



Sermon Discussion Guide
Love Thy (Socially Distanced) Neighbor: Don't Wait! Do It Now!
Sunday, August 30, 2020
Based on Pastor Jason's Sermon

Introduction

We're continuing in a series called *Love Thy (Socially-Distanced) Neighbor*. In this series we're thinking through what it would look like to really love our neighbors during this pandemic season, and take steps that will help introduce them to Jesus. In this third lesson, we learn that we should take advantage of this season and not wait for things to change.

To watch this week's sermon before your group discussion, go to www.journeyoffaith.com/messages

Share Your Story

1. When something needs to get done, is your first reaction to do it immediately or to put it off?
2. What's the biggest inner-emotion that sometimes hinders you from actually doing what Jesus encouraged us to do? (i.e. fear, self-doubt, lack of trust, selfishness, etc.)

Hear God's Story

1. After His resurrection, Jesus gathered His disciples before He ascended to Heaven. Read what He told them in Matthew 28:16-20. Why do you think Jesus' charge to them was one of action and not passivity? Why is this important?
2. Jesus' audience up to this point was primarily 1st century Jews who considered "outsiders" as people to be avoided. Now, in verse 19, He says to go to every nation (or "ethnos" in the original Greek - literally "every people group"). Why would this be shocking to them to hear? And, what's your own biggest hesitancy of going up to people who are different from you?
3. In the very last sentence in Matthew, Jesus says He'll be with us always. What does this mean in the context of 28:16-20, and what difference can that make as we go and actually try and live this out?

Create a New Story

1. How can you actively show love to your neighbors this week?
2. How can you learn one new thing about your neighbors and your neighborhood this week that can better help you share the good news of God's love and forgiveness?

Further Studies: Proclaiming the Kingdom With Our Actions

“As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’”
-Jesus, Mt. 10:7

In Jesus’ day the social landscape of the Roman empire was ripe with divisiveness, dominating others for one’s own means, and generally had a very self-focused outlook on how one conducted their life. In Jesus’ last words before His ascension in Matthew 28:16-20, He called His followers to represent an alternative community from what was culturally accepted around them. Their values and practices were now to be shaped by who Jesus was telling them to serve and seek after: others above self. This taps into how Jesus said that this call to love others out of our love for God sums it all up (Matthew 22:37-40).

All of this was Jesus elaborating on what He said earlier about what it realistically looks like to proclaim that God’s kingdom has come to us (Matthew 10:7). In our current social landscape of divisiveness and fear, this call to proclaim God’s kingdom as we seek to love others is as important today as it was back then. Just like He told His disciples before He ascended to Heaven, we’re called today to represent an alternative community from what’s around us. Through our actions and our counter-cultural loving example, they will know we belong to the God over it all.

DISCUSS

1. How does reframing “proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven has come near” in light of our actions and example, rather than just our words, help you understand what Jesus wants from us?
2. What’s one thing that sometimes distracts you from our ultimate mission of loving God and loving others while we live in such a complex time?
3. What one thing are you going to try and change this week to help you focus better on the larger mission of Jesus He’s called us to participate in?
4. What does it say to you about God’s priorities that Jesus’ last words were about “going out” of our comfort zones to those who need Him?
5. How does acknowledging that God is calling us to represent an alternative community impact you?

For Parents: Repackaging for Youth

1. For those who have young children in the home, what are some ways you could teach this lesson to them that takes into account their age and learning level?

For questions about this curriculum, contact Pastor Matthew Jensen at
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