

The Priority of Love in Gatherings of Believers

by Edgar Reich

The sermon emphasizes the importance of loving our neighbors and the least of these in our community, as commanded by Jesus in Matthew 25.

Duration: 4:52

Scripture: Matthew 22:37

Topics: "Loving God", "Christian Service"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the priority of love as commanded by Jesus in Matthew, focusing on loving God with all our being and loving our neighbors as ourselves. It shares stories of individuals overcoming challenges to show love to difficult neighbors and the importance of loving the least brethren. The message highlights the transformative power of genuine love and compassion, urging listeners not to harden their hearts but to embrace a spirit of love and service towards others.

Transcript

Good afternoon and thank you for joining me. I would like to discuss briefly the priority of love and in the book of Matthew, Jesus told us about the two greatest commandments and he said, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment and the second is like it, love your neighbor as yourself.

It is not easy to love neighbors. I remember the story of a pastor who had a little house in Jamaica and his neighbor did not like him because of his faith in Christ. So one day he saw his neighbor spraying things on his flowers and his flowers wilted the next day and he was very, very angry because he loved his flowers.

But then he was reminded of this commandment to love his neighbor as himself and one day he saw one of the children walk towards his house and he talked to the child of the neighbor and said, look, your father and I are neighbors, we really ought to be friends. And that child said, well, I cannot help you, go and talk to him yourself. So he felt very downtrodden that he might have to do that and humble himself after all the neighbor had harmed him.

And so he went over and he talked to his neighbor and he said to him, look, we are neighbors, we ought to get along, we ought to love one another, we ought to help one another. And they became friends and that neighbor became a Christian because he saw Christian action on part of this Christian. And then in our country, we often see destitute people and our hearts are already hardened.

And I wanted to share the principle of loving also the least brethren with you for a moment. And in scripture in Matthew chapter 25, the Lord said, then the righteous will answer him, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you as stranger and invite you in or needing clothes and close you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you? The king will reply, truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. Sisters and brothers, don't let your hearts be hardened.

There was a pastor Jeremiah Stipek, he was appointed to a 10,000 member church. He was the new pastor, but the congregation did not know him. He dressed up as a homeless person.

He let his beard grow. He let his hair grow. He looked homeless.

And then he went to the morning service when he was to be appointed the new pastor. He went there in his torn clothes, dirty, with long hair. And the people there, many of them despised him.

Only three said hello during a period of 30 minutes with thousands of people there. He asked for change for food and not one of the persons would give him change for food. He then sat in the front row and the ushers rushed and came to get him to put him on the back row.

He greeted people, but they just stared. The new pastor was introduced by the elders on the podium and all of the congregation rose and started clapping to see their new pastor. And up in the aisle came a homeless person, torn, torn clothing, dirty, long hair.

And people looked at them. The applause died down. There was no more applause.

It became quiet. You could hear a pin drop. And this pastor went to the microphone and he said, you're not yet disciples.

You're not yet a church of Jesus Christ. You simply are a gathering of people. When will you decide to become disciples? Beloved, ask God to replace your stony heart for the downtrodden, for the needy in this country.

The Lord bless you and I love you.

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