

Loving Your Neighbor as Yourself - Part 2

by Carter Conlon

Loving our neighbors as ourselves is not just a commandment, but a reflection of God's love and acceptance for us, and it's the key to breaking free from self-loathing and pouring out God's love to others.

Duration: 15:01

Scripture: John 13:34

Topics: "Gods Love", "Self Acceptance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and accepting God's unconditional love and grace, leading to a transformation in how we view ourselves and others. It highlights the simplicity of pouring out God's love and compassion onto those around us, focusing on the new nature we have in Christ and the need to love ourselves as God loves us. The message encourages self-acceptance, recognizing the work of God within us, and challenges us to extend that same love and acceptance to our neighbors, ultimately fulfilling the greatest commandment of loving one another as God loves us.

Transcript

And about themselves the way that we once did. That you and I are to stop and to pour in the oil and the wine which God Almighty has poured into us. It's as simple as that.

Oh God, thank you for what you've done for me. That's why new Christians win more people to Christ than older ones. Before they get a chance to study and get all condemned, they know in the beginning that it's all grace.

They know in the beginning it's just the goodness of God. They know they are sinners. They know they fall short of the glory of God.

But they know they're covered. They know they're cleansed. They know they're loved by God.

They simply walk through their day looking at other people who look just like themselves. And they start pouring oil and wine into them as God has poured into them. They begin to pour out onto others.

Hallelujah. Ironically, as we do this, we find ourselves walking closer to God than any amount of Bible study, as good as that is, can ever bring into your life. Or songs you sing or tapes you listen to.

We just start pouring a kind word, hope, just a seed into somebody's heart. We find then we're actually walking with God. We find that the love for God begins to increase in us.

As we begin to pour into others, we become aware that God is pouring into us. The truths we share with other people around in society who are struggling, we become more and more aware that these truths are irretrievably ours and cannot be taken away from us. And in doing this, we end up loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

We begin our day by saying, God, I love you so much. And in spite of what I see in the mirror, that's not what you see when you look at me. In spite of how I feel about myself, that's not what you're feeling in your heart.

You said to Jeremiah, the thoughts that I think towards you are more than the sand that is on the seashore. And I'm thinking these thoughts to bring you to a desired end, somewhere that you want to go and somewhere that I want to bring you. And I'm bringing you there right now.

And we look in the mirror and we begin to realize, God, you don't see this person anymore. There's a brand new creation going on inside of me. And that is the person that you're looking at.

It's your son, Jesus Christ, who is now living his life within me and changing me every day from image to image and glory to glory. Oh, God, let my mind be focused on these things. Let these things be the passion of my heart.

Let me give my strength as it is to this work that you're doing within me. When I see a downtrodden person on the side of the road, I don't have to know the whole Bible. I have to just know that God loves them the way he loves me.

Folks, I won 50-something people to Christ in the very first season when I became a Christian, just one-on-one sharing Christ with everything and everybody that moved. I would speak Jesus Christ to them. Many people begin to weep and give their lives to Christ.

Then I got into the ministry, started studying, and stopped winning people to Christ. I had to stop at one point and say, God, what am I doing? Where have I gotten off track here? I have all this knowledge now, and I'm not winning anybody to the Lord. Folks, I had to get back again to the simplicity.

The simplicity. That's why Brother Dave stays so alive. He doesn't talk about it in this church, but quite often on Saturday afternoon or evening or some of the week evenings, he'll go out on the streets here.

He sometimes walks all the way down to the 30s. He'll just share Christ with people, just pour into people's lives. Tell the drug addict, you don't have to live like this.

There's a God that loves you and the homeless person and the struggling mother and so many others. That's why he stays relevant, and he stays alive in Christ, because he's never lost the simplicity of what this relationship with God is all about. Love your neighbor as yourself.

Here's how I interpret this. As you have opened your heart for me to love you, that's really the key. Love your neighbor this way.

You can't love your neighbor until you know how much I love you, God says. Until you see them the way I see you. Until you accept your neighbor as I've accepted you.

Until you're able to encourage your neighbor as you have been encouraged. Love your neighbor as you love yourself. These are strange words for some of you this morning, to be able to come to this sanctuary and say, God, I love myself.

You know, there's a lot of teaching out in the world today about self-acceptance, but a lot of that is about accepting the old nature. This is not about that. This is about accepting the new nature.

I love the work you're doing. If you love me, God, why should I hate myself? If you've cleansed me, why should I call myself unclean? If you are saying that you're doing the miraculous in me, why should I call it less than it is? Why should I live in spiritual poverty when the treasure of heaven in Christ is open to me? Why should I hate myself when you say you love me? I'm loved of God. And so are you.

It's time to accept that. I'm loved of God. Loved.

Let it soak down so deeply into your heart this morning. God loves you. I shared with a service recently that there was a great, great evangelist in days gone by, and a young man traveled quite a distance to get to his home and to get some incredible revelation.

And he finally got to his home and said to him, in all of your years of serving God, in all of the things that you've done, all the revelation of the scriptures and all the mighty things you've seen God do through your hands, what is the greatest truth that's ever been revealed to you? And he looked at the young man and said, Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. It wasn't being trite. It was true.

For some of you today, it's going to be a great deliverance to stop hating yourself. When you finally accept that you're clean, when you finally accept that God loves you the way you are, and you finally accept that you're not mediocre in the sight of God, you finally accept that there are gifts and talents of the Holy Spirit planted within you, you're going to be able to walk out of the door of this church and love your neighbor because you love yourself. This is as great as the greatest commandment.

If I may close with these words, Jesus said to his disciples, I give you a new commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. You see, it wouldn't be possible if the disciples didn't know the depth of his love. He said, I'm going to open your heart to how much I love you, and this is the way, and in the strength of this love, I want you to love one another.

I want to give an altar call today, which is very unusual, but it's for people who you've hated yourself, and it's been wrong. You've not seen yourself the way God sees you, and today is a time to put this self-loathing away. It's time to take it to an altar and say, God, forgive me for embracing this image of myself when you have cleansed me, and accepted me, and changed me, and you are making me into a new person every day.

Forgive me for how I have refused to see this. We're going to stand, and as we do, I want to ask those that God's speaking to, you can make your way to this altar in the balcony. You can go to either exit.

The main sanctuary, just slip out of where you are. Make your way here. We're going to pray together.

You've had a hard time accepting yourself, but today you're going to lay it down. This is going to be a time of great deliverance for you. You're going to go out of this sanctuary today, and you're going to become a loving person.

I speak that prophetically over your life. You're going to become a loving person, because you know you are loved of God, and you're no longer going to despise the work that God is doing within you. Hallelujah.

You see, the Holy Spirit wanted to send Peter to the Gentiles, but he couldn't be sent until this issue of uncleanness is dealt with in his own mind, in his own heart. God wants to send you to make a difference in your world, your city, your family, but the issue of uncleanness in your own mind has to be dealt with first. You are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

If you are a genuine Christian, it doesn't mean you're without struggle, but you're the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. That means you're as clean as God is. That would sound almost blasphemous if it wasn't true.

If it wasn't in the Bible, you're as clean as God is. Now, this has no application to the religious game player. I'm talking to the sincere Christian.

It's an amazing thing to realize when it finally hits home, God, you've accepted me. I'm fully accepted in the beloved. You look down upon me.

You just love me. And you see something you're doing that I'm not aware of, and there are giftings in me that I can't see because I'm so focused on my own failing. The Lord says today, I want you to look away from that.

Pray with me. Jesus, thank you for receiving me, for loving me, for cleansing me, and day by day making me into a new person. The person that you're making me into because of your life being lived inside of me.

I love this new identity. I love myself because you are working and making me into your image. I love you, Jesus.

And I love your work inside of my life. Open my heart to the joy that you want to give me, to the hope that you want to pour into me. To the strength that you say is mine.

I take authority today over every lying voice, the voices of my own heart, the voices of evil that come against me, trying to call me unclean. I condemn you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because I declare by his word I am clean. I am the righteousness of God.

He is doing a marvelous work inside of my life, and he will use me for his honor and for his glory. Now, Lord, that I've accepted myself and I'm learning to love your work in me, help me now to accept my neighbors with all of their failings and all of their flaws, all of their faults. Help me to pour into them your love, your encouragement, your life, your salvation in the same measure that you have poured into me.

These are the greatest commandments. Oh, God, help me not to forget this today. This is a divine moment.

This is an encounter with truth. Lord God, love people through me. Do it today.

I ask this in Jesus' name. Now thank him. Thank him.

Hallelujah. For the people at this altar, just a word of encouragement to you. You're not too tall.

You're not too short. You're not too heavy. You're not too light.

You're just right. God made you the way you are. God loves you.

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