

Building Blocks - Rediscovering the Art of Neighboring
Overcoming Our Fear of Neighboring
October 2nd, 2011
Text - Luke 14:12-14
Scripture Reading - Luke 14:12-14

Video 2

A look back...

- Week 1 - Established that Jesus us to love our *actual* neighbors
 - o Good Samaritan - Neighbor is anyone we come across who is in need
 - o Actual neighbors are our neighbors because we come across them every day, and they are in need.
 - o It makes sense that Jesus would call us to love our actual neighbors because...
 - Their needs are right before our eyes
 - We are well positioned to meet their needs
 - It is a bad witness to pass by on the other side
 - o Action Step - Commit to becoming a better neighbor and take the next step for you
 - Commitment Cards / Website
 - Magnets (learning names next step for most)

- Week 2 - First primary hindrance to being a good neighbor - TIME
 - o We're all called to be good neighbors to our actual neighbors. The only question is, what does that look like for us?
 - o Many of us are too busy to obey the call
 - o Two questions to ask
 - Are we using our time to build God's kingdom or our own?
 - Sinful nature is at its core a selfish nature
 - For those of us who have repented of our sins and trusted in Jesus, God recreates us anew to stop living for ourselves and to start living for Him and for others. To advance His kingdom, not our own.

- Thus, if our answer to the question, are we using our time to build God's kingdom or our own is our own, we need to make changes.
- Are we making the BEST use of our time?
 - Are we doing what God wants us to do when God wants us to do it?
 - o Do we know what God wants us to do in general? Are we in the Word daily?
 - o Do we know what God wants us to do specifically? Are we being led by the HS throughout each day?
 - Are we spending time in prayer every morning allowing God to set our agenda?
 - Are we open to God ordained interruptions throughout our day?
 - Are we able to say no to immediate pressing needs and move on when God is calling us to?
 - o Jesus example in Mark 1 (a day in the life)
 - o Action Step - Pray and ask God what He wants us to do to become a better neighbor and be open to His Spirit's leading
 - Ron and Brina's examples from this week

Second primary hindrance to being a good neighbor - FEAR

It's possible for a person's whole life to be controlled by fear.

- "Her whole life is controlled by fear. Fear of what could happen, fear of what people might think, fear of what people might say, fear of what people might do..."

This is certainly true for many when it comes to neighboring.

A few are afraid of actual physical harm

- Examples from MG

- Pray, be wise, be sure you've heard God's call correctly

But most are afraid for other reasons

- Contamination
 - o God calls us to be holy
 - **1 Peter 1:15-16 (NIV)**
¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."
 - o The company we keep has an effect on our holiness
 - **1 Corinthians 15:33 (ESV)**
³³ Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."
 - **2 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV)**
¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers...
 - o Yet God does not call us not to remove ourselves from the world, but rather to go into it for Jesus' sake
 - **Mark 16:15 (ESV)**
¹⁵ "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.
 - **John 17:15-18 (ESV)**
¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one...¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.
 - **1 Corinthians 5:9-10 (ESV)**
⁹ I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— ¹⁰ not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.
 - o As always, Jesus shows us the way on this front
 - Jesus was perfectly holy and undefiled by the world.
 - **Hebrews 4:15 (ESV)**
¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

- And yet Jesus was in the world, *risking contamination*, making a difference
 - **Luke 5:29-32 (ESV)**

²⁹ And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. ³⁰ And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, “*Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?*” ³¹ And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”
 - **Matthew 11:19 (ESV)**

¹⁹ ...‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, *a friend of tax collectors and sinners!*’ ...
 - o *We need to learn to be in the world but not of the world for Jesus’ sake.*
- Discomfort
 - o Many of us will do just about anything to avoid discomfort, including disobeying God. This is why we avoid getting up too early, staying up too late, going too long without eating, running too far, running too fast, going out when it’s too cold, going out when it’s too hot, and speaking in public ☺. And this is why we avoid reaching out to people we don’t know very well, who may be different than us, and with whom we may have very little in common. We hate *even the thought* of being uncomfortable.
 - o It is far more comfortable for us to spend time with our friends, our relatives, and our like-minded Christian brothers and sisters than it is to reach out to people like our neighbors, and that’s why we do it so little and disobey God.
 - o But here’s what Jesus has to say about that...
 - **Luke 14:12-14 (ESV)**

¹² ...“When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your

relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

- In other words, this life isn't about our comfort and immediate gratification (getting some return or repayment from those we invite), it's about helping those in need and advancing the kingdom of God, even at cost to ourselves. Our reward will come later in heaven (at the resurrection of the just).
- o *We need to be willing to get out of our comfort zone for Jesus' sake.*
- Rejection
 - o Some fear rejection in general
 - They're not going to like me
 - o Most fear rejection of their faith
 - They're not going to like what I stand for
 - o But here's what Jesus had to say about that...
 - **John 15:18-21 (NIV)**
¹⁸ "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹ They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.
 - **Matthew 5:11-12 (ESV)**
¹¹ "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- o *We need to boldly risk rejection for Jesus' sake.*

So how do we overcome our fear of neighboring? LOVE

- God doesn't want our lives to be controlled by fear *but by love*
 - o **2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (ESV)**
¹⁴For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.
- How does this work?
 - o Love has the power overcome fear
 - That's why people are willing to risk anything for their spouse or their kids
- The more we love God and our neighbors the more we will be able to overcome our fears.
- It was this love that freed Jesus to overcome His fears and die on the cross for our sins.

Communion

- Action Step: Pray for a love for God and a love for your neighbor that overcomes our fears.