

We live in an isolated world, one of both our own making and the culture around us. There I was taking another load of boxes from inside the house to the moving truck in the driveway. We were moving from our house in Napa to the Bay area. Memories were flooding my mind. I was getting a little bit nostalgic. I'm a bit of a sap for those things. As I stood in the driveway, I began to look to my left and my right; it all of a sudden hit me. I don't think there was a single neighbor on that street who either realized we were moving or cared. I realized that in the two years we had lived there, not only did they not notice we were leaving, but I couldn't tell you a single neighbor's name.

Then I realized that the only time in that house I had ever actually met my neighbors was at 4 am when a 6.0 earthquake hit Napa, and we left our houses just to make sure we were okay. It literally took a natural disaster for me to meet my neighbors. I'm a pastor of a faith tradition that says and believes the story of the Good Samaritan.

With all the promise and the possibility of digital connection, I can't help but think of Sherry Turkle's book *Alone Together*. She makes the point that we are more connected than ever. Yet, although we may be digitally connected, we are deeply alone. Is there something from the way of Jesus that might be able to counter these sorts of rhythms that keep people more at an arm's length than the neighborliness that we just read about? Yes, of course!

Last week, we started this series on the practice of hospitality. It's the third of four practices that we're building out in our church's "Rule of Life." If that language is unfamiliar to you, just know that it's basically how we live and follow Jesus together as a community. It's not the whole picture; it's just how we've decided in this season to counter the rhythms that we see in the world around us and commit to as a community—shared commitments and shared practices. It's something similar to what we have on our website in our What We Believe section.

We talk about this commitment this way: We practice hospitality in contrast to a world full of division, isolation, and hostility. We do so by cultivating habits of table welcome and evangelism. In a few weeks, we're going to start talking about the idea of table welcome, but hospitality is the broader banner under which it falls. It's important that we begin by understanding what we mean when we use the word hospitality, because it's more than what typically comes to mind.

Here's how we define hospitality: Hospitality is creating a space where strangers are welcomed as friends and friends are turned into family. Last week, we made the point that this practice of hospitality is uniquely important because we live in what sociologists call a post-Christian age. Meaning that the world we live in, particularly on the West Coast, is living in reaction against Christianity, sometimes hostile, other times ambivalent.

You do you. Whatever is good for you is good for you, and what's good for me is good for me. But what has shifted in this post-Christian age is that where the Christian faith used to be typically viewed as a net good for society, it is now viewed quite the opposite, almost more of a net negative, a moral drag on the progressive movement of history. How do we live the Jesus way? How do we reach our neighbors and invite them into the invitation of Jesus in that context?

Well, we made the point that hovers across this whole series, which I took from a pastor named John Tyson, "In our post-Christian world, the credibility of our witness is dependent on the quality of our hospitality. So what does it mean to be a neighbor? What does it mean to be hospitable?"

Luke 10 might be the most famous story of Jesus in the scriptures. The "Good Samaritan" has worked its way into the common vernacular of our day. It has become something that we are familiar with. This text doesn't use the word hospitality, but it is the quintessential view of what it means to be hospitable. "*On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' (Luke 10:25).*

It's important that we catch the very posture of this because this is that testing or challenging of Jesus. This expert in the law, who would be a lawyer in our day, comes up to Jesus, and asks a good question. It's a basic question, a foundational question. "*What must I do to inherit eternal life. 'What is written in the law?' He replied. 'How do you read it?'" (v. 26).*

He's an expert in the law. Jesus often answers questions with more questions, but it's also a bit cutting in the sense that he knew the law. He had most of the Old Testament, particularly the first five books, memorized. He knew what the law said. So Jesus' question is. "What do you think it says?"

He answered, "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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." vv. 27-28

Jesus looks at the man and says, "You got it. That's exactly it." This echoes of the other instance in which Jesus was asked, "What's the number one commandment." The Pharisee gives the same answer that Jesus did. "Love the Lord your God, with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself." Now, the first part of that is what has become known as The Great Shema. It comes from the very first word in Deuteronomy 6, which says, "Hear O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one." Then it says to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. It's something that orthodox Jews, even to this day, will pray three times. It's a beautiful prayer, and it is the answer. Love God with every part of who you are.

Then he tacks on something from Leviticus, which is what Jesus does as well, and says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." So when he answers, Jesus does affirm him. It's the right answer. And yet this expert in the law couldn't quite leave it at that. "*But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'"* (v. 29).

Now, certainly, we would not see ourselves as the expert in the law on this. We've never wanted to justify ourselves before Jesus. But for whatever reason, I'm guessing, this is me reading into the text, not the scriptures, that there was something in the simplicity of that answer of loving God with everything you are and loving your neighbor as yourself that convicted this expert in the law.

We have to understand a little bit of the historical context. When those Old Testament passages were written, the people of God were on their own out in the wilderness, trying to figure out what it meant to be the people of God. So their neighbor, the only neighbor they had, was a fellow Jew. Now in this context in Israel, where Jesus and this expert of the law encounter each other, they're living under Roman occupation. The enemy, the oppressor, is within the camp. So when he asked this question, there's something in him that says, "I don't quite know if you mean my neighbor like the oppressor or do you mean the Jew?"

He's pressing Jesus because he's been convicted that there are others who may now be considered his neighbor. Is he to love them? So he asked the question, "Who is my neighbor," looking to justify himself. This is the context in which Jesus launches into this parable of the Samaritan. And it's this question that covers the whole thing. Keep in mind that when Jesus responds with this story, he's answering the question, "Who is my neighbor?"

"In reply Jesus said: 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.'" (v. 30).

There's some ambiguity about this man, and that's intentional by Jesus. Jesus is brilliant because he wants us, the listeners, so many thousands of years later, as well as those present there, to be able to impose whoever we need to understand who could be

this man. We don't know anything other than he was a man who was on his way to Jerusalem from Jericho.

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was about 18 miles long and notorious in the first century. They're walking this whole distance, and on top of that, there is a dramatic elevation change. Within those 18 miles, you would have descended nearly half a mile of elevation. The terrain was a desert, and it was narrow, rocky, and winding. There were a lot of blind turns, so this road had been notorious in the ancient world. Over time, it had gained the nickname of The Bloody Way. By the fifth century, this was known as one of the most dangerous treks you could make because many robbers would hide in the blind turns and jump people who were on this journey. It's for that reason that some commentators believe Jesus could be drawing from a literal story that may have taken place. Jesus is drafting this parable from well-known circumstances.

A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. vv. 31-32

Priests and Levites were religious officials. They were the ones that you would anticipate being the good guys. This is one where you see the crowd before Jesus as he's answering this question, and you think, surely these are the good guys. But Jesus is obviously a little cower than that.

There have been attempts to try to understand why the priests or the Levites would have bypassed the man. Some of them are good, some are bad. The bottom line is we don't know exactly the motivation. One theory is that if they were going from Jerusalem to Jericho, they could have been finishing up their priestly duties in Jerusalem and were then walking all the way back to their home. The theory is that they were carrying their earnings, which would have been things like food and offerings of animals, food that would feed his family. If they encountered someone who probably looked fully dead, to encounter a dead body would have rendered him and all of that unclean. There's a concern of feeding his family.

It's a disruption where he's having to wrestle and make some tough decisions. Another thought is that they're going the other way toward Jerusalem to perform their works and to be rendered unclean by encountering a corpse would have made them unable to work. They wouldn't have been able to enter the temple. It's in this place that we see the religious duties, the pietism of a priest, and a Levite getting in the way of caring for an individual.

There was a conventional storytelling mode in which you would loop three people together. So a priest, a Levite, and who would have typically made up the population of the temple would have been the Jews. So, the next person they would expect to be introduced into the story was a Jew. The listeners would have been

anticipating and thinking that this story is against clericalism. That is against the religious piety of the leaders of the temple. Of course, the average ordinary Jew would help the Samaritan. But Jesus flips the script.

But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' Luke 10:33-35

The story isn't about a priest, a Levite, and a Jew; it's about a priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan. And the Samaritan follows a similar cadence as you're hearing the story. The priest came, saw the man beaten on the road, and passed by on the other side. The Levite came, saw the man, and passed by the other side, but the Samaritan came, saw, and moved with compassion toward the man.

The Greek word for compassion here has this sense that you feel it at the core of your being. It's like he saw the man left for half dead and in his bowels, he knew he had to do something. He said he had compassion, and so then he goes about caring for the man in all the ways that you'd think. He bandages the wounds, puts him on the donkey, takes him into town, leaves him at an inn, puts him up for a few days, and then even says that if there are more things, he will reimburse all the expenses.

What's shocking about this story to the first-century Jew was a Samaritan was introduced. The jaws of those listening would have absolutely dropped. This radical nature of the story is not against clericalism. The Samaritans were up in the north, and the Jews were in the south. The Samaritans weren't Jewish; they were an entirely different ethnic group. Originally, there were twelve tribes in Israel. Ten in the north, two in the south. In the seventh century B.C., the ten tribes of the north were dragged off into exile by the Assyrian Empire. There were a few Israelites who survived that vicious attack, and they remained up in the north. The Assyrians, wanting to populate and occupy that area, imported Assyrian women into the area so they could intermarry with the Jews of the North.

They did just that. They sent the women there, and the population began to grow. What was born there were the Samaritans, half Jewish and half Assyrian. Now, the Assyrians were the oppressors. They were hated among Jews. They had violently taken them out of their own land. A few hundred later, the two tribes in the south were also dragged away into exile by Babylon. The survivors of that attack in the south refused to intermarry. For them, it was a bridge too far, a line in the sand.

How do you think those Jews in the south felt about the Samaritans in the north? After hundreds of years of warfare

between these two sides, North and South, the hatred ran so deep that the Jews viewed the Samaritans as half breeds and heretics, and the Samaritans saw the Jews as racist and cruel.

These two groups were diametrically opposed to one another and hated each other. It's hard for us to even grasp the enmity that was between the Jews and the Samaritans. So when Jesus tells this story to a group of Jewish people, experts in the Torah, experts in this origin story, and he makes the Samaritan the hero, it doesn't make sense. It's stunning to the first-century listeners.

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." vv. 36-37

Notice the way Jesus flips the question. Instead of what does it mean to be a neighbor, it's who is my neighbor. Rather than listing out a list of this person and that person, he sent the question back to the expert in the law. Who do you think was the neighbor? The expert in the law can't even bring himself to say the Samaritan. Did you catch that? "The one who showed mercy." You could sense the anger in his voice through gritted teeth. He feels caught. Then Jesus lands this final blow. "Go and do likewise." He just told the Jewish expert in the law to go and be like the Samaritan.

It's fascinating the way that Jesus flips this lawyer's question because we could spend all day theorizing about what is exactly meant by neighbor. In fact, we could have Bible studies about that and talk about who do we think our neighbor is. But Jesus seems a little bit less interested in that. Jesus is much more focused on you being a neighbor. Christine Pohl, in her book *Making Room* comments on this exact exchange.

The scope of our responsibility to care includes anyone in need. This expands more tightly bounded definitions of neighbor that tend to limit responsibility to those we like or those who like us...The practice of hospitality forces abstract commitments to loving the neighbor, stranger, and enemy into practical and personal expressions of respect and care for actual neighbors, strangers, and enemies. The twin moves of universalizing the neighbor and personalizing the stranger are at the core of hospitality. Pohl, Making Room

Did you catch those two moves? The universalizing of the neighbor but the personalizing of the stranger. Let's look at each one of those in turn.

Universalizing the Neighbor

First, what Jesus does in this story is he universalizes the neighbor. For Jesus, the neighbor is not just the person with whom you share a property line. It's not just the person who lives next to you, but it's anyone in need. Remember, they're walking down the road. They're walking along this journey, and

they come across somebody. That person is now the neighbor. The one who's broken, who's left for dead. Jesus extends our moral obligation from your literal neighbor to your enemy and everything in between. The question that is most important to Jesus is not who is my neighbor, but rather the right question for Jesus is: "To whom will I be a neighbor?"

It's less interested in the particularities but rather in universalizing that everyone has the potential to be one whom we are called to be a neighbor and who we are called to care for. There is no loophole. There is no way around it for Jesus. The neighbor is the universalized person that we extend to all those emblazoned with the image of God. In the first century, that's exactly what this expert in the law needed to hear. He needed to hear that the neighbor was far beyond just the literal neighbor. Most of us are pretty comfortable with that. If you were to ask the non-believers what the Christian message is, they'd give a lot of different things, but somewhere along the way, they'd probably talk about loving everyone.

Personalize The Stranger

We're comfortable with the universal neighbor, but Jesus does more than just universalize the neighbor. Jesus also personalized the stranger. I would argue that the personalizing of the stranger is more the message you and I need to hear. We're comfortable with the universal neighbor. We're a little less comfortable with the particular neighbor. It becomes a little bit harder. It's us looking down the street, realizing we don't know anyone's name, but yet, "We love our neighbor."

There's a danger to the universalizing of the neighbor. The claim is so broad that it can remain abstract, and rather than a practical commitment, it becomes just the theory that we believe in. The danger is that we can respond to such a large number of people that it diminishes the care of the particular. But for Jesus, the particular neighbor was when the Samaritan saw that man on the side of the road; that is who he was to love.

Before, when the expert in the law said, "Love the Lord, your God, with your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus affirmed that answer. My point in all of this is certainly Jesus meant love everyone. But he didn't mean less than your literal neighbor. Certainly, he also meant that the everyone includes the very particular people that we share streets and hallways and neighborhoods with. This is the message that we, in our digitally connected age, need to hear. In our haste to universalize, we diminish the very person who may be right in front of us as the potential neighbor.

If we're honest, this connection gives us a global exposure of everything that's happening around the world at any given time. It becomes easy to mix up our knowledge of those issues around the world with actually getting involved in loving the particular person. Christine Pohl, later in her book, wrote:

A steady exposure to distant human need that is beyond our personal response can gradually inculcate us against particular action. It can also delude us into thinking that by simply knowing about it we are somehow sharing in the sufferings of others. Isolation from local need, and over exposure to overwhelming but distant need make our responses to strangers uncertain and tentative at best. Pohl, Making Room

The first century needed to hear that the answer was more than your literal neighbor. But in our modern connected world, we need to hear that our neighbor is not less than our literal neighbor.

A haunting question that I haven't wanted to bring up, mainly because I might be the worst at this in this room, is, do you know your neighbor's names? The stat I saw was that only six percent of people can say they know their neighbor's first and last name. Just their name. For the record, I'm in the 94 percent. Do you know the name to your left and to your right? As I've mentioned the word neighbor, who is the face that comes to mind? Are they the person across from you to the left, to the right? Are they the ones behind your house, the ones in front of your house?

Who is that individual that comes to mind? Have you considered that maybe Jesus has you on that street to care for that particular neighbor at that particular time? The practice of hospitality is fundamentally about neighboring. It's what we do from this parable, how we take this and understand the question. It isn't who is my neighbor. It is how do I become a neighbor like this Samaritan?

Our English word neighbor comes from the Middle English *neigh* and *boer*. It's a compound word in which "neigh" means near and "boer" means person. So it literally means the near person. We tend to view the neighbor through the lens of this universalizing. The invitation for us is to neighbor like the Samaritan who simply saw the next person in front of them as their moral obligation to care for. Dallas Willard, in his book *The Scandal of the Kingdom*, wrote,

To "love your neighbor as yourself" is not a matter of identifying and making a list of neighbors and then making it a project to go around and love those people. It's an active love, where we are alert and aware because the next person we come across—though we may have never seen them before and though they are very unlike us—may turn out to be someone to whom we will choose to be a neighbor. This places the emphasis on neighboring. Neighboring is an opportunity in the kingdom of God. Willard, *The Scandal of the Kingdom*

The problem that the lawyer could not overcome was that he wanted to just talk in theory about who the neighbor was. But Jesus was calling him to a particular action. So how do we become like that Samaritan neighbor? Let me offer four brief

reflections on what we see in this story and what it means. I've called them the four neighborly characteristics that we see from the text.

Proximity

The first is this proximity. The reality is we need to be close to our neighbors, which means we don't hole up and hide inside. I'm an introvert, and so I tend to do that, but it's a diminished view of what it means to be human. Not just because I need community but also because I'm called to be out in the world. We need proximity. The priest saw the man and passed by the other side. We talked about this. The Levite did the same, saw him, and passed to the other side.

Yet the Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was. He moved closer in proximity. We can keep people at a distance, and we've gotten quite good at this. One of the ways we do this is in a digital world. We've grown comfortable with keeping people at a distance by projecting an image of who we are and gathering all sorts of friends and connections. But in reality, it gives us a faux concept of connection. What may be best used as an entryway, a front door to a deeper connection, has become the end unto itself. What if instead of keeping people at a distance through digital connection, we found a way to move closer in proximity in real-world presence?

Hospitality is the extension of welcome to a specific person in a specific place at a specific time. Is your life open to the possibility of holy disruption? When we begin to live life through the lens of the Samaritan hospitable act, we come to ask greater questions of our disruptions.

Just yesterday, as I was convicted of the Samaritan story and practice, I realized I hadn't done a great job at this. I was washing my car, and a neighbor I had met just once when we first moved in came walking by with her dogs and said, Hi. I thought that this was the right time to take my Air Pods out and talk to her, given the topic of my sermon tomorrow.

I got to know Jean and her two dogs, Maya and Trigger. I learned that Jean just had two hip replacements. That's why I haven't seen her because she's been recovering from that, and this pastor of a neighbor has not been very good at helping her recover from her hip surgeries because I just discovered that she had them. Are you open to holy disruptions? It happened that this took place on Sabbath, the day I've designated to create space and margin in my life, but maybe that's a greater indicator that the rest of my days are too busy. It's where I can't afford the holy disruption because I'm rushing from one thing to the next.

To be open to holy disruption, we have to evaluate and cultivate the margin in our schedules so as not to rush past the opportunities to neighbor. We must come to move at the pace of love, which is inevitably inefficient and slow because love and hurry are incompatible, and often, our lives are marked more by

hurry. This crowds out the possibility of welcoming the disruption that's right in front of us, which has the potential for us to practice hospitality. So the first characteristic is proximity.

Awareness

The second is awareness. The Samaritan wasn't impeded by the pace of life. He was moving in such a way that he wasn't looking down or focused on his particular goal. I'm speculating that for the priest and the Levite, one of the things on their mind was either their religious duties or familial duties, and they were going towards a direction with a purpose. I wonder if they were even unaware that the man was half dead, but the Samaritan walks and sees this person. There was a sense in the Samaritan that was not avoidance.

Isn't it cutting? I mean, I can't be the only person who's ever crossed the street to avoid somebody. I can't think that even in this parable, as practical on a small note, Jesus is saying that the priest and the Levite walked across the street to avoid the person. I've done that. Of course, I've done that. But the Samaritan had the awareness to see there was a human there; someone emblazoned with the image of God and the dignity of life. I also imagine, as the Samaritan's walking, it was probably a pretty gruesome scene.

If it says they left him half dead, I'm sure he was beaten and bloody, yet, it appears that this Samaritan had a non-reactive, calming presence with which he entered into the situation. The tasks of his day weren't blocking him from the availability and the awareness of the half-dead man. The text specifically says, "When he saw the man." The awareness of the Samaritan was such that his interactions were not clouded by anxiety or fear, but rather he moved closer.

The question is similar to the first question. Do you have the margin to see the other? Or are your days so fully packed that you're racing from one thing to the next? Do you give yourself the possibility that the interruption in front of you may be the thing God had planned for your day? This gets back to the distance that we've created through technology, but we also create distance by filling our schedules in ways that don't allow the margin for us to be aware of the needs of people around us.

Compassion

The third characteristic is that of compassion. This might be the defining characteristic of the Samaritan over the priest and the Levite. The Samaritan moved close in proximity, saw the man, but was moved towards him with a heart of compassion. The word compassion has this sense of a guttural feeling. It's something that's stirred within him. It is built off of proximity and awareness. When you get close to a need and become aware, it will inevitably move you. It's easy to hate people from a distance, but love will require us to move closer and closer. It becomes very hard to hate people up close.

What if our proximity and our awareness are the entryway to compassion? Instead of sitting in our homes, trying to pray and foster the compassion, what if we trusted the work of the Holy Spirit, and as we moved closer, compassion began to swell up within us? A person of compassion is one who feels the struggles of others and is moved by the distress of somebody else. It is to enter their lives in such a way that you feel their story. Ask the question, does my heart bend toward empathy for the other?

We live in a world of suspicion where we tend towards caution and distance. But does your heart tend toward empathy and understanding? Is this the first disposition of your heart? Suspicion is often rooted in a sense of superiority in which we believe that a condition of being downtrodden is the person's fault. One can think that the poor simply haven't worked hard enough. That's why they're in this condition. But what if our posture tended to be less rooted in judgment and more in empathy?

As the great theologian Ted Lasso said, "Don't be judgmental; be curious." What would it look like for your heart to bend toward empathy? This could be a good prayer for reflection. Did you invite the Holy Spirit to convict our calloused hearts to be softened towards the other?

Care

The final characteristic of neighborliness is that of care. This seems so obvious, but the last characteristic is the basic hospitality that the Samaritan showed. He met the man's physical needs, bandaged the wounds, and poured the oil in the wine to care for him. He took him to the Inn. He put him up. He extended that help. I would argue most of us are not going to walk across someone in the condition of this man on the road. But I would argue that our neighbors, houses, and departments near us are filled with people who may not be physically beaten but are emotionally worn out and beaten up.

Our practice of hospitality may look less like driving someone to an Inn as much as giving them our time and sitting in their living room with a cup of coffee just listening to their story. We are living through a loneliness epidemic, and I wonder if our task is more to be a presence to people who are dealing with and carrying pain and wounds that cut so deep. What if our care could not only look in the physical realm, but we had the wherewithal to think through the lens of how to come alongside a person who's lonely?

One commentator mentioned that we tend to think of the Samaritan putting the man up in the Inn as an extravagant act, and that is partly true, but most likely, this man was a man of means, and so to put him up in the Inn wasn't difficult. The

commentator would argue that it was a small act. It was a little act against destructiveness.

Sometimes we get this image that it has to be over the top, and that creates distance. I don't have the time; I don't have the money. But often, it's just carving out an hour or two to sit in the living room with a cup of coffee. It can be simpler than we make it, and I wonder if our expectations of that lavishness are a way in which we distance ourselves.

Do you have a willingness to enter in? Are you willing to spend the time to go a little bit further to encounter the other? There's no way around it. This is the call to be neighborly towards those that we find.

I still have work to do in this area. I've been living in my house for a year now, and I just met Jean. I convinced myself when we moved that I would not make the same mistakes from the last neighborhood and I would get to know my neighbors. I've had marginal success. It isn't to say I fully ignored it, but I've moved 10 times in 15 years. I've had a lot of streets, a lot of hallways, and a lot of opportunities to love neighbors. Honestly, I can't think of that many. I could tell you stories about Mike, who lived across the street, was a woodworker, and had a dog.

I could tell you about Patrick and Rose. I could tell you about the lovely couple who are natives of San Bruno. Who grew up in the very house they were living in. They'd witnessed the rapid changes in the Bay Area. I could tell you about Jean and Mike on my current street, the two that I do know, but there are countless others I can't tell you about.

I do not bring this message or this series as an expert. I bring this as a fellow sojourner, trying to figure out how to extend the hospitality that God has given me. I'm convinced, through experience, that the main thing this will cost us is time. The thing I've been convicted of is that I'm just too busy. So, what does it look like to carve out the space where you can get to know the neighbors around you?

The lawyer's question is a good one. Who is my neighbor? For a lot of us, that may be the starting point. Do you know your neighbor's names? But don't forget that the real question is which of these is the one I'm called to neighbor to? The answer is all of them. May we become a community that practices neighboring as a form of hospitality. May we come to see our streets and hallways not as inconveniences but as the literal neighbors that Jesus has invited us to love. When we come to see this, may we go and do that. That's the invitation.

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

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