

# **Loving Others Through Jesus' Eyes**

## **Christ Centered series Week #2**

### **by Chris Famisaran**

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the opportunity to gather together as a church family. Be with us as we continue our series on being Christ centered as we talk about seeing others through your eyes. Lord, open our eyes in Jesus name. Amen.

Years ago, many of us heard the phrase it's a beautiful day in the neighborhood sung by Mr. Rogers. Mr. Rogers shared a number of things that I think that are very relevant to even today. I wish Mr. Rogers was still around. Amen. If you didn't grow up on Mr. Rogers, I'm sorry, there's still time. Go back to PBS. But Mr. Rogers, I always loved Mr. Rogers because he brought warmth. He exuded kindness, empathy, love. He challenged social norms at the time that we take for granted expressing kindness. How many of you remember the scene where he and a police officer put their feet in a little pool? Some of you are thinking, well, they just put feet in the pool at a time, though, because the officer was an African American man at the time. This was cause for provocation in some people's eyes. And yet Mr. Rogers knew love goes beyond. He saw this officer as he should, through Jesus eyes.

When's the last time you were greeted by your neighbor? When's the last time you greeted your own neighbor? I think here in California, we don't greet our neighbors as much as our neighbors in different parts of the country because we tend to keep to ourselves. I regularly walk by to get my mail. We live on one side. I have to walk down this alley. I might get a mmm out of somebody as I walk down.

And yet greeting people. Apparently there was a study done. What's his name? Andy Corbley mentions that there was a study done and he writes, saying hello to more than one person correlated with greater self-perception of well-being.

And there was a study done over five dimensions. Career, communal, physical, financial and social well-being. And the increase which greeting a neighbor had led to a two point increase on a scale of 1 to 100 up until the sixth neighbor. Now, men were more likely to greet their neighbors than women, as were people with children under the age of 18 in this household and people with household incomes of a certain point. Most of the greeters were usually between the ages of 40 and 65, and 27% of the participants graded five neighbors or more in a day and says the report continues, Notably, greeting neighbors is also linked to career well-being, liking what you do each day, physical well-being, have the energy to get things done, and financial well-being, meaning being able to handle Your money. Well, but just this idea of reading your neighbors.

How many of you have that sour neighbor that even if you say hello, it's kind of like the old cartoon, is it really a good day? And some they'll greet you. They're so happy to see you. Right. Sometimes it's a mixed bag when you greet your neighbors, especially if you live in a gated area.

Now, a question sometimes that I have to ask myself. Have you ever been frustrated by somebody? I think we can probably all agree we've probably been frustrated at some point. You sometimes question people's decision making because maybe eventually it will affect you. All right, okay.

Now my main point today, okay? Unless we see people through Jesus' loving eyes. Loving eyes, it's going to be impossible to fully embrace those around us. Okay? Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate expression of love.

Everything that Jesus did was rooted in love. Now, I'll be honest with you. Sometimes I have trouble expressing this, being loving, being kind, because I think at some point along the way, you know, when you've been hurt enough, it's hard to sometimes take a chance or be vulnerable. Amen.

There's more things that we could say about this. We struggle sometimes to love and see people through Jesus' eyes because we have our differences. That person dresses differently than I do. They comb their hair the wrong way.

You know, they look like they have more money than me. You name it, okay? And oftentimes differences lead to what prejudice are we? Prejudice? Don't

lie. We are all prejudiced at some point, okay? Doesn't matter. We all look at people in a certain way. And yet sometimes I think it's fair to say. I think sometimes it's easy to be selfish and sometimes it's hard to love others because there's a fear of failure.

Like, I don't want to mess this up. Especially somebody who maybe has come to the faith and they say, okay, go love others. And yet they're scared because they don't want to mess up. We've talked about this plenty of times. Living your faith requires what Sometimes it might mean taking a risk, and sometimes you might mess up.

And sometimes it might be the best experience ever, being vulnerable. I mentioned this a little earlier. You're hesitant to put your heart out because you might have it turned against you or even betrayal. I think this is also something. The next thing I'm going to say is, I already have enough on my plate. I don't have enough energy or time or mental capacity emotionally to just help others right now. How many of you sometimes feel that right when you've just been burnt out? I don't have energy to love others or maybe just I hate other people or I'm allergic to people now. It's humbling. It's also humbling to deal with difficult people. Amen. Those are the ones who probably test us the most. Supposed to see this person through Jesus lens. I don't want to do that now.

What does Jesus say about loving others? I want to go to the book of John. Okay, let's go to John 13 and I said verse 34 here. But actually I want to go to verse 31, John, chapter 13, verse 31. And this is a very pivotal time. Right before this Jesus has washed the disciples feet. He took on the form of a servant, wrapped the towel around, took his cloak off and he washed his disciples feet. Now of course he said, you ain't going to wash my feet, Peter. They're sitting down, they've had a meal. And now Jesus is going to share the last, what some scholars say called the last discourse.

From chapters 13 through 16. He's going to prepare them because as he's about to say, he's going to leave them. Alright, so let's start at verse 31. It says when he was gone, Jesus said now the Son of man is glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself and will glorify him at once.

He's alluding to his death. Okay, and what does death often do? It takes you from your loved ones. Let's look at it in this context. Verse 33.

He says, My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. What is he alluding to? He is going to be separated from them for a time. Okay, you will look for me. And just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now, where am I going? You cannot come. And here Jesus now gives them a new command, A new command. I give you love. What? One another. Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another. And the premise here is that Jesus is saying, hey, there's going to be a time of separation between you and I. And Jesus says it's a new commandment. It's really. And yes, it's a new commandment. I think the difference now is people will know you, they will know who I am, especially by your love. Because Jesus, I mean God has been saying from the very beginning, God's essence has been love. It's why he created Adam and Eve.

It's why we have all these stories of love. The Ten Commandments, they're really rooted in love. If you look at it right. Jesus also says, love your neighbor as yourself. And you also have the Shema in Deuteronomy. Love God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength. And so this is just another expression, though. But he's adding a little bit to it in a sense of you're not just to love, but love as I have loved. And so if you look through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, there's many times where Jesus showed by example how you could love one another. So as I loved you means the model of how we should love others.

Okay, so how did Jesus love others? As I have loved you is the impetus to love others. It's the action. Jesus showed us grace, love, commitment. So also we should have love and grace for others.

What did Jesus do? Jesus humbly served people. You have to wonder, how tired did Jesus get? Did Jesus often regularly go away? Majority of the gospels all indicate he either went up in a mountain. He told the disciples, let's get in the boat and get away from everybody. Even right before he died in the Garden of Gethsemane, he went away to pray by himself. Even though James, James and John and Peter were there, he still had to spend some time directly speaking to God. And yet he humbly served people all day long.

Even after Sabbath. He'd been preaching, he'd been spending time. What did they do at night? Everybody brought those who were sick or infirmed, needed healing, were demon possessed, and Jesus healed them.

Sometimes it takes a lot for us, too, to push our pride back. Amen. And to humbly help others. There are times where you look at situations like, ooh, I don't want to. I don't want to. I don't want to help that person. Maybe it's inconvenient, or maybe it requires hard work. Might require pulling your sleeves up.

Jesus also shared tremendous kindness. How did he show kindness? He showed it by listening to people. I'm sure he heard a lot of rants, he heard a lot of problems. Many of us probably would say, okay, I've met my cup today. And Jesus went beyond that. Jesus was kind. How many people did he heal? We don't know. But we know he healed a lot of people. He healed those who were blind, who were dead, who had leprosy. I could keep going on and on. And on. He also restored and fought for those who were oppressed and hindered.

If you had leprosy or if you were blind, were you always welcome in the community? Or perhaps you were thought of eewww. Stay away from me because I don't want to catch what you have, or you're a burden or. Or look at that person. Tax collector, prostitute. Let's not associate.

And what does Jesus do instead? He restores or he makes them whole. Think about the story in Luke where a woman comes in and tries to anoint Jesus feet. And what are the people saying? If Jesus knew who this woman was, he wouldn't let her touch her, touch him. And yet what does he do? He turns around and he gives him his two cents and says, this woman has done a wonderful, beautiful thing. When he'd been invited, he said, you haven't even allowed me to wash my feet or anything. What kind of host are you? And now you're judging this person.

Jesus defended others and restored them. He also taught. He also mentored. He taught through parables, through stories. And along the way, he also especially dedicated and focused time to preparing the disciples for life after him physically being here on earth. And especially, he especially took time to mentor Peter, James and John.

And ultimately, when we think about it, he also. The greatest thing is he sacrificed himself for others. All of these things, you could say he sacrificed his time, his energy and everything for us. And at the very end, literally for us. And when you look at this list, you sometimes think, oh, that's a big list. I can't do all those things. Like, I'm not a doctor. I'm not this or that. No, you're not a doctor. But in some ways, there's so many ways. There's so many ways that we could serve humbly. There's so many ways that we could be kind. Even though we may not be a doctor, there are some ways that we can help. Even doing these things is in some ways helping people to heal, to restore, fight for people's dignity, respect.

I've shared this example. How many of you been at the office and break time and you're on the water cooler and maybe you'll talk about the last football game or the Dodgers or whatever. Or sometimes maybe a lot of people's favorite pastime is, have you heard about Fred? You hear about what Julie did you talk about Sam? Talk about Kelly? And you have to wonder, it's so easy. What's the story? Or maybe we could say, hey, have you talked to that person? About that, do you want to continue? See, growing up, I was reminded of this. This phrase, growing up, you were always taught to mind your own business. I think if we minded our own business, we'd probably save ourselves a lot of grief. Amen. Let's mind our own business. But it's so easy when it's a juicy story. Amen.

Have respect for one another. If there's issues in kindness, one of the most restoring things you can do, go to that person if there's an issue and say, hey, let's talk about this. That way, rumors don't fly around.

Seeing people through Jesus eyes, though, can be challenging. If we were to be humble, if we were to be kind, if we helped people who were sick, if we fought on behalf of others and helped to restore them, if we taught and mentored others and at times have to sacrifice a little bit for ourselves, would our lives be changed? Would it affect our relationships with others? You know, it's hard sometimes. It's hard to be loving and kind. It's hard to be forgiving at times, especially when they have hurt you. But just as we even prayed about last week in the Lord's Prayer, forgive us our debts as we forgive others in the simple prayer that Jesus teaches us, I still have to remind myself sometimes

when somebody makes me irritated or makes me angry, I have to remember Jesus loved and died for them, too.

Sometimes even too, you know, our closest ones, those closest to us, when they hurt us, it's hard because when you would do anything for them. But yet, if you learn to love, what amazing possibilities could be extended. Those of you who've been married know that sometimes it's hard being married.

Sometimes it can be challenging if you don't communicate, if you don't talk along the way. But when you grow together and you become one, it's amazing, right? I've only been married 17 years, yet today is also. I normally don't do this. I normally don't do this. But I think today there's a very special day for a very, very special couple. Is Rick and Kelly here? Where's. Okay, would you mind. For those of you who don't know, would you mind just waving your hands? Is it today? Today is Rick and Kelly's 50th anniversary. Give him a hand. All right. And I say that that's love and commitment. Congratulations. We wanted to make sure that you were acknowledged, and what a beautiful testament. Thank you for your example, your commitments and love to one another. So congratulations. Happy anniversary.

There's a lot that we can do, something as simple as a phone call. This last week, I had two awesome conversations. Sunday night. I was texting with a friend that we'd been able to exchange numbers, and we hadn't talked, really, really talked in 23 years. After high school, he decided to join the military and was gone. And we caught up on Facebook years ago, maybe 15 years ago, we would message each other here and there, but lo and behold, we just. We lost contact. And maybe a couple months ago, we found each other and we decided, okay, we're going to call each other. And I had been wanting to talk to this guy because we were really great friends in high school. And then just life happened. And Sunday he texted me, hey, what are you doing this week? I said, nothing. I'm a pastor. I don't do anything right. I only work one hour a week. He says, what are you doing tomorrow? For three and a half hours? We tried to catch up in 23 years, and we just touched the surface. What was beautiful about this is we were able to just catch up, connect, and as if it was nothing had changed. And we shared things. And, you know, when you find somebody that you know, you can trust and you can tell what's on your heart to that person with no judgment, even if they think that maybe you're being

ridiculous to have that person. The kindness that he expressed and listened to a lot of the things, 23 years of life and likewise being there for him. We both said, this is the best therapeutic session we've had. And no, it was just a beautiful conversation.

And what was so striking is said, you know, I haven't done this very often, but now I tell my friends, I love you. Two men to say that, okay, it's hard sometimes because we want to be brash when we're strong. No, we both said, I love you and I'm glad you are still around. Last night I had another conversation. A guy I used to ride bikes with, and he called me closer to later in the night. And usually when somebody calls you at that time, it's usually something that's really good or tends to be, usually what? Bad news. And I hadn't talked to this guy in person in a couple of years. And number one, he called me and asked, hey, are you guys okay? Because we're not necessarily close, but to the fires. But he wanted to make sure that I was okay. Said, yeah, that's awesome. No, thank you for reaching out. And he says, hey, dude, I just want to let you know as well I got baptized and I can't tell you, like, I've been praying for this dude and I just. It's a guy that I just rode bikes with. And we were able to share what had happened in the last couple of years. He's able to say, hey, you know, I got baptized. My life has been changed. And we both told each other this because we'd been thinking about each other. Man, I've been meaning to call you and that. Been meaning to call you. Could either last a couple of hours or it could last years. What does this mean to love others through Jesus eyes? Sometimes it means if you're being impressed, call that person, text that person, write that person an email, reach out and say, hey, I'm just thinking of you. I love you, would love to catch up.

What does it mean to be kind, to be loving, to be caring, to help heal those. Sometimes it might mean just, hey, smile at somebody. Is it hard to smile sometimes if you're in a bad mood, but smile, have manners, please say thank you and please, something as simple as a thank you or a smile can make somebody's day. Sometimes it just means listening. Or even when you're having an argument. Do you always have to be right? Sometimes you want to be right, right? Or would you rather keep the relationship and just say, hey, I want to listen to you? Doesn't mean you have to agree. But sometimes just listening can make a difference, especially when they can sometimes be a

difficult in person. You know, this past week we have. I don't know what to make of this last week, but thousands of people have lost homes. Some have gone their whole lives are 80 or 90 years old and having to start all over. I don't have the words, I don't have the thoughts to convey, but what I feel is a tremendous amount of sadness, heartache for those you know, I have several friends. I have a friend who literally, the fire was just a street down from him, a block, and his home was spared. I have church members from Pasadena. When I used to pastor there, one said, our home is okay, but the others around us, the fire affected them. And then of course, you look at Pacific Palisades, where was it? 75% of it is basically burnt. A good portion of Altadena is burnt. Those are just two fires. There's other fires that happened this week. Tremendous loss. And I think it's sometimes easy to get angry. Yeah, there's anger. I think that's normal. But should we just focus on the anger? An investigation will come by, things will be figured out, I think.

Where should our hearts and our minds be? Number one, at the very least, you talk in practicality. Loving others through Jesus eyes. Folks, let's just pray for them. I don't care who they are. They're all God's children. They're our fellow brothers and sisters. Whether they believe or not, let's pray for them. You know, we also have opportunities to give. Bill, are you gonna have a code up later for Adventist giving or where's Bill? Well, if it's not, we're gonna have an opportunity. If you want to financially give, please let us know and we'll provide a code for you. I think if you're in the email thread, we should have sent that out to you.

If not, we will get that out to you. There needs to be. Things are gonna have to be replaced. Things are gonna have to restart for many of these families. People are just trying to get by.

What's the next meal? I need medicine. I was just informed. I just got a text message. If you want to donate time, literally, they're looking for volunteers.

If you want to donate stuff such as blankets or something as simple as hygiene products, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, things that we assume and take for granted every day, people don't even have that. People are looking for places to charge their phones, right? People are trying to get around. People are trapped. If you want to donate, there's places perhaps.

I know White Memorial and Hollywood Church have opened their doors. These are just a handful that I can think of off the top of my head. But at the very least, folks, while they're not in Downey, they're part of California, loving our neighbor. At the very least, let's pray for them. And in some ways, if you want to financially help or if you want to give resources, please come see me and I can help you, direct you, or if you actually even want to donate time, I can point you towards places where you can donate.

It doesn't take much to make a difference in your home, in your neighborhood, in your city, or in our case, our state, our area. What would it mean if we loved others? What would it mean for our lives? Would your life change if you were to model all of these attributes Jesus passed on to us? You look through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. He exemplified love. He modeled love in so many ways. And it's important as you read these gospels, learn from these and practice, incorporate these lessons of love into your life. So this week, I want you to think of and write down one way you can practice and exercise each of these examples to love others. How can you be humble? How can you be kind? How can you help others who are perhaps sick? How can you mentor and teach? Love sometimes also requires sacrifice. So think about write these things down.

Continue to pray for your 12 people that we talked about, your family, your friends, your church people and your unchurched people. And live out these attributes, these examples of love Jesus exemplified in the Bible, in particular the Gospel. May God bless you. See others as Jesus to us

Father in heaven Lord, today we thank you for your grace and your love, for your great sacrifice and also the examples of love that you left us with in Scripture today. Lord, we want to take a moment just to pray for those who have been impacted by the fires. We especially pray for our first responders. Lord, we have family members and friends who are fighting these fires. Protect them, guide them. We pray as a community. Lord, may we example, may we exemplify your love for our city, our homes, our neighborhoods, wherever we are. God, may we know your grace and share that grace. May we know love and be an example. May we know your forgiveness and forgive others. May we

be humble, may we be kind. May we lift your name up and may we work and be united as one and all God's people said Amen.

Grace and peace. Everyone.