

Be a Good Neighbor

Series: Personal Work and Personal Evangelism

Intro:

- → **start series on personal work and personal evangelism** — something congregation very interested in doing more actively
 - ! this series is from the perspective of being a good neighbor — summarize personal work, good neighbor
 - ! “good neighbor” personal work
 - ! “good neighbor” evangelism
- **This lesson:**
 - ! **Title:** Be a Good Neighbor
 - ! **Purpose:** introduce series, set for the basic mind set for personal work and evangelism - be a good neighbor

- #1 **If we live by the golden rule, we will be successful personal workers and personal evangelists!** — good neighbors
 - **Being a good neighbor, is the essence of being a Christian**
 - ! **Matt. 22:39** (Jesus asked, greatest commandment) "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
 - → **It encompasses every relationship, fulfills the law** — golden rule for personal relationships (family, friends, work — personal work, evangelism)
 - ! **Rom. 13:8, 10** (Paul, quoting *Golden Rule*) **Owe nothing to anyone except to love** (boil down all relationships to this one thing) one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. . . . **10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor;** therefore love is the **fulfillment of the law.**
 - **Summary: What's this mean to you?**
 - ! To be the personal workers and personal evangelists God wants us to be, simply be a good neighbor (love your neighbor)!
 - ! it's as simple as that
 - ! **illus.: Boston Globe, 10-27-93, Neighbor Dead Four Years** Before Anyone Noticed
 - ! **Adele Gaboury died in her house**, no one noticed for **4 years**
 - ! **What they did:** When her front lawn grew hip-high, they had a local boy mow it down. When her pipes froze and burst, they had the water turned off. When the mail spilled out the front door, they called the police.
 - ! **What they didn't do:** The only thing they didn't do was check to see if she was alive. She wasn't.
 - ! **Police** finally climbed her crumbling brick stoop, broke in the side door of her little blue house, and found what they believe to be the 73-year-old woman's skeletal remains, where they had lain, perhaps for as long as four years.
 - ! **Neighbor said:** "It's not really a friendly neighborhood," said Eileen Dugan, 70, once a close friend of Gaboury's, whose house sits 20 feet from the dead woman's house. "I'm as much to blame as anyone. She was alone and needed someone to talk to, but I was working two jobs and was sick of her coming over at all hours. Eventually I stopped answering the door." (Sally Jacobs, "Years After Neighbors Last Saw Her, Worcester Woman Found Dead," Boston Globe,(10-27-93).
 - ! **application:** not any good personal workers around, because there were not any good neighbors (people did not love their neighbor)

➤ #2 What does it mean to love (agape) our neighbor?

→ Parable of the good Samaritan:

! **rf. Lk. 10:1-29** intro:

! 70 sent out and returned, reported what had occurred and miracles done, Jesus told them not to rejoice over the miraculous power they had but because their names were written in heaven

! lawyer tests Jesus

! lawyer: what do to be saved

! Jesus: asked Him what was written in the law (God's word)

! lawyer: quoted OT: love God, neighbor

! Jesus: "Do this and you will live."

! lawyer: wanted to justify himself, asked, "And who is my neighbor?"

! **Lk. 10:30-37** parable:

! **to love neighbor is to show mercy and compassion — next point**

! **Real-life illustration — similar to good Samaritan:**

! **Gordon MacDonald tells a story** about traveling with his wife (Gail). They were in an **airplane flying to Boston**, seated almost at the back of the airliner in the two aisle seats across from each other. As the plane loaded up, **a woman with two small children came down the aisle to take the seat right in front of us**. And behind her, **another woman**. The **two women took the A and C seats, and one of the children sat in the middle seat**, and the **second child was on the lap** of one of the women. He **figured these were two mothers traveling together with their kids**, and hoped the kids wouldn't be noisy.

! **The flight started**. The two **children had a tough time**. The air was **turbulent**, the **children cried** a lot—their **ears hurt**—and it was a **miserable flight**. The **two women kept trying** to help and comfort the children. The **woman at the window played with the child in the middle seat**, trying to make her feel good and paying lots of attention.

! **Things went downhill** from there. As they got **towards the last part of the flight**, the **child in the middle seat got sick**. The next thing I knew, the child was **losing everything** from every part of her body. The **diaper wasn't on tight**, and before long a **stench** began to rise through the cabin. It was unbearable! **"Stuff" was all over everything**. It was on this **woman's clothes**. It was **all over the seat**. It was **on the floor**.

! Mr. **MacDonald watched as the woman next to the window patiently comforted the child and tried her best to clean up the mess** and make something out of a bad situation.

! **The plane landed**, and when we pulled up to the gate all of us were ready to exit that plane as fast as we could. The **flight attendant came up with paper towels and handed them to the woman in the window seat** and said, **"Here, Ma'am, these are for your little girl."**

! The **woman said**, **"This isn't my little girl."**

! **"Aren't you traveling together?"** the flight attendant asked.

! **"No, I've never met this woman and these children before in my life."**

! Gordon MacDonald says he suddenly realized the **woman sitting in the aisle seat** had just been merciful. She had found the opportunity to give **mercy**. She was **"the person who was the neighbor."**

! **application:**

! **one person watched while the other person helped**

! **who was the ladies neighbor — the one who had mercy - helped**

→ **Application:**

! **we constantly run into opportunities** to be a good neighbor

! **good neighbor takes action, everyone else watches** — not always possible to act

! **commitment:** be a good neighbor, every time you can — personal worker, personal evangelist

➤ #3 What are the two key attributes of being a good neighbor? — good personal worker, evangelist

→ Answer: compassion and mercy — parable of the good Samaritan

→ Definitions:

! **Compassion:** sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it (Webster)

! deep sympathy that we are moved to do something to help

! **compassion commanded:**

! **Col. 3:12**

! **Mercy:**

! provide for the **needs** of people, that they **can't provide for themselves**

! e.g., parable of good Samaritan — man beaten and left half dead

! e.g., God to us — salvation

! **mercy commanded:**

! **Matt. 5:7** "Blessed are the **merciful**, for they shall **receive mercy**."

! **Lk. 6:36** "Be **merciful**, just as your Father is merciful."

→ **Compassion and mercy work together, in tandem:**

! compassion is the feeling that motivates us to action

! mercy is the action

→ **Bible illus. of compassion and mercy:**

! **Bible illus.: parable of the good Samaritan (above)**

! **application:** we can't be so busy with life that we don't stop to be a present-day good Samaritan

! **secular e.g.: theology students put to the test** (Marshall Goldsmith, "Goal 1, Mission 0," Fast Company, August 2004)

! research done Darley and Batson at Princeton in 1973

! A group of theology students was told that they were to go across campus to deliver a sermon on the topic of the Good Samaritan.

! As part of the research, some of these students were told that they were late and needed to hurry up.

! Along their route across campus, Darley and Baston had hired an actor to play the role of a victim who was coughing and suffering.

! Ninety percent of the "late" students in Princeton Theology Seminary ignored the needs of the suffering person in their haste to get across campus.

! As the study reports, "Indeed, on several occasions, a seminary student going to give his talk on the parable of the Good Samaritan literally stepped over the victim as he hurried away!"

! **application:** we can't be in such a hurry that we neglect to be good Samaritans

! **e.g., on the way to church Sunday morning**, running late, see a car accident and people hurt, what would you do?

! **e.g., on the way to the airport to fly out of town on business**, see man get beat up and left dead, stop and help or drive past?

! **moral:** we must have compassion for people, moves us to sacrificial action, without putting ourselves in danger

! **secular e.g.: terminally ill boy puts others first** ("Selfless Dying Boy, 9, Gets Climbing Wall Built," Courier Journal, 4-12-04; submitted by Van Morris, Mt. Washington, Kentucky)

! **The Make-A-Wish Foundation** has been granting the wishes of children with life-threatening illnesses since 1980.

! **Most commonly**, children wish to meet a celebrity, shake the hand of the president, or go to Disney World.

! **Mak Shulist, a critically ill nine-year-old, wished to enrich the lives of others.**

- ! **Before a brain tumor took Mak's life on April 9th, 2004**, he got the Make-A-Wish Foundation to build something for his friends: a **rock-climbing wall on the playground of Ellisville Elementary School**.
 - ! He told them that **he wanted to leave something for his friends**.
- ! **The community pitched in** as well.
 - ! The **Shulists put a basket out on their front lawn** and everyday people would leave offerings to help make Mak's wish come true.
 - ! The **Make-a-Wish Foundation put up \$15,000**, and the **people of Ellisville volunteered to build** a 7-ft. high rock climbing wall in the playground.
 - ! **Climbing wall was built**.
 - ! **Dave Knes, principal at the 600-student school in suburban Ellisville said**, "We learned a lesson from a nine-year-old, that even **when we're going through tough times** we should be **thinking of other people and not ourselves**."
 - ! **After the climbing wall was built, the principal video taped students** scaling of the wall. He recorded students' conversations and added his own colorful commentary to describe the scene.
 - ! He **rushed it to Mak's parents** who **played it for him that night**. His mom said he listened to it and responded. The **next day Mak Shulist died**.
 - ! **application:** the people who touch us the most are those who do for others — compassion, mercy
- ! **Bible illus.: God's salvation of Lot and his family**
 - ! **Story - Gen. 19:1-14**
 - ! 2 angels came to Sodom, Lot strongly urged them to stay with him, they did
 - ! men of Sodom came that night and tried to rape the angels
 - ! the angels made them blind
 - ! angels tell Lot their plan to destroy the city, and give him time to get his future sons-in-law, but they thought he was joking
 - ! **Gen. 19:15-16** Lot and family saved because the **compassion of the LORD was upon him**
 - ! **application:** God saves us because of compassion (Ja. 5:11)
- ! **Bible illus.: parable of the forgiven slave** — Jesus teaches forgiveness after Peter asks how many times to forgive brother
 - ! **Matt. 18:21-27** master forgave because of compassion
 - ! \$3 billion +/-: talent was worth more than 15 years laborers wages
 - ! **Matt. 18:28-35** since first slave did not forgive fellow-slave, master handed him over to the torturers
 - ! \$16,000 +/-: denarii a days wages
 - ! **application vs. 27, 33:**
 - ! compassion results in mercy
 - ! no compassion / no mercy
 - ! **application vs. 35:** if we are not compassionate and merciful to others, we will be lost
 - ! **Matt. 5:7** "Blessed are the **merciful, for they shall receive mercy**."
- ! **Bible illus.: father of the prodigal son**
 - ! **Lk. 15:11-24**
 - ! vs. 20 father of prodigal son, received back and forgave because of compassion
 - ! vs. 21-24 forgave and rewarded — as God does us
 - ! **application:**
 - ! if we are compassionate to others, we will be forgiving
 - ! if we are compassionate, we will reach out and help others as God has reached out to us and helped us

! **Bible illus.: Jesus feeds the hungry because he has compassion for them, 4k men + women and children**

! **Matt. 15:32, 35-38** Jesus had compassion on the people, fed the hungry

! **application:** if we are compassionate, we will be moved to do for others

! personal work, personal evangelism

! “good neighbor” personal work

! “good neighbor” evangelism

Conclusion:

➤ → Summary:

! If you want to be a **good personal worker** and personal evangelist, just **be a good neighbor** — it’s not any harder than that — just be who you want to be!

! have **compassion** upon people

! then **allow that compassion to work** — be merciful

! “good neighbor” personal work

! “good neighbor” evangelism

→ Inv.:

! Jesus is compassionate and merciful to us, providing a way of salvation. He is a good neighbor to us — came to earth not to serve Himself but each of us (Rom. 15:1-5), compassion and mercy upon us

! What has Jesus commanded, for us to serve Him in return?

Audio sermon notes:

! ➤ denotes the place to proceed to the next PowerPoint slide.

! All Scriptures are NASB unless otherwise noted.

! Sermons recorded 11-13-05, Church of Christ, South Livingston Avenue in Lutz, FL, Allan McNabb, BibleGuide.org.