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# Will The Real Neighbor Please Stand Up? (No Limits

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The Power of God's Love

Pastor Wil Nichols

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***Sermon: The Power of God's Love: Will The Real Neighbor Please Stand Up? (No Limits***

***Lesson Text***

Luke 10:25–37 (KJV)<sup>25</sup> And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? <sup>26</sup> He said unto him, **What is written in the law? how readest thou?** <sup>27</sup> And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. <sup>28</sup> And he said unto him, **Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.** <sup>29</sup> But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? <sup>30</sup> And Jesus answering said, **A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.** <sup>31</sup> And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, <sup>34</sup> And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. <sup>36</sup> Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? <sup>37</sup> And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, **Go, and do thou likewise.**

***Introduction***

Again, our theme for 2026 is “The Power of God’s Love” based on a New Commandment from Jesus: John 13: <sup>34</sup> **A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.** <sup>35</sup> **By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.**

Now so far, we’ve looked at how the absence of walking in Jesus’ commandment to love impacts us: Matthew 24: <sup>10</sup> **And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.** <sup>11</sup> **And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.** <sup>12</sup> **And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.**

Today we want to start looking at how the presence of walking in Love impacts us; specifically on how it impacts our relationships with three groups of people – our neighbors, our strangers, and our enemies.

This message will focus on our neighbors.

In our lesson text, a lawyer, having a discussion with Jesus concerning how to inherit eternal life, comes to the response of “Loving God with all your heart, and loving your neighbor as yourself”.

## Will The Real Neighbor Please Stand Up? (No Limits)

Page 2 of 5 (February 1, 2026)

The lawyer then asks this profound question, “Who is my neighbor?” This was not only a profound question by then, but still a profound one today especially when you consider how we are treating one another from personal relationships to domestic and global affairs.

But this was not so much a request for clarity, as much as it was a request for limits. In other words, how far should our love extend?

Because human beings are limited, our love has limitations – limitations on who we love, limitations on how much we love, and limitations on how far we love.

Years ago there was a game show call “Will the Real Person Please Stand Up?”

Jesus gives us the answer by looking at the response of three people to a man who had been robbed or mugged and left for dead. A Priest (a modern-day pastor), a Levite (armor bearer or praise and worship leader), and a Samaritan (a person who doesn’t look like us).

What we will learn today is that although we place limits on who we love and how we love them, the love that God gives us for our neighbor has no such limits.

***Series and Sermon: The Power of God’s Love: Will The Real Neighbor Please Stand Up? (No Limits)***

(Love based on Compassion not Proximity, Actions not Intentions, Obedience not Sacrifice)

### ***I. Love based on Compassion not Proximity***

Luke 10: <sup>33</sup> But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

The first thing we need in order to have the love of a neighbor is compassion.

The struggle many people have concerning neighbor love is proximity. We love those who are close to us, and not so much those who are not. It’s because human love is based on proximity.

Eros love is based on intimacy; Familial love is based on blood; and Phileo love is based on close friendships.

The problem with the Levite and the Priest is that although they had physical proximity, they didn’t have emotional proximity. Their hearts were too distant from the wounded man.

And so, it is with us – we either have or develop emotional distance from people and our love stops working. It’s like magnets that attach; as long as they are close in proximity, they work. But if they drift too far apart, they stop working.

People that are not in our crew are too far from us. But even those that we live with, that we are married to, that we work with, even that we church with every week can be too distant from us. We sleep with them but still feel lonely. We church with them but don’t know them.

Matthew 15: <sup>8</sup> This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

But the love of God requires no such proximity. Why? Because it sees you and has compassion for you.

Luke 10: <sup>33</sup> ... and when he saw him, he had compassion on him

Human love can't see what you're going through, it's too far away. The man that was wounded was a Jew. The Priest and Levite were Jews, they were close to him, but they didn't see him.

But the Love of God sees your pain and meets your needs.

Lamentations 3: <sup>22</sup> *It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.* <sup>23</sup> *They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

The Love of the neighbor is not about who's near you, it's about who sees you and has compassion for you.

## ***II. Love based on Actions not Good Intentions***

Luke 10: <sup>34</sup> *And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*

The next thing we need in order to have the love of a neighbor is actions.

This is the challenge of faith vs. works, gifts vs. fruit. The Priest and Levite probably had faith that the man would be delivered, but they had to work to be the deliverer. They probably had gifts to pray for him as they crossed the street, but not any love watch for him.

James 2: <sup>20</sup> But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

Mark 14: Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak.

Faith may save us, but it won't deliver us, that requires work. Gifts may enable us, but they won't mend or heal us, that requires fruit.

James 2: <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup> And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? <sup>17</sup> Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

Without works, faith is just good intentions. Love that never acts is just good intentions. And the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

But the love of God is more than faith and gifts; it's works and fruit; it's faith put into actions.

Luke 10: <sup>34</sup> *And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*

The love of the neighbor doesn't just believe, he puts his faith into action. The love of the neighbor doesn't just pray, but he watches with his actions.

Good intentions don't heal wounds, obedience to the love of God does!

### ***III. Love based on Obedience not Sacrifice***

Luke 10: <sup>36</sup> Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? <sup>37</sup> And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

The final thing we need in order to have the love of a neighbor is obedience.

- God's Love is not limited by proximity; it loves those who are not close to us.
- God's Love is not limited by good intentions; it loves those with works and fruit
- God's Love is not limited by our sacrifice: it loves those because of our obedience

As Christians we should sacrifice – sacrifice our time, sacrifice our talent, sacrifice our body, sacrifice our finances. But sacrifice should never be done at the exclusion of obedience.

1 Samuel 15: <sup>22</sup> And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.

Jesus asks who was the neighbor of the wounded man? All three of them had been led to him.

- Perhaps the Priest had to get to church to get service started. (Sacrifice)
- Perhaps the Levite had to get to church to give his tithes and offering (Sacrifice)
- And perhaps the Samaritan had to get to church to sing in the choir, but he stopped to help and show mercy to man (Obedience)

Sacrifice is important, but it has limitations!

Sacrifice says look holy, but your neighbor may not look holy.

Sacrifice says be holy, but your neighbor may not know holy.

Sacrifice says present your body holy, but your neighbor doesn't do holy

But God's Love has no limits; and if we obey him, we will have no limits!

Isaiah 1: <sup>19</sup> If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

Deuteronomy 28: <sup>2</sup> And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

**Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: Will The Real Neighbor Please Stand Up? (No Limits))**

**Lesson Text**

- Luke 10:25–37

**Sermon Outline**

- I. *Love based on Compassion not Proximity***
- II. *Love based on Actions not Good Intentions***
- III. *Love based on Obedience not Sacrifice***

**Questions: (What was your main takeaway from this message?)**

**I. Getting to Know “Me”**

1. Which one is your Love Language: Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Physical Touch, Acts of Service, or Receiving Gifts?
2. If you could have dinner with any historical Black figure, who would it be and what would you discuss?

**II. Into The Bible**

1. In Luke 10:30-34, what specific actions distinguish the Samaritan from the priest and the Levite, and how does Jesus use those actions to define what it truly means to “love your neighbor”?
2. The priest and the Levite were those expected to know and practice the Law of love. Why does Jesus deliberately make the Samaritan the one who shows mercy, and what does this reveal about the difference between knowing the command to love and demonstrating love through obedience? Did Jesus demonstrate love within this passage? If so, how is His love shown through His words, the story He tells, and His final command in verse 37?

**III. Life Application**

1. The Samaritan was moved by pity and acted immediately. How can we train ourselves to be more observant of needs around us?
2. What did helping cost the Samaritan? What is a “costly” act of service you can perform this week? Identify what might stop you and how you will overcome that barrier.