



Reflection Guide: Sunday, August 25, 2024

Opening Prayer:

Opening Prayer: O God, as the Apostle Peter came to understand, you show no partiality to any one group of people, but through your divine love and mercy, you call all to encounter the transformative love you offer to those created in the divine image. As we enter this time of reflection, open our minds, eyes, and hearts so that we may know you more deeply, be transformed by your grace, and go forth into the world proclaiming your good news to all. In Christ, we pray. Amen.

Reflection on the Sermon:

Over the past few weeks, we have journeyed through the sermon series “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” where we’ve explored the teachings of Jesus on what it means to be a “good neighbor.” We’ve reflected on loving God and neighbor, the parable of the Good Samaritan, and the story of Ruth and Naomi. Today, we conclude this series by facing the challenging truth of our own biases and how they affect our ability to love others as God loves us.

Personal Reflection:

1. Reflect on your initial reaction to the idea that we all have biases. How does acknowledging your biases change the way you see and interact with others?
2. Think about a time when you felt challenged by someone who was different from you. How did you handle that situation, and what might you do differently now in light of today’s message?

Scripture Reflection:

1. Re-read Acts 10:34-35, where Peter declares, “God doesn’t show partiality to one group of people over another.” How does this declaration challenge or affirm your understanding of God’s love?
2. Consider Jonah’s response to God’s mercy towards the people of Nineveh. In what ways might you, like Jonah, struggle to accept that God’s love extends to those you find difficult to love?

Community Reflection:

1. Peter’s transformation required him to move beyond his cultural and religious boundaries. What are some boundaries in your own life that might need to be crossed in order to love others more fully?
2. How can our church community better reflect God’s inclusive love? What steps can we take to ensure that everyone feels welcomed and valued?



Practical Applications:

- **Confronting Biases:**
 - Take time this week to identify and confront a bias you may have. Reflect on how this bias might be affecting your relationships and interactions with others. Pray for God’s guidance in overcoming it.
- **Acts of Inclusion:**
 - Make a conscious effort to reach out to someone who is different from you—whether in background, belief, or lifestyle. Offer a gesture of friendship, such as sharing a meal, having a conversation, or simply offering a kind word.
- **Community Engagement:**
 - Consider ways you can contribute to fostering a more inclusive environment within your community or church. This could involve volunteering for outreach programs, participating in discussions about diversity and inclusion, or supporting initiatives that promote unity and understanding.

Closing Reflection:

As we conclude this series, let us remember that the journey of being a good neighbor is ongoing. Like Peter, we are called to continually grow in our understanding of God’s expansive love. Let us be open to the Holy Spirit’s guidance, allowing ourselves to be transformed as we seek to love others as Christ loves us.

Closing Prayer:

God of all people, we thank you for the lessons we’ve learned throughout this series. Help us to carry these lessons into our daily lives, living out your command to love our neighbors as ourselves. May we be agents of your inclusive love, reaching out to all people with grace, compassion, and understanding. In the name of Christ, our neighbor and our Lord, we pray. Amen.