

5-19-19 **EVERYONE IS SOMEONE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST – ESPECIALLY OUR NEIGHBORS**

TODAY'S MAIN POINT: TO BE A CHRISTIAN IS TO BE A BLESSING, especially to those who cross our paths of day-to-day life. AND NOT a matter of "doing" but of "BEING" and "WANTING TO BE COMPASSIONATE, EMPATHETIC, and EXTENDING."

Yesterday many from SHUMC joined together to work with the township to help clean up a property of one of our elderly neighbors. At the same time, the youth joined together to help clean up the properties of some of SHUMC's families who also needed a little help.

This is great ... this sort of community involvement and care has always been a part of God's intended role for His people ... to be extending the love and care of God to the world around us, especially to those who are our neighbors.

God intends for the world to be a BETTER PLACE because of us.

Jesus actually teaches that all of the commandments are summarized by two commandments --- essentially the 1st --- TO LOVE GOD with all of our heart, soul and mind...and the 2nd --- TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR.

Matthew 22:34-40: *Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.* ³⁵ *One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:* ³⁶ *"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"*

³⁷ *Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'* ³⁸ *This is the first and greatest commandment.* ³⁹ *And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* ⁴⁰ *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

This is not a New Testament addition or after-thought ... this fundamental tenant of biblical Christianity has always been at the heart of God's intentions for His children ... for the people of His family.

Deuteronomy 6:5: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength

Leviticus 19:18: *Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.*

And even before these directions (written at the time of Moses) there was God's covenant with Abraham that was fundamentally rooted in the requiring that the world be blessed as a result of God's followers being blessed and cared for by God Himself.

Genesis 12:1-3: The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

² "I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;

I will make your name great,
and **you will be a blessing.**

³ I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and **all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."**

GOD'S PEOPLE ARE TO BE A BLESSING !!!

GOD'S PEOPLE ARE TO BE LIFE-GIVING NOT LIFE-TAKING

Luke 10:25:37: ²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

QUESTION: What do you think was the lawyer's motivation?

²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

²⁷ 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.'

²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, (either for his own peace of mind – or perhaps to be praised by Jesus) so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN: (Luke 10:30-37)

³⁰ 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. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man,

he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ 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.'

³⁶ "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

NOTE: Jesus changed the lawyer's question from, "WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR" to "ARE YOU A GOOD NEIGHBOR?"

WHY MIGHT JESUS HAVE DONE THIS?

SO, LET'S REFLECT:
WHO is our neighbor?

HOW should we treat our neighbors?

HOW SHOULD OUR NEIGHBORS FEEL as a result of our neighborly ways?

Are you a GOOD NEIGHBOR?

WHO DO YOU NEED TO ASK GOD FOR HELP SO THAT YOU MIGHT BE A BETTER NEIGHBOR (or FAMILY MEMBER)?

ARE YOU A BLESSING? Not because of what you do, BUT BECAUSE of WHO YOU ARE in Christ, through the Holy Spirit's CHANGING OF YOUR HEART and MIND and SOUL.

EXPRESSING LOVE AND CARE --- BEING A BLESSING TO OUR COMMUNITY & BEING MOTIVATED BY COMPASSION & CARE RATHER THAN REASONS THAT ARE SELF-CENTERED -- IS A MARK OF BEING ONE OF CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS.

ARE YOU GROWING IN YOUR FAITH & TRUST IN JESUS?

ARE YOU BECOMING BETTER AT BEING A BLESSING?

In the Bible, faith in and love for God always overflow into a love for one's fellow human beings, especially fellow believers. When believers love one another, they exemplify to others the love that God has shown to them.

Reference	Faith in God	Love for Neighbor
John 13:34-35	"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you. . ."	". . .you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."
John 15:10, 12	"When you obey me, you remain in my love. . ."	"I command you to love each other in the same way that I love you."
Colossians 1:4-5	"We have heard that you trust in Christ Jesus. . ."	". . .and that you love all of God's people."
1 Thessalonians 1:3	"As we talk to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work. . ."	". . .your loving deeds."
Philemon 1:5	"I keep hearing of your trust in the Lord Jesus. . ."	". . .and your love for all of God's people."
1 Peter 2:17	". . .Fear God."	"Show respect for everyone. Love your Christian brothers and sisters."
1 John 4:11	"Dear friends, since God loved us that much. . ."	". . .we surely ought to love each other."

