

A People of Love in A Time of Fear (Covid Series week 2)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 March 2020

[0 : 00] Hello, good morning, and welcome. My name is Brian Hart. I'm one of the pastors here at One Harbor Moorhead. We're so glad you're watching this with us, and I'm sure we are all grieving the various impacts of the coronavirus.

And this morning, probably chief among those things that we're grieving is the fact that we can't be together. It's one of our favorite things to do. And so, in light of the fact that we can't be together and we don't know how long it's going to be until we can, and we're going to expand the video experience beyond what you maybe saw last week.

So this morning, we're going to be able to sing and worship. We're going to hear the word preached. We're going to take time to pray together. And we even have something for your kids. So if you scroll to the bottom of this page where you're watching this video, there is another video from Lee Johannesson.

She's the kids ministry director in Moorhead. That video is really for you parents. And there are then some links for things to do with your kids. And all those are taken from the Gospel Project, which is the curriculum that we use for our kids ministry.

We've also had some of you ask about giving. We would love for those of you who are able to continue to give. You can do that by mailing gifts into the office. You can also give online by going to oneharborchurch.com.

[1 : 17] Or you can text to give, which is maybe the easiest option. And we've got a slide here for you. So depending on what site you attend, you can text any of these codes to this number, 77977.

And from there, it's a very easy process. I do just want to say that we are very aware of the fact that while some of us can still give, many of us are in a very difficult spot right now, financially speaking. We know that some of you have lost your jobs or had your hours cut. And so we don't want you to hear this as a burden to give if you're in a position where actually it's impossible for you to do so. We don't want to be a burden to you in this season. We're hoping to be a blessing to you in this season. So this is really for those of us who are still able to give. We do have a few announcements for you this morning, most of which are really related to the coronavirus situation that we're dealing with.

First is that we are anticipating that needs in our community are going to escalate in the coming weeks. Many of you have asked about how the church is going to keep track of the various needs that are surely to rise.

[2 : 25] And so what we have on our website right now on the homepage is a link to a form. And so if you go and fill out this form, you can fill it out for yourself or you can fill it out for someone else.

I think we've actually got a screenshot of the form to show you. The link to this form, again, it's on our homepage. And this is an opportunity to tell us that maybe you are sick with the coronavirus, that you need prayer, that you need someone to talk to, or more practically speaking, you may not be able to leave your home, but you need help with errands like getting groceries or picking up prescription medication.

And so we want to be able to help with all those things. You can fill this form out for yourself. You can also fill it out on behalf of someone else, maybe someone in your community group that doesn't have a computer or internet access.

And all of those responses as they come in will be distributed to the pastors and leaders at the sites for where you attend. Another thing that we have on our website, if you go to the homepage, there is a button right underneath this banner talking about our response that says COVID-19 resources. So if you click that button, it'll take you to another page where you will find phone numbers for each one of our sites. So we now have, we have got a phone number associated with each site.

[3 : 43] And if you are not able to fill out the form or if you just want to talk to somebody, you can call us and you'll be put in touch with one of our pastors or someone who can help you. We also have links to documents that list out resources by county for Carteret, Craven and Onslow counties.

So we're trying to keep track of resources being made available to the public as we hear about them. And there is also a card that you can download and print. And the purpose of this card is for you to give to maybe your neighbors as you are comfortable and as you feel able, where you can tell them, hey, in the coming days, if you need something, I mean, maybe your neighbors, they're not part of a church where people are offering to help them get groceries and get their medicine. You can tell your neighbors, hey, if you have needs, I would like to help you. And so this is a great way to be on mission, even in an age of social distancing. And even if your neighbors don't take you up on it, it will mean so much to them that you offered.

And I think will contribute a lot to our collective gospel witness in wanting to care for one another in a time of crisis. Lastly, in the coming weeks, we are going to be producing videos that we'll release online, mainly on Facebook.

It's probably the best way to find them. And these are videos that are meant to just encourage you, lift your eyes during the week towards the Lord and help you use the time, not just to watch Netflix, but also to consider the Lord and grow in your understanding of him and of the scriptures.

[5 : 11] And so with all that said, why don't we now turn our attention to the Lord in prayer as we get ready to worship. Heavenly Father, many of us have been consumed with the news.

We've been thinking about disease, government response, the fragility of life, the fickleness of the economy. And you are not like any of those things.

You are marvelous with no hint of change. Your word says that though we trespass against you, your gifts of grace are not like our trespasses.

You are so different than us. You are holy. You are beautiful and perfect. You are the antidote to everything that afflicts us. You're the cure for our sorrows, the perfect immunization.

For the diseases of fear and hatred and all the other things in our hearts that have gone wrong. We love you and we need you as much now as we ever have.

[6 : 10] Help us this morning to see you again with fresh eyes as we worship your wonderful name. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's worship. And I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene.

And I wonder how he could love me. I'm a sinner condemned, unclean.

We're singing how marvelous and how wonderful and my song shall ever be.

And how marvelous and how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

[7 : 26] What is your love for me? And he took my sins. He took my sins.

And my sorrows. And made them his very own. He bore. He bore the burden to Calvary.

And suffered and died alone. Singing how marvelous and how wonderful.

And my song shall ever be. And how marvelous and how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

When with, when with the ransom in glory, his face I at last shall see.

[8 : 49] It will be. It will be. By joy through the ages. And how marvelous and how wonderful.

And my song shall ever be. We're singing how marvelous and how wonderful.

And my song shall ever be. And how marvelous and how wonderful.

And how marvelous and how wonderful. And my Savior's love for me. Is my Savior's love for me.

Is my Savior's love for me. Is my Savior's love for me. Is my Savior's love for me.

[9 : 43] Is my Savior's love for me. Is my Savior's love for me.

shall ever be. And how marvelous, and how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

Worthy of every song we could ever sing.

Worthy of all the praise we could ever breathe. Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe.

We live for you. Jesus. Jesus, a name above every other name.

[11 : 06] Jesus, the only one who could ever sing. Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe.

We live for you. We live for you. And holy, there is no one like you.

There is none beside you. Open up my eyes in wonder and show me who you are and fill me with your heart and lead me in your love to those around me.

Sing worthy. Sing worthy. Worthy of every song we could ever sing. Worthy of every praise we could ever breathe.

Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe. We live for you. We live for you.

[12:21] Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. The name above every other name. Jesus.

The only one who could ever sing. Oh, we live for you.

Oh, holy and holy. And holy, there is no one like you.

There is none beside you. Open up my eyes in wonder and show me who you are.

And fill me with your heart and lead me in your love to those around me.

[13:19] Lead me in, lead me in your love. We look to you, oh, we build our lives on you.

And I will build my life upon your love.

It is a firm foundation. I will put my trust in you alone.

And I will not be shaken. I will build my life upon your love.

It is a firm foundation. I will put my trust in you alone.

[14:31] And I will not be shaken. And I will build my life upon your love.

It is a firm foundation. I will put my trust in you alone.

And I will not be shaken. And holy, there is no one like you.

There is none beside you. Open up my eyes in wonder. Show me who you are.

And fill me with your heart. And lead me in your love to those around me.

[15:29] Father, won't you lead us?

Father, won't you lead us? Lord, that's our prayer this morning as we gather, as we look to you again and again and again, that we would build our lives not on things that are shakable, but that we would build our lives upon you.

The never changing, always faithful, always true. Father, the one who we can put our hope in and you will never change.

We want to praise you this morning, Lord, for you continue to have your way as we gather today. In your name we pray. Amen. And, hey, guys, we do want to just welcome you this morning, being with us all throughout eastern North Carolina and beyond.

And normally we will say, hey, say hello to someone around you. But we want to just maybe even encourage you right where you're at. If you're thinking of a friend that you wish you were with this morning, man. Yeah.

[17:06] Yeah. We hate not being together, but if there's someone that you wish you could be with right now, maybe just shoot them a text. Say, hey, I'm praying for you.

I love you. I'll see you soon. We love you guys. Hey, guys, let's take a few minutes and pray together. So social distancing is the most important physical thing we can do right now.

But prayer is the most important spiritual thing we can do right now. And I know that it feels counterintuitive to distance yourself socially, but it's what we have to do. And I know it feels counterintuitive to spend time praying.

But, man, it's the most important thing we can do together. So where should we even start? I mean, where do we even begin to pray for all of the things that are going on in our lives and in the world? Well, we can and should pray for ourselves, but there's also a different kind of way to pray where we actually pray on behalf of other people.

The word for this is intercession. Intercession is just saying a prayer on behalf of someone else.

And so we're going to take five minutes each time we do a Sunday service to do just that.

[18:10] So let me walk us through a few things that we're going to take time to pray for this morning. First, we're going to pray for those who are vulnerable. Now, you know right away that so far we know elderly people are vulnerable and people with previous health conditions that might make them compromised physically.

We know those people are vulnerable. So we want to pray for them. But we also want to pray for those who struggle with anxiety and depression. They're especially vulnerable in this time. We want to pray for small business owners and those who are employees who are worried about losing their jobs or losing their businesses or losing their homes.

We want to pray for those people, those who are already struggling financially or impoverished. We want to pray for those who are vulnerable. We're also going to take some time to pray for those on the front lines of the COVID-19 response.

So be that first responders, be it nurses and doctors or other health, you know, or hospital employees. We want to pray for government officials and scientists and doctors who are trying to find a cure and an answer and how to respond.

We want to pray for all who are on the front lines of this. We want to pray for them to have wisdom and to have strength, that a cure is found quickly. I mean, this is unlike anything any of them have ever been through.

[19 : 20] And so let's take time to pray for those. And lastly, we're going to take a few minutes and we're going to pray for those whose home isn't a safe place. It's one thing for a lot of us to go, gosh, we don't want to be stuck at home.

But for some people, it's not just being stuck at home. It's actually a terrifying thing to be home. Think about those who suffer from domestic violence abuse, children and adults both, who for them school or work is their only place of refuge and it's been taken from them and now they're stuck at home.

Let's pray for them. Let's pray that God would help them. Let's pray that God would deliver them. Also, think about those who are alcoholics and addicts who depend on getting out of the house, who depend on going physically to AA meetings and NA meetings, who now have been stripped of those abilities.

Let's pray for those who, for their home, it's not a safe place for them. So we're going to give you a timer. We're going to give you five minutes to start now. Just, you know, whoever you're with, just to begin to pray together for these three groups of people.

Think of it. Thank you.

[21 : 16] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[23 : 46] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Good morning, guys. My name is Brian, and I lead the Beaufort site of One Harbor. It's great to have you all with us from your homes this morning. Maybe some of you are gathered in small groups. Maybe some of you are by yourself wherever you are.

We're glad that you're tuning in this morning. I do want to know that. Even though we're going to be doing this. We're going to be doing this. We do have a new series. We're going to be starting up next week.

[25 : 39] We're going to be starting up next week that we're all really, really excited about called Prince of Peace. We know that Jesus brings us peace into uncertain circumstances, into our worry, into our anxiety, into our fears, into the storms of life.

And so we feel like this could be a really, really helpful series for a time like this because we know theoretically that Jesus brings us peace. We're going to get into how and what that looks like when the going really does get tough.

And so that'll be next week. But this morning, we're going to continue just meditating on this very particular moment that we all find ourselves in, which is so incredibly unique and even surreal.

There's something surreal about this moment. And in one sense, it's totally unprecedented. But in another sense, it actually reminds me of other times that the world really felt turned upside down. I'm from New York City, and I remember what our whole community felt like on 9-11 and the days right after that. And I was speaking with my dad on the phone the other day.

[26 : 36] He still lives in Queens. And he told me as well he felt the same way that he felt in the days right after 9-11. And many other New Yorkers have mentioned that as well.

And it's that idea that, man, our routine has been broken and messed up. Our illusions of control in many ways have been exploded. And so it's a moment like this that can bring some real clarity, I think, if we don't waste it.

I don't want us to waste this moment. And what I really hope that this moment will do when I think about how God could use a moment like this is I hope that it explodes our individualism.

You know, there's a sense in which Americans in particular are uniquely unprepared for this moment because we are very individualistic. We tend to think we should all fend for ourselves, that people are responsible for meeting their own needs, and I'm responsible for meeting my own needs.

But this moment that we are all in is forcing us into this very profound place where we are realizing just how vulnerable we really are and just how connected we all are, how much we all really need each other.

[27 : 47] So this is also an opportunity because what is true now during this pandemic is actually always true, but we don't always have eyes to see it.

And this moment is forcing us to really see it. And so this is a moment where we can reflect on how we see the world and how we tend to see one another. So in this very unfamiliar time we're all in, I want us to together look at a very familiar story.

I want us to look at the story of the Good Samaritan. This story begins with Jesus having a discussion with a religious leader, and they both agree that you should love your neighbor as yourself, but this religious leader has a question.

Luke 10, 29. But he, this religious lawyer, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, and who is my neighbor? Jesus replied, Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

And the next day he took out two denarii and gave him to the innkeeper saying, take care of him and whatever you spend, I will repay you when I come back. Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?

[29 : 29] He said, the one who showed him mercy. And Jesus said to him, you go and do likewise. This is God's word. This is a story about what it means to be a good neighbor.

And you know, the world could really use some good neighbors right now. So last week, Donnie spoke about what it means to be a people of faith in a time of fear. We don't cower back in fear. We're filled with faith and hope in God. And this morning, we're going to talk about what it means to be a people of love in a time of fear. Our communities, our towns, they need us more than ever to be loving neighbors.

But this doesn't come naturally to us because what comes naturally to us is individualism. When something comes our way, our first thought is often, how is this going to impact me?

Right? Three times in this story, people see a man beaten and bleeding on the side of a road. But the first two times, it says that the priest and the Levite, they pass by on the other side. But then we see in verse 33 that the Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was.

[30 : 31] And when he saw him, he had compassion. So first of all, we see that love sees beyond our own individual needs. Love sees beyond our own individual needs.

You know, this Samaritan surely had his own problems that he was dealing with, right? He was on a long and dangerous journey himself. The Jericho road that he was traveling was a long and winding road known for the many robbers that lurked there.

He probably had his own fears as he traveled. He also probably had a limited amount of money and resources to help. He probably had somewhere to be.

He had people waiting on him for his return. And yet, when he saw the need of this other person that he hadn't even met, who was in a much worse situation than he was, he saw him and had compassion.

He allowed this man's needs to put his needs on hold. Now, in a moment of crisis, this is a really difficult thing to do because when crisis strikes, our needs, however small they might be, they come rushing to the foreground, right?

[31 : 34] And it's very easy to be individualistic and to be selfish. I heard the other day that the airline JetBlue announced that they discovered a passenger who had already tested positive for the coronavirus went and flew on their airline anyway.

And he didn't tell anyone on the airline. And they found out afterwards. So they have put his name on a permanent banned list. Now, when I first heard that story, I immediately started to judge and despise this guy, right?

But as I thought about it, I imagined, you know, this guy probably justified that action. He probably thought, you know, I can't, I couldn't imagine canceling this trip. I need to be there so badly wherever it was he was traveling.

And, you know, those of us who have been raised on individualism, we've been bred in the soil of individualism, we have a very hard time with the idea of changing our behavior or missing out on something that we want for the sake of other people.

Just take, for example, this incredibly depressing clip of interviews from spring breakers this past week in Miami. If I get corona, I get corona.

[32 : 42] At the end of the day, I'm not going to let it stop me from partying. You know, I've been waiting. We've been waiting for Miami spring break for a while. About two months we've had the strip plan. Two, three months. We're just not even having a good time. Whatever happens, happens.

Like, it's really messing up with my spring break. What is there to do here other than go to the bars or the beach and they're closing all of it? It's really messing up. I think they're blowing it way out of proportion. I think it's doing way too much.

Doing us bad. We need a refund. This virus ain't that serious. Yeah, I mean, we planned this a long time ago and it was kind of up in the air if we still go. But, like, we're here. I just turned 21 this year, so I'm here to party.

So it's kind of disappointing. But we're just making the most of it. We met these other people in our little Airbnb spot. So we're just hanging out with them and trying to get drunk before everything closes.

They think the same thing that we often think. Why should I have to change my life when this doesn't really seem to be a problem that's going to impact me? And, you know, it's not just these random young people that don't know any better.

[33 : 42] Katie Williams is a former Miss Nevada who's now running for public office. And she tweeted in defiance to what she saw as this unwarranted panic.

Here's what she said. I just went to a crowded Red Robin and I'm 30. It was delicious and I took my sweet time eating my meal because this is America and I'll do what I want.

You know, I thought that sounded about right. This is America. What do we do here? Well, we do what we want. That's what we do. I mean, the troops surely didn't sacrifice their lives so we wouldn't have to sacrifice our freedom to go to Red Robin.

She got 22,000 likes on that tweet. So people are clearly agreeing with her. Many of us have grown up in a culture that where we're told to put ourselves first, where we're told, well, you've got to live your life.

Community responsibility is not what's drilled into us. Self-care is what is often drilled into us. And Miss Nevada points out she's only 30, right? She's not likely to be severely affected by this virus.

[34 : 44] But the reality is that the symptoms of this virus, they take at least a week or more to show. And so you could be carrying the virus without even realizing it, which means a healthy 30 year old could still transmit the virus to someone who is much older or less healthy and be the very reason that that person dies.

For those of us who are younger or maybe haven't ever had serious health issues, it doesn't come naturally to us to think of this as serious because it won't likely affect us seriously in a direct way. But what love does is love looks past what just affects me and it sees what other people are dealing with, right? Jesus did this. Jesus saw people and he entered into their needs.

Reflecting on the life of Jesus, one writer, Paul Miller, says that Jesus slowed down, put himself in the shoes of other people and thought about their needs.

He says this. He says, love takes work because nothing is obvious if it's not happening to you. I love that. Nothing is obvious if it's not happening to you.

[35 : 51] How true that is for me. Entering into someone else's needs and cares is totally non-obvious. It's not intuitive. Love actually takes effort to think about the non-obvious thing that other people are dealing with, to think about those who have compromised immune systems or the elderly.

You know, I've heard some younger people say things like, this virus only really affects old people. And you know, if you're 70, then you've already lived most of your life. But what if we actually put ourselves in their shoes for a moment?

You know, dying at 70 versus dying at 85 might not seem like a big deal to you if you're 22, but that could mean the difference between knowing your grandson when he's five years old and knowing him when he's 20, right?

Seeing him graduate high school or become a man. This doesn't come naturally to us to put ourselves in someone's shoes. See, empathy isn't natural. What's natural is self-interest.

You probably remember the story of Cain and Abel, these two brothers, and Cain kills Abel out of self-interest. And do you remember what God said when he came to Cain? He asked, where is your brother?

[37 : 01] And Cain replied that famous line. He said, am I my brother's keeper, right? That is the way of self-interest. And it's a perfectly natural way for us to think in our individualistic culture.

I'm not my brother's keeper. I'm my own keeper. I'm responsible for me because after all, if I don't look after me, who will? But this moment requires us to be our brother's and our sister's keepers. I love how one professor of disease described how we should be behaving during this time. He said this, most people have a fear of acquiring the virus. A good way of doing it is to imagine that you do have the virus and change your behavior so that you're not transmitting it.

Don't think about changing your behavior so you won't get it. Think about changing your behavior so you don't give it to somebody else. See, Christian love, it takes effort because effort, it takes effort to enter into someone else's situation.

And remember that they are also a person with cares and needs, with a body that hurts, and a family that loves them just as much as your family loves you. And they also have hopes and dreams that are different from yours that can be torn from them.

[38 : 11] And while the Samaritan was walking on the Jericho Road with his own pressing needs, he stopped anyway because he saw the need of this other person and he considered it and he took compassion.

And that is what is required of us in a time like this. And some of us are able to do that to an extent, but even then there's something that holds us back. You know, we can often see the needs of a certain kind of person, but we often make exceptions for other kinds of people that don't seem to qualify for our love.

But another thing this story teaches us is that love actually obliterates distinctions. This is one of the core things this story is about. You know, Jesus tells this story to a lawyer, which means that he was a smart guy who spent all his time studying the religious law.

And at the beginning of the story, he agrees with Jesus that, yes, I know that I'm supposed to love my neighbor as myself, but then he just couldn't help himself. He had to ask a smart aleck question, right?

He says, okay, Jesus, I get it. Love my neighbor. But who is my neighbor really, right? And this is what we do. We agree with Jesus in principle, but then we try to get ourselves off the hook with an exception.

[39 : 17] We're happy to love people in general, but we would like to limit exactly who gets that treatment. And it's at this point that Jesus says, let me tell you a story. And he tells him the story of the Good Samaritan.

See, the Good Samaritan, it's not just a story about a good man doing a good thing in general. There are very specific cultural things going on in this story. In the story, it's a Jewish man who is beaten and left on the side of the road.

And then he is passed by by a Jewish priest and a Jewish Levite, which are two supposedly holy men of his own culture and of his own race. And they ignore him.

But then he is taken in and cared for by a Samaritan who culturally would have been considered an outsider, an enemy of the Jewish people. And so Jesus's whole story was engineered as a rebuke to this man who is asking, who is my neighbor really?

Because we are always looking for exceptions, right? Well, I'll love that person because they're my kind of person. They share my interests. They share my culture, my class. They're like me.

[40 : 18] They're easy to love. But those people, they don't really do much for me, right? Well, in their culture for the Jews, the Samaritans would have been the exceptions. And so the moral of the story that Jesus tells is that your neighbor is anyone that God puts in your path to love, regardless of their race or their class or their culture or their creed, without distinction.

In fact, especially the people that we are tempted to make into exceptions. That means our neighbors include foreigners, refugees, marginalized people, the poor, the elderly, people of different political backgrounds, and yes, even kids who go on spring break in Miami.

The story that Jesus tells is a rebuke to us for how quickly we categorize people and we dehumanize people and we put them into categories so that we don't have to truly love them.

Martin Luther King Jr., reflecting on the story of the Good Samaritan, said this, too seldom do we see people in their true humanness. We see men as Jews or Gentiles, Catholics or Protestants, Chinese or American, Negroes or white.

We fail to think of them as fellow human beings made from the same basic stuff as we, molded in the same divine image. The priest and the Levite saw only a bleeding body, not a human being like themselves.

[41 : 35] If the Samaritan had considered the wounded man as a Jew first, he would not have stopped for the Jews and the Samaritans had no dealings. He saw him as a human being first. The good neighbor looks beyond the external accidents and discerns those inner qualities that make all men human and therefore brothers.

So the Samaritan thought, you know, he might be different from me in some external cultural ways. There might be some real cultural disagreements, but he is a person just the same as me.

The priest and the Levite, they didn't see themselves in him. They didn't see someone that could have been just as easily their brother or their son. But everyone is someone's son, someone's daughter.

Do we ever do this? Dehumanize people like this? You know, I read one Christian writer who was writing about 10 years ago and lamenting about the lack of Christians being troubled by the abuses of detainees during the Iraq war, such as Abu Ghraib.

Many of you remember some of the abuses and the torture that took place. And I was really struck by what this Christian writer said. She said, we do not care about torture in Iraq because we do not see ourselves or anyone in our families as members of the same species as a prisoner being tortured, right?

[42 : 51] We don't see ourselves or our sons or our brothers. We see something foreign, something different, something that doesn't really qualify for our love. In America, we make distinctions between people, who qualifies and who doesn't.

And the distinctions we often make have to do with deserving, right? We ask, does someone really deserve our compassion or our charity? When we think of poor people or disabled people, retired or elderly people, people who are unemployed, some are tempted to think that they don't add value and so they don't have the same worth to society.

We live in a culture that often tells us that if people are poor, well, they probably deserve to be poor or they're only poor because they're lazy. So maybe if it's their own fault, then you don't have to really worry about them or associate with them or offer them charity.

During this crisis, there will be many people let go of their jobs through no fault of their own. And if you're tempted to think, well, that's not my problem, they should have had a better job, well, then you have already begun to make exceptions in your love.

And I think Jesus would stop you and say to you, let me tell you a story. See, Jesus teaches us that our value as human beings does not come from what we accomplish or produce or what value we add to GDP, but every person is infinitely valuable, uniquely valuable just because we are made in God's image.

[44 : 13] See, Jesus' love, in fact, always seeks out the undeserving. And his love meets even the most undeserving with generosity and sacrifice and service. And that is the third thing we see in this story, that love is generous and sacrificial.

The Samaritan truly goes above and beyond in this moment. He personally binds up this man's wounds, not worried about the blood that he might get on his suit. He pours oil and wine on him to clean him, meaning that he would have no oil and wine left over for himself.

He puts him on his own animal, which meant that the Samaritan would have to walk. And he brought him to an inn and spent his own money on a stranger. And then he said, I'm actually going to come back soon and spend more money.

Now, what strikes me about what he does for this man is that nobody would have judged him if he had done less, right? He didn't just do the socially acceptable minimum so that he could sleep well at night.

And that's what I usually do. I compare myself to others, right? I say things like, well, I'm doing just as much as anybody else, right? Or we say, totally, of course you should be loving.

[45 : 21] But listen, you also have to be reasonable, right? Because you can't go crazy. You can only do so much. After all, you've got your own life to consider. But the Samaritan, he blows past what's reasonable.

He steps into radical generosity and sacrificial service. And that is what Jesus says it looks like to be a good neighbor. If there was ever a moment that required radical generosity and sacrificial service, this is it.

This is it. We're in it. And we are actually seeing people step up all over the world right now. I was just reading about a doctor who has begun to treat infected patients. And he has moved into the garage so that he would isolate from his wife and his newborn and his two young children so that he could keep treating patients without infecting the rest of his family.

He is not sure how many weeks might pass before he can hold his wife or his newborn child again. And that is what it looks like for him to love his neighbor right now.

Even companies are thinking about this. I read about the Durham Distillery right here in North Carolina. They have moved their distillery facilities from making gin and vodka to making hand sanitizer.

[46 : 32] And they're giving all of it away locally. And I am absolutely sure that that is impacting their bottom line. Those are just a couple stories of people in the world. And I don't even know if any of those people are Christians.

How much more should this kind of radical, generous love be on display in the lives of people who say they know Jesus? 1 John 3 puts it this way. 2 John 3 puts it this way.

Does our love lead to action? You know, I say I love my wife. Well, do I serve my wife? Do I forgive my wife? Do I bless my wife with my words? If not, then what do I actually mean when I say that I love her?

We say we love our church. Well, do we give to our church so that we can be a part of providing for the needs of our brothers and sisters? We say we love our community. But do we serve our community in moments when the demand is so high?

The us church people are so good at saying the right things. But what do we do when we see our brother in need? Love has to be more than good intentions. Love is inherently sacrificial.

[48 : 03] When the Bible talks about how much God loves us, many times it says, here's how much God loves us that he gave. Right? He gave his only son. Love is inherently generous. You can think that you're a loving person, but love is more than feelings.

Love is not about liking everybody. It's not about just feeling general positive vibes. Love is about giving. You can think that you're loving, but if that love is not reflected in generosity with your money, generosity with your time, generosity with the gifts that you've been given to serve others, well, then you're not really loving in a way that matters to anybody else.

When our community looks at the church at this moment, will they find us consumed with our own needs, thinking of our own families as sort of walled off fortresses, us four and no more hunkered down?

Or will they find us loving and giving and serving? What does this look like for us right now? At a minimum, it means not causing further harm by abiding by the recommendations, right?

We should not be going out into crowds. We should be practicing what's being called social distancing, not putting others at risk. But I think we can go far beyond that. Right now, a simple action of love that we can all do while we're not able to gather on Sunday mornings, let's pick up our phones more than ever before, right?

[49 : 21] Social distancing should not mean that we don't have relationships, right? It really just means physical distancing. We actually need social connectedness more than ever before. So let's love each other practically.

You know, I've been trying to just call five people a day from church. And, you know, maybe that's going to get overwhelming. Maybe you're an introvert. Maybe it's two people a day. But maybe pick a number and anything would still be amazing in fostering relationship during a hard time.

But also ask yourself, what gifts has God given you? Do you have a business? If so, how can you help the community with the resources that you have? Maybe you're a boss.

You're an employer, right? Right? Normal business practices might mean that at this time you've got to start laying off employees. But is there a possibility that you can move beyond what's normal, right?

Could you be your brother's keeper and seek to still pay people during a time when they can't work their normal hours? There are going to be so many opportunities to serve and be a blessing.

[50 : 20] Maybe bringing groceries to older folks that aren't able to go out during this time. And the way that we behave right now at this moment has everything to do with whether or not the gospel of

Jesus Christ is actually true in us.

I love how Jesus put it in John 13. He said, A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

By this all people will know that you're my disciples if you have love for one another. I love that Jesus says it's a new commandment. You're like loving each other. That's kind of been around a while. But it's new because he says love like I loved.

And nobody ever loved as radically as Jesus loved. Nobody ever loved as generously or sacrificially as Jesus loved. Jesus was the servant leader who stooped to wash his disciples' feet.

And not just the good ones, right? He washed Peter the denier's feet. He even washed Judas' feet who was about to betray him. And Jesus didn't just love in life. He ultimately also loved us in his death.

[51 : 19] He didn't just sacrifice his income or a few weeks with his family to love us. He went to the cross for us. Jesus gave his whole life for us. And he says this is how people will know that you are my disciples.

They need to see this from you. First John puts it this way. He says, as Jesus is, so also are we in this world.

As Jesus is in his selflessness, in his love for people that weren't like him at all, who didn't seem so deserving but he still loved them anyway, so also are we to be in this world. And you know the early church caught this.

When church historians answer the question, how did Christianity spread and grow so fast over the world, one of the main historical answers is the way that the early church was known for their love. When the pagan world around them was divided by class and culture and nationality, the Christian community welcomed every class, culture, and race. They were united by the blood of Christ, shed for all people.

[52 : 17] And when they were persecuted, they didn't return evil for evil. They actually loved their enemies in return. And when the plagues came, they were on the front lines caring for people that they didn't know and had never met.

In fact, there's a historical record of the pagan emperor Julian complaining bitterly how those cursed Christians would care for even non-Christian sick people.

He was upset about this. He said it wasn't fair because it meant that more and more people just flocked to those annoying Christians. Our love brings the reality of Jesus Christ to people because as he is, so are we in this world.

But the real question for us is, does our love look anything like his love? Or are we too individualistic, too self-interested, too caught up in who deserves what or how much it might cost us?

If that's the case, then our greatest problem right now might not just be that we're not showing off his love. Our greatest problem might be that we have not truly encountered his love at all. And this is ultimately what we need most.

[53 : 21] You know, this story of the Good Samaritan, it does so much more than just show us an example for how we should love. Ultimately, yes, it does give us a great moral example. It does challenge us to love beyond our interests, to love beyond our limits.

But it ultimately gives us a picture of how we have been loved by Jesus Christ. Spiritually speaking, every single one of us is the man left on the side of the road for dead.

We have been beaten and we have been bruised by sins that we have done and by sins that have been done to us. And Jesus, seeing us in our spiritual state, did not pass by on the other side.

No. He saw us and he had compassion on us and he came straight towards us. Even though we were his enemies. Even though, you know, he had nothing in common with us. He didn't consider, he didn't look at us and consider, do they deserve my compassion?

He didn't ask how deserving we were. He came straight for us and he lifted us up and he poured oil and wine on us. And he carried us, not just to an innkeeper, but he brought us right into his father's house.

[54 : 31] And his love was generous. He didn't love within reason. Jesus loved us right unto death to forgive us and to heal us and to set us free so that we could love others as we have been loved by Jesus.

And so let the world ask, am I my brother's keeper? After all, nobody's looking out for me. But let the world look to the church and see the church standing up and declaring, I am my brother's keeper.

Because Jesus Christ, my great older brother, when I didn't deserve it at all, he was my keeper. At this time, if you're able, especially if you're gathering with others this morning, I encourage you to take communion and to remember what Jesus Christ has done for you.

You know, if you need to pause now and maybe grab some bread or grape juice or whatever beverage you have on hand, please go ahead. And I'm going to lead us into this together. Now, when we have church on Sundays, our giving buckets are on our communion tables.

We don't have those minnow buckets online, but you can give online or use text to give. And listen, I know that many of you might be experiencing economic difficulty. And so this is no guilt trip.

[55 : 42] But I want you to also know that if one harbor is your home, one of the ways that we respond to Jesus' generous love for us is by giving with generous hearts from whatever we might have.

And maybe you can't give what you normally give during this time. And I want to say that that's okay. Jesus smiled on that widow who just dropped one penny in the bucket because her heart was postured towards generosity.

And so when we come to the communion meal, we remember that Jesus' heart is postured generously towards us, right? When we come to the bread and the cup, we remember that this is how much he loved us.

He loved us so much that his body was broken for us. And so I encourage you to take the bread, which is his body broken out of love. Jesus Christ despised his own interests and he humbled himself to death for us.

Now, take the cup, which is his blood, poured out in love for his enemies, making no distinction between who deserved it and who didn't because none of us did. His blood is for the undeserving.

[56 : 58] Let's pray together. Jesus, you laid down your life for me when I least deserved it, when I never would have done the same for you. Now, Lord, would you, in your compassion for me, would you free me from my self-interest, from my individualism?

Would you help me to have a generous and sacrificial heart? As you are, so are we in this world. I pray that we would reflect your love in this moment when our community needs us so badly to be the loving church of Jesus Christ, to be good neighbors.

Jesus, we can only do this in your strength and by your Holy Spirit's power. Amen. At this time, there'll be some questions on the screen. And I encourage you to pause it on the screen. And if you're in a small group of people, maybe take some time asking these questions and discussing how we can be good neighbors in this moment.

Thank you. Amen. Thank you.