

Rediscover Jesus, 37: “Parable of the Good Samaritan”

Luke 10:25-37

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Sermon Series & Scripture Introduction

Today, we are continuing in the sermon series, studying through the Gospel of Luke in order to Rediscover Jesus, for some of us, discover Jesus for the first time, to learn who Jesus is, what he did, and what it has to do with our lives today.

Please follow along as I read scripture from...

Scripture Reading

Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)

²⁵ And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” ²⁷ And he 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.” ²⁸ And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”

²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” ³⁷ He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

This is the Word of God. Amen.

Sermon Introduction

It is no question that we are, along with the rest of the world, infatuated with love. Our desire for love is seen in movies that present stories of love that look too good to be true, but our hearts are still satisfied. For stories that are real, we are drawn to the ones that seem to withstand the test of time like a couple married for 60 years and still loving one another as best friends. Our hearts are warmed by stories that withstand the test of sacrifice, like a father and mother giving up their dreams to care for their sick and dying child.

But, in reality, there is no “perfect love story” among people. If we hear the rest of the story, we will see how imperfect love is on this earth. Couples who were married for 60 years, were not perfectly loving, faithful, honest, or understanding. The parents who gave up their dreams for their children, were not perfectly loving, gentle, kind and patient. I’ve only been a father for 4 years and I’ve already given up hope to be the perfect father.

We easily realize that we cannot find perfect love between lovers, between family, between friends, even between church members. We were once created to receive perfect love and to love perfectly but our sin destroyed any hopes of perfect love among people. But, God’s love for us goes beyond time and crosses the separation between us and God that was caused by our sin. Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, is the only one who has revealed to us perfect love, who has perfectly loved God and perfectly loved neighbor. We have hope for perfect love again in Christ alone, who teaches us his love.

So the One Thing for today’s sermon and today’s passage is this...

The One Thing

*We cannot love God and neighbor perfectly
so humbly receive Jesus' love and mercy.*

We'll look at Luke 10:25-37 in two parts:

Overview

1. Jesus is tested on his understanding of eternal life (vv.25-29)
2. Jesus teaches on his standard of neighborly love (vv.30-37)

Prayer for the Preaching of the Word

Our love is imperfect and limited. So open our eyes to see the hopelessness of trying to find perfect love in the world. Teach us of your abounding, steadfast, limitless love through your Word and through the work of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts and minds.

Sermon Outline

I. Jesus is tested on his understanding of eternal life (vv.25-29)

- Jesus is tested by a religious lawyer who assumes that he can earn eternal life by keeping religious rules and justifying himself.
- Let's read verses 25-26 again...

Luke 10:25-26 (ESV)

²⁵ And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?"

- Remember last week, we saw how 72 disciples of Jesus returned from their mission work. After they all came back together, Jesus and the disciples were rejoicing. They were celebrating the work of God in them for salvation, and celebrating the work of God through them for his kingdom. And in the midst of this celebration, behold, suddenly, our attention is drawn to a lawyer who stands up to ask Jesus a question. Jesus was telling his disciples how their names were written in heaven, which meant that they had eternal life. So this lawyer may have overheard what Jesus was telling his disciples, so he took this opportunity to ask Jesus about it.
- This lawyer here is not the kind of lawyer we see in courtroom drama shows today. He was a religious lawyer, an expert in the Law of God, which is found in the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament. So, he was more like a theologian and a religious leader among the Jewish people, who took great interest in understanding and applying the Law of God in real life situations. But, we see that the lawyer did not come to Jesus to learn. He had no intention to be Jesus' disciple. He does call Jesus, "Teacher," but he came to test him. He is just like that student in class who is too cool for school and tries to test their teacher every once in a while with a trick question. (I hope it's not any of our teenagers.) So, this expert in the Law, he knew all the answers, but he wanted to test Jesus to see if Jesus knew the right answers. Even to trap Jesus in his own words.
- So, to test Jesus, the lawyer asks a strange question.¹ He says, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Now, this is a strange question because no one can actually do anything to inherit anything. To "inherit" here can mean specifically to receive a benefit or gift as a child from parents, or

¹ The same question is asked by a rich ruler in Luke 18:18, but commentators agree that the rich ruler was genuinely asking on how to enter into heaven. He may have had a similar understanding as the lawyer in Luke 10:25 that doing enough good works according to the Law was a way to receive eternal life (considering his conversation with Jesus in Luke 18:20-23), but I understand that though the wording is exactly the same, the question asked by the lawyer is different from the rich ruler's because the lawyer's intention was to test/trap Jesus.

it can mean generally to gain something you have not earned.² So the only way to inherit something is by being born into the right family, which is not something we choose to do.

- But this is not how the lawyer sees it. The lawyer comes with the assumption that he can earn eternal life somehow. Because the lawyer specifically says, “What shall I do?” As a lawyer, he knows the law of God. Yet still, he assumes that he can do all that is required of him to earn eternal life. He doesn’t see God graciously offering eternal life to people; he sees God giving him a to-do list that he is able to check off and prove that he can earn his way into heaven.
- The reality is that no human being is able to earn his or her way to heaven. The bible says that before God, everyone is unclean because of sin, and even our most righteous, holy acts are still like dirty, filthy rags to God (Psalm 14:3; Isaiah 64:6). God is so holy and set apart from sinners like us that no one could set their sinful eyes, even to look at God’s face and live (Exodus 33:22).
 - If the lawyer looked at the Old Testament scriptures not only as religious rules to follow but as the truth of God that teaches us who God is and who we are, he would have been asking Jesus a different question. Because an expert of God’s Law should be humbly saying to Jesus: “Is it even possible for a sinner to receive eternal life? I know all the rules and laws, and there is no way to keep them all. I find myself failing in almost all of them. Wrong things I shouldn’t do that I keep doing in my sin against God. Good things I should do that I haven’t been doing for God. Is it even possible for me to go to heaven with all of my many sins?”
 - Unfortunately, this wasn’t the lawyer’s question or the posture of his heart.
- So, Jesus, who is the expert Teacher as the Son of God, directs the lawyer to what is actually written in the Law. And Jesus answers the lawyer’s question with his own question, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” Let’s read verses 27-28:

Luke 10:27-28 (ESV)

²⁷ And he (the 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.” ²⁸ And he (Jesus) said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”

- The lawyer gives a standard answer, stating the greatest commandments. He summarized the entire law of God in two famous Old Testament scriptures in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, to “love God and love neighbor.”
 - What’s important to note here in the greatest commandments is that loving God and loving neighbor goes together. The lawyer states them together and Jesus affirms this to be true. These two commandments are our two greatest responsibilities and they actually go together as one. Because, we cannot claim to love God if we do not love people whom God created. In other words, how we love people, shows how we love God, who created them.³ God has created us in a way so that our personal relationship with God is not only about “me and God,” but it very much involves other people in our lives. How we love God is reflected in how we love others, and how we love others is reflected in how we love God. We’ll get to who our neighbor is later on in the sermon.
- For now, we need to address this statement Jesus makes in response to the lawyer. Jesus simply says, “Yes, you answered correctly. Love God and love your neighbor. Do this and you will have eternal life.” This should make us pause and consider what Jesus is suggesting here. Because it doesn’t sound like the gospel that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Why is Jesus saying love God and love neighbor and you will have eternal life?
 - Well, what Jesus is saying is still true. Because if there was someone who could truly love God and love people, that person would be worthy to inherit eternal life. If there was someone who could meet the requirements of love, that person has successfully earned eternal life. But no one can love like this. So, we have to look carefully at what kind of love we’re talking about here.
 - The requirement to love God is to “love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength and all your mind.” To love God with my “all” means to love God comprehensively. It means

² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 572.

³ Grant R. Osbourne, *Luke Verse by Verse* (Lexham Press, 2018), 100.

that my deepest desires, my most passionate emotions, my most intimate reflections and my greatest efforts are completely for God. In other words, we're talking about a perfect love. And if anyone could love God perfectly, then he or she could love others perfectly. And if that's the case, that person deserves eternal life. They have earned it.

- But the problem that the lawyer has to see, and that we also have to see is this: No one can love like this. Our love for God is imperfect. And we prove this to be true every time we sin. Every time we sin, we have given our hearts away to evil desires. When we feed our greedy, jealous desires, we're not loving God. When we lash out in anger, we are not loving God. When we give into sexual pleasures, we're not loving God. When we hide in the darkness of lies and deception, we're not loving God.
 - Our love for our neighbor is also imperfect. We sin against people all the time. When we gossip about them, slander their reputation, hate them, hurt them, abuse them, even ignore them, we are not loving our neighbor as ourselves.
- The point is, no one can love like how we are required to love if we tried this route of earning eternal life. We could go on and on about how our love is imperfect, how our love is selfish and self-seeking. Like the lawyer, we have hidden motives and wrong intentions in the place where perfect love should be in our hearts.
 - The lawyer knew what he needed to do to inherit eternal—he just needs to go and do it. But even as he was reciting the greatest commandments to love God and love neighbor, he is guilty of not doing either. He came to test Jesus. That's not loving at all. Testing someone to trap them in their own words is all about loving self. It's an activity of pride and arrogance that puffs myself up and brings others down.
 - So now, as the expert Teacher, Jesus has turned this test around to the lawyer. Jesus exposed the lawyer's hypocrisy and lack of love. So, the lawyer, now feeling trapped in his own words; he asks Jesus another question to try to save himself. It says in verse 29...

Luke 10:29 (ESV)

²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

- This action of "justifying self" means trying to make yourself be right or look right even if you might be wrong. You see this whenever you are typing a word document. You have the options to align left, center, align right, or justify. When you click "Justify", all the rough margins of text are forced to look neat and tidy. All the spacing in between looks odd, but at least the edges are straight and even.
 - The lawyer knows he's wrong and now is desperately trying to make himself right. But he's not only trying to justifying himself in this conversation, but he thinks he can justify himself before God. Instead of looking at the perfect Law of God and seeing how he falls short to inherit eternal life (cf. Romans 7:7-8), he is bending the requirements so that he can make himself get into heaven somehow. The line between the righteous and unrighteous, between the holy and the sinner should be clear and established. But as he tries to justify himself, he is trying to move that line around so that he can somehow be considered righteous.
 - He is clearly not loving his neighbor as himself even in his evil intention questioning Jesus. But, he is trying to redefine who exactly his neighbor is. Because if he redefines "neighbor" to be the people who are just like him, people who are part of his "in-group", his inner circle of friends, then he can simply choose who his neighbor is in order to fulfill the requirement of God's law. He can choose his neighbor to be the people in his life who are easy to love, who are beneficial for him to love.
 - The lawyer might be able to look right in the eyes of other people. But not to God. No matter what anyone does, we cannot look right before God in our own efforts, because God sees our hearts (Luke 16:15). He sees our imperfect love. How foolish it would be to try to justify ourselves as sinners before our All-knowing, Almighty, perfectly holy God. Yet here is this lawyer trying to figure out, "Well, I'm not perfect but what's the minimum I need to do to be right with God? What's the minimum I should do to be ok?"

- Whenever we try to justify ourselves, we are guilty of minimizing our sin, our obedience and ultimately God. When we justify ourselves, we're guilty of minimizing our sin because we are acting as if our sinfulness is not a big deal before God. But only those who understand the severity of sin understand the severity of God's wrath that will rightfully come to punish sinners.
 - When we justify ourselves, we're also guilty of minimizing our obedience to God. We see God's commands not as serious instructions that are life-giving for our souls, but rather, we see them as unnecessary advice that we don't have to follow.
 - So, ultimately, when we justify ourselves, we're minimizing God. We're making him to be less than what he truly is, in all of the glory and splendor of his holiness.
 - This is where the lawyer's heart is, and this is where we don't ever want to be, asking God, what is the minimum I need to do, in order to still get the maximum reward of eternal life in heaven.
- For those of us here who have not yet put our faith in Jesus Christ, I pray God is speaking to your hearts through his Word. The question about eternal life is the question of all questions: God has put eternity in the hearts of man. As finite, fallible beings, we cannot help but wonder about the infinite. Do you wonder what will happen to you after you die? The bible teaches us that there is an afterlife. And it will be for eternity. For sinners who are not saved because they do not have faith in Jesus Christ, it will be an eternity in hell, separated from God and in agonizing torment. But for sinners who are saved by faith in Jesus Christ, it will also be an eternity, but an eternity in heaven with God forever. But this is not only about getting into heaven and avoiding going to hell. It's about a relationship we can have with God that is firmly founded upon perfect love. Come to Jesus, not to test him, not to justify yourself, but come to Jesus to trust him and confess your lack of love to him.
 - For those of us who are believers and who have been in the church for some time, remember Jesus' words as an ongoing reminder and warning to come humbly to him. Those who considered themselves "wise and understanding" like this lawyer are the ones to come to test Jesus. While those who were child-like and humble continued in their trust in him.
 - So, we first saw how Jesus was tested on his understanding of eternal life. Jesus will now respond to the lawyer's second question, with another question of his own. But to set up his question, Jesus tells a parable. And we'll see next how...

II. Jesus teaches on his standard of neighborly love (vv.30-37)

- Jesus teaches the lawyer on his standards through a parable about a perfect neighbor who would be deserving of eternal life.
- A parable is a story or saying to illustrate a spiritual truth by using comparison, exaggeration, and symbolism. Jesus used parables to bring people from the familiar things of life and to move them into the unfamiliar, which are the spiritual truths of God. And so, the content of parables are easy to grasp. But, understanding the meaning and significance of a parable in order to apply it will require diligence to study and effort to live it out. Or else, parables can be easily misunderstood and misinterpreted.
 - The parable of the Good Samaritan is one of those easily misunderstood parables. This is why we have been looking carefully so far at the conversation that leads up to this one because context is key. This parable is so much more than just a moral teaching on being kind to others. Every religion teaches this. But Jesus is not like any other religious teacher and what he teaches is not like any other religion. On the other hand, Jesus is not teaching an allegory where he is the Samaritan, the robbers are satan, and we are the dying man. That's not what he is teaching. So with fresh ears, let's hear this parable that Jesus shares in order to respond to the lawyer's questions, "And who is my neighbor?" It says in verses 30-33...

Luke 10:30-33 (ESV)

³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and

saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.

- Jesus starts the parable with a nameless, unidentifiable man. We don't know much about him, his social class, his economic status, or his background. Our best guess is that he is Jewish, traveling between two Jewish cities of Jerusalem and Jericho. But that's still up for debate. All we know is that, as he was traveling, he was attacked by robbers and was left naked and dying on the road.
 - The first and second person to see this dying man was a priest and a Levite. They are the ones who serve in the temple of God in the Jewish religious system. They were the ones who were responsible to represent God to people, but in this parable, they are doing the opposite. Instead of coming to the man to help and care and love with the help, care and love of God, they saw him and intentionally walked to the other side of the road. They avoided and ignored him.
 - By this point in the parable, the lawyer who was listening to Jesus was probably starting to get a hint that the parable is being told against him. But he did not expect the story to take a turn for the worse.

- "But, unlike the priest and the Levite, a Samaritan, came to man, saw the man and had compassion on the man." The lawyer's jaw would have dropped as soon as he heard these words from Jesus' mouth. It wouldn't make sense for him to hear Jesus, another Jew, just tell a story that puts Jewish leaders and teachers in a bad light, and makes a Samaritan the hero of the story.
 - Remember back in Luke 9:54? Even Jesus' own disciples James and John had no mercy and compassion for Samaritans. They wanted fire from heaven to come down on an entire village of Samaritans and destroy them. This is because Jews and Samaritans have been hostile enemies for hundreds of years. In the eyes of the Jews, the Samaritans were half-breeds, mixed with pagan nations and pagan worship. They saw Samaritans as unclean sinners who fell away from God, and clearly did not consider them as their neighbors. If anything, the lawyer would assume that the evil robbers in the parable were Samaritans. To the Jews, there was no such thing as a Good Samaritan—they were all bad. So this is unbelievably offensive for the lawyer to hear that someone he could not love, someone he hated so much that he would not even go near, to be made the hero of the story.
 - Just try putting your hated enemy in the place of the Samaritan in the story. Put in the person who has hurt you the most.
 - But as the expert Teacher, Jesus did this to press deeper into the lawyer's heart. By making the Samaritan the hero, Jesus was further exposing how much the lawyer fell short of God's standard of love. Jesus is teaching the lawyer that asking, "Who is my neighbor?" is the wrong question that only a person without love would ask.
 - So let's get back to this Samaritan. As Jesus tells about the Samaritan's compassion on the dying man, he describes the kind of neighborly love that is deserving of eternal life. He says in verses 34-35...

Luke 10:34-35 (ESV)

³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'

- The neighborly love in Jesus' standards, the perfect love that deserves eternal life is a proactive compassion, as the Samaritan saw and went directly to help the dying man. It's a sacrificial compassion as he gave up his own resources, his own energy, and even his own safety. He had much more to lose if the robbers happened to come back. It is a selfless compassion as he served for the complete benefit of this unknown man without anything in return. And it is a limitless compassion. Any cost that the dying man needed to recover, the Samaritan would keep an open bill for him. And he would repay everything when he came back.
 - This is the perfect love for a neighbor that deserves eternal life. This was Jesus' standard. And by making a hated Samaritan who would never do this for anyone, Jesus makes his point clear that trying to earn eternal life by perfectly loving a neighbor is impossible for sinners like us. The law of God demands an impossible standard that sinners cannot reach. God's standard is perfect

love and limitless compassion for anyone in need around me, especially the ones I would naturally avoid. And to love them without condition and to love them at such a great cost.

- We, as sinners, are so far from perfect love. There's prejudice and judgmentalism in our hearts. We give preferential and unequal treatment to people we find easier to love. Sinners should identify themselves to the priest and the Levite in the parable. If not, the parable should serve as a wake up call to all those who think they can easily be like the Good Samaritan for they may be guilty of the same heart of wanting to justify themselves before God.
- The point of this parable was to show that the lawyer had no hope in trying to justifying himself before God's requirements.
 - If this lawyer thought that he had some kind of security for his soul, he needed to realize he has a false sense of security. If anyone thinks that they could approach a holy and perfect God and somehow meet God's standard on their own efforts is actually so far from God. They might fool themselves and even other people by doing religious activities, giving to the poor, going to services week after week, but their souls are not safe. They think they are standing on solid ground. But they're really in sinking sand.
- So as Jesus finishes his parable, he changes the lawyer's question. The lawyer asked, "Who is my neighbor?" trying to choose who his neighbor is so that he can make himself right. Jesus changes the lawyer's question to be, "How do I prove to be a perfect neighbor?"
 - Rather than trying to justify himself by minimizing God's law, the lawyer needed to face the reality that he could not prove himself to be a perfect neighbor as God's Law required. So Jesus finally ends with his own question in verses 36-37...

Luke 10:36-37 (ESV)

³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

- To the lawyer trying to justify himself, trying to minimize his obedience to still somehow get the maximum reward of heaven, is still left with an instruction for the impossible. Jesus is saying to him, "If you think you can earn eternal life, first don't try to justify yourself. Instead, "Go and do likewise." Go and try to give this kind of perfect love and limitless compassion and mercy to people around you."
 - We have to understand that our love must extend even to our enemies, to love those you hate and those who have hurt you. Jesus taught disciples to love their enemies, to have mercy on them and to welcome them as friends (Luke 6:27-36). But note here that the lawyer could not even say the word, "Samaritan." I'm not sure his heart changed at this moment.
- So the lesson from the expert Teacher, Jesus Christ, ends with the reality that there is nothing we can do to inherit eternal life. No amount of good works we do or money we give to the poor or care we provide for the need will make us deserving, worthy of eternal life. The law of God demands that we love God perfectly and also love our neighbor perfectly. And this is impossible for us.
 - For the lawyer, it ends here. But for us, we know that the impossible is made possible for us through Jesus. Our expert Teacher Jesus Christ. He lived out everything he taught us to do as he came to us, to be born like one of us. In love, God the Father sent God the Son, and in that perfect love, Jesus willingly came to die in our place. While we were still helpless, hopeless sinners headed for death, Jesus came, loving us with his perfect love and saved us from our sin.
 - Jesus is the ultimate expression of the truest standard of perfect love. And Jesus is the only one who is able to and who successfully proved himself to be the perfect neighbor, because he was without sin. So for those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we don't need to do the impossible. We don't need to try to earn eternal life. We don't need to try to justify ourselves before God. Jesus came to justify us by paying for the penalty and the punishment of our sins as he died on the cross in our place.
 - He says, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

- And we will need an eternity to truly understand the breadth, the depth, the width and the height of God's perfect love for us that surpasses all knowledge! (Ephesians 3:18–19)
- Now, for those who have received this perfect love from Jesus, we are free from the requirement in order to earn eternal life, because we have received it by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. However, as we have received perfect love, our impossible requirement to love is transformed into a responsibility to love like Jesus. We must go do likewise. Not to earn eternal life, but because we already have inherited eternal life.
 - Our responsibility on who to love is greatly expanded by this parable. A neighbor is not only the ones who are easy to love or who are beneficial for us to love. A neighbor is not only someone who is like us, not only someone who understands us. A neighbor is anyone in our lives, anyone in need, especially those we would naturally avoid.
 - Our responsibility to love our neighbor starts with those in our church. To love one another, just as Jesus has loved us. We cannot claim to love God if we fail to love other brothers and sisters in God's family that we have been baptized into and with whom we have covenanted with.
 - It starts with learning to love one another in the church. We shouldn't try to limit love for one another if we have together received the limitless love of Christ.
 - (i) This is why we have one another. Because the more we grow and strive to love one another this way, we have greater assurance that we have truly received God's perfect love and eternal life. Because only God's love and eternal life make the impossible possible for us.
 - (ii) 1 John 3:14 (NIV) = ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death.
 - So, knowing Jesus died and purchased and saved that brother or sister, it directs how we love them. Forgive them, reach out to them, serve them. Without such love for one another. Such compassion and mercy for one another, we will not be able to reveal Jesus to the world.
 - John 13:34-35 = ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
 - So our church is like a training place on how to love God and love our neighbor. And our responsibility to love our neighbor extends to those outside the church, whom God has created and sovereignty placed into our lives.
 - You can start to extend God's love by not looking away and walking to the other side of the road when you see a neighbor in need. When you see a neighbor in need being avoided and ignored; when you yourself feel the natural impulse to avoid and ignore that neighbor, pray and speak with God. If you ask, "God, is that my neighbor?", he'll say to you, read this parable again and answer your own question. But pray, God, help me to love this neighbor. Fill me with your limitless compassion and mercy for this person.
 - As we are called to receive his love, we are called to reveal his love. By this love, all people will know that we are his disciples, as we love one another in the church and learn to extend that same love to those outside.
 - Remember the two greatest commandments—they are our responsibility for those who have inherited eternal life by faith. And how we love our neighbors is evidence for how we love God.
 - As we are welcomed into his love and his love overflows from the depths of our hearts to anyone around us, starting with our church and out into the harvest.
 - We are called to reveal Jesus and his love. He will use us as we faithfully and by faith serve people in need and speak the gospel.

As we close, I suggest a few ways we can apply God's Word in our lives.

Life Application:

- 1) Reflect: How is God speaking to me through his Word?
- 2) Repent: Do I try to justify myself before God, minimizing my sin and minimizing my obedience?

- 3) Rejoice: Am I deeply moved to rejoice in the perfect love of Jesus I have received by faith?
- 4) Reveal: Having received such perfect love, how am I moved to “go and do likewise” to my neighbors inside and outside our church?

The One Thing

*We cannot love God and neighbor perfectly for eternal life,
so receive God's love and mercy from Jesus Christ.*