we're trying to put out videos to inspire and challenge you all to be good neighbors. And sometimes, as people, we like to know like, "What the next steps are?" We like to have it all planned out and know exactly where we're going. And neighboring doesn't always work like that. And that's one of the things I appreciate about Marlys. She saw a need; she didn't know what the next steps were but she was willing to step in and be a good neighbor.*

*(Marlys): "So I saw my neighbor, Judy, up out in the driveway, and I knew she was a recent widow. My neighbors who usually check in on her were gone to California for three months. So I just went over and knocked on her door and said, "Hey, Judy, I'm the neighbor next door to Joyce and Craig. I know they're gone. Is there anything that I could do for you?" And she goes, "Oh, my gosh! I just had to stop driving. So, if you could go get my medication that I need today for me, that would be great." That just started a really neat conversation, a way to serve her. I found out she was a believer, and we just had the best conversation. But to reach out, I can get intimidated sometimes and think it has to be this big deal. But like with Judy, I just asked God, "What should I do?" and He goes, "Just go ask her if she needs help." So, I just*

*walked across the street and said, "Hey, I'm Marllys. Do you need any help?" And she's like, "Absolutely I do." It's as simple as that."*

(Ryan) Gosh! Just go ask her if she needs help. It's as simple as that. What did the Samaritan do? The Samaritan saw a problem and he chose to enter in. The priests and the Levites saw the problem and chose to just pass on by. If we make ourselves available, if we step out, it's not always going to happen that God will reveal a need, but He might do that sometimes. That's precisely what happened with Marllys. There was a need. She reached out, and there actually was an authentic need, and she was able to help. She's able to love her neighbor.

Who knows what God might do over time with a situation that is going to present itself in your life? Who knows what God might do as we decide to do what the Samaritan did? He saw a need and he crossed the road. We can choose to enter into the lives of the people that we live next to, that we work with, and then choose to love our neighbors, and be a neighbor.

So, challenge number two: Just pray; pray that God would make a need available, that He'd give you eyes and ears to see what's happening around you. I guarantee there are needs. In this broken world, I guarantee there are needs all around us. But sometimes we just drive right by, right? So, would you ask God this week, "Lord, would You just help me to see if there is a need? And then give me the faith to step out?" Simple step.

Now sometimes what will happen is there will be an opportunity to give someone the very gift of life that they might enter into life with God, and that's what we all hope for—to have the opportunity to share the love of God and share the truth of the gospel with our neighbors. It doesn't always happen, but sometimes it might. God might do that. And that's precisely what He did with James and Connie. Last one: "Neighboring in 60 Seconds":

*Hey, what's up guys? My name is Jason. This is the Baltensperger family, and welcome to another episode of "Neighboring in 60 Seconds". Alright, so in this week's video we are highlighting James and Connie Baltensperger. These guys are awesome. I hope you get a chance to meet them. I enjoyed my time with them tremendously. In this week's video, we're going to be talking a little bit about this word called evangelism. What does it mean? What does it look like to love those around us as it relates to talking to people, to sharing with people, and maybe just something so simple as asking them, "Tell me about your life?" And then when the conversation turns and they ask about your life, you can't help but evangelize. You can't help, in other words, to talk about how Jesus has so radically changed your life. Check out what these guys have to say.*

*(Connie): So Cindy and I, my neighbor, went on a walk together. And I just started out asking a question. I asked her, "Tell me a little bit about your life story." And through the course of that, I began to share my story with her so I could share with her how Jesus has played a vital role in my life. (James) And so if I truly love my neighbor, I'll be concerned about not only their relationship with the Lord Jesus, but also about where they're gonna spend eternity. It's like, if I give some food to a guy, and I don't share the gospel, I've just prolonged his life—what, another day—but I haven't given him real substance. That's the*

*most important thing we have that we can give away—that relationship with Jesus. You just want everybody to be aware of it.”*

(Ryan): Don't you just want to have a cup of coffee with James and Connie? I just feel like you could just see God's love in them.

Over these past six weeks, we've been talking about this vision: that we'd be a people *coming together to know Jesus, become more like Him, and help others do the same*. You know, my deep belief is that if we as a people start to experience the deep, rich community as we come together, and then we start to know Jesus more and enter into this interactive life with Him that becomes our first and only focus, everything else is rubbish, as Jeff shared when he was talking from Philippians 3. If that's happening, and then if we're becoming more like Jesus, if our hearts are being transformed, and they're looking more and more like His, then if those things are happening to me, it's just going to be a natural response that we will want to share that with other people. We'll want to share from the richness of our own experience. If I'm experiencing deep, fulfilling, flourishing life with God, how could I not want to share that with others, right?

Do you know your neighbors? Are you watching for needs? Are you ready to share the truth with them, to share the gospel with them? This week, third challenge: Do you know a neighbor that is walking far from God? They're not with God. If so, could you just begin to pray for them? Just pray, “Lord, be near them. But, Lord, I'd love for a chance to share my faith with them. I'd love for a chance to share the gospel with them,” because I pray that God would bless them and that somehow He would give me a chance to bring them into life with You. Could we pray for them? Would you do that this week?

Who knows what God would do with these small steps? We live in a broken world, a world that needs Jesus. We live in a chaotic and confusing world right now, a world that needs Jesus. Church, let us be people that are ready to love our neighbor and to love them by being neighbors. There will be a day, I promise, where we look back on this moment, and it will be a distant memory, right? We'll look in the rearview mirror and say, “I'm glad that's done.” But the question I want to ask is, “When that happens, what would it be like if we could say, ‘During that time, God helped us love our neighbors and be neighbors like never before. God gave us an opportunity to bring others into what we were experiencing.’” We can invite others into this moment where we're coming together, where we're coming to know Jesus, we're becoming more like Him, and then we help many, many, many others do just the same. Let's pray that happens. Will you join me in prayer?

*Our Father, we know that this world is broken. We know it's hurting. And we thank You that You have brought us to Yourself, that You have made us Your children, that You've given us the chance to be people of hope because we are grounded in You. We have hope now and we have hope in the future. Lord, we want to be people that, at this moment, stand out for the quality of love that we have for our neighbors. We know that's only possible if You, by Your grace, help us to do it. So we ask that You would, Lord, help us to be neighbors. Help us to love our neighbors, that we might represent You and proclaim*

*Your name and glorify Your name in this moment that we live. We pray these things in  
Your name, Amen.*

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## Introduction

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This week, we started unpacking the final section of our vision statement: Coming together: to know Jesus, be more like Him, and **help others do the same**.

As Ryan explained, seeking to know and be more like Jesus should transform our hearts and actions. The natural outflow of being like Jesus is loving God and our neighbors.

## Getting to Know Each Other *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

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Begin your group time by learning more about each other. Open up and have some fun!

→ Have you always lived in Lincoln? If not, what brought you here?

→ Other than your home, what place do you visit most often, and why?

## Getting Started

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Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Invite someone to open the group in prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
  - a. God to reveal His truth and love for the group
  - b. Openness to each other and God's voice
  - c. Friendships to deepen and grow
- 2) Invite someone else to read Luke 10:25-37 to the group.

## Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

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Please complete these questions before your group meets.

- 1) What part of Ryan's sermon stood out to you most?

- 2) In Luke 10:25-28, the law expert paints a correct picture of what is necessary to inherit eternal life, and it's a pretty tall order. First, we are to love God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind.

**Read Deuteronomy 6: 4-9.**

- a. When it came to God, what was your house/family like growing up? Did He play a significant role in how your family lived, was He only thought of occasionally or was He not brought up at all? What effect, if any, did that have on your upbringing?
- b. What role does God play in your household today?
- 3) The second command is to love our neighbors as ourselves. We'll see later in this passage that Jesus redefines 'neighbor' as anyone in our sphere of influence.

- a. Can you list the names of all your 'neighbors'?

Neighborhood

Work/School

Places You Shop/Visit

- b. On that list, who is the hardest for you to love? This week, what could you do to love them more than yourself?

- 4) In verse 29, the expert in law pushes Jesus to clarify. He wants to know the boundaries so he can stay in the lines (i.e., "He can't mean everyone. There have to be some people I don't have to love!").

**Read Jonah 3:10 -4:10**

- a. Why do you think God wants us to show love - even to the people that have wronged, frustrated or annoyed us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Are there areas in your Christian life in which you may be like the expert in the law, seeking only to do the bare minimum (prayer, patience, generosity, love, moderation, integrity, perseverance, etc.)? What's keeping you from fully being like Jesus in those areas?
- 5) Ryan challenged us, not to just act like Jesus sometimes, but to be like Jesus in every situation.
- a. The Good Samaritan loved his neighbor no matter the cost or cultural implications. If Lincoln Berean were filled with people who loved like that, how might it help us achieve the last part of our vision statement (Coming together: to know Jesus, be more like Him, and help others do the same)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. If we're too focused on the road or destination, we can miss opportunities to be like the Good Samaritan. What could you do this week to make sure you're looking for opportunities to love your 'neighbor' as yourself?

**Prayer** *(Suggested time: 10 min)*

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Consider your answers to the questions above and take a few moments to prepare a prayer request.