

# Love Your Unborn Neighbor

by John Piper

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of compassion and mercy in showing love to our neighbors, particularly in the context of abortion.*

**Duration:** 39:20

**Scripture:** Proverbs 24:11-12, Ezekiel 36:26, Luke 10:30-37, Luke 22:20, Titus 2:14

**Topics:** "Pro Life", "Compassionate Love"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of compassion and a heart transformation, focusing on the parable of the Good Samaritan. It challenges listeners to move beyond self-justification and instead cultivate a heart of mercy and sacrificial love towards all, including the unborn. The message calls for prayer for the salvation of those involved in abortion clinics and highlights the power of the gospel to bring about change and redemption.

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## Transcript

Let's pray together. Father, what's really clear here is that the Samaritan was a very different kind of person. The priest, the Levi, they saw the dying man and walked by, and the Samaritan felt compassion.

He was so different. So my conviction when I read this is that I need to change. I don't need to figure out who my neighbor is.

That's not the issue. I need to change. So I ask you to help me, and you help everybody listening to this message to change.

You died, Jesus, to purchase this change. This is the change of the new covenant, a new heart I will give to you, a new spirit I will put within you, and I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will act from the inside out. Now you won't have to be constrained by classifications of wounded people.

So God, for Christ's sake, for the glory of Christ, because the blood of Christ is worthy, give those new hearts now a pray in his name. Amen. Amen.

God has commanded us in his word, Exodus 20, verse 13, thou shalt not murder. And he told us why in Genesis 9, verse 6, whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. In other words, when you murder a human, you attack God, because he made humans in his own image.

This is the fundamental mistake that Peter Singer, the professor at Princeton, makes when he says, the life of an adult pig deserves more protection than that of a newborn human baby, and the parents should be free to kill their young children already born if they deem them unacceptably disabled. The reason he's wrong about that is because the human baby is created in the image of God, and the pig is not. And it shows how far we will go when God is lost.

The psalmist describes how personally, how intimately God is involved in this business of creating us in his image. You know this text. For you formed my inward parts, you knitted, you just can't pass over that word too quickly.

Picture God knitting. My mother taught me to knit when I was a boy. I didn't do it long.

You knitted me together in my mother's womb, I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works, oh my soul knows it very well, that's Psalm 139, 13, 14. And then lest we think that somehow this dignity of being created in the image of God belongs only to born children and not to unborn children, God lets us read the words of the angel in Luke 1.15 to Zechariah concerning John the Baptist.

He said, he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and then a few verses later, Elizabeth carrying this baby in her womb approaches Mary and says, behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Now when we have heard all these things in America, which is so blood stained with millions of unborn babies losing their lives, we really need to hear this word from Proverbs 24, verses 11 and 12. Rescue those who are being taken away to death, hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter.

If you say, behold, we did not know this, does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it? And will he not repay man according to his work? What work? The work of mercy, work of justice, work of caring for the oppressed, work of defending the unborn, the good work of loving the unborn neighbor. Why did Jesus come? To rescue you from your guilt and sin. Here's why, Titus 2.14. He gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people of his own possession who are zealous for good works, among which is the glorious work of loving and defending our unborn neighbor.

Christ died that you would be zealous for good works. What good works are you zealous for? The good modern word for zealous is passionate, which is the one we use in our mission statement. Which good works today are you passionate about? Or do you just kind of coast through life, keeping your nose clean, of course, morally, but are you passionate for some good works? Well, I'm commending to you some to be passionate about, namely, rescue those who are being taken away to death, hold them back from stumbling to the slaughter.

January 22nd is the 33rd anniversary of the decision of the Supreme Court called Roe versus Wade in which abortion was made legal all the way to birth if the health of the mother is at stake and the health of the mother has been defined, working definition is, any discomfort that comes from not wanting to have this baby. And so basically for 33 years we have had abortion on demand in this country and 46 million unborn babies have been killed. Women's Issues website estimates that worldwide, I think this is a very modest estimate, has that number dying every year, 46 million a year.

The parable of the Good Samaritan beckons us from the global, however, to the local, doesn't it? So let's come closer to home. Since 1973, in our state of Minnesota, 490,000 unborn children have had their lives ended by abortion. In 2004, the last one I have any data on, there were 13,788 abortions in this state.

And as tragic and horrifying as that number, it is encouraging in that it's the lowest number since 1975. And the parable I think says, no, no, no, no, come on closer, come on closer, you're still at this big macro general level. The parable beckons us to come closer down to the Twin Cities.

In the Twin Cities, really this really is Minnesota, virtually all abortions, not all, but most, the vast majority, are done in five clinics right here in the Twin Cities. I want to tell you their names, and I want to read to you things from their promotional literature. I want you to get a window onto this industry within our neighborhood, one four blocks away, one downtown, one down the corner of Chicago and 24th, one in Robbinsdale, one over in St. Paul.

Number one, Midwest Health Center for Women. It's located at 33 South 5th Street, right down there, a few blocks away, on the 4th floor, and on their website they openly state that they provide 3,000 abortions a year. They advocate sexual freedom that makes so many of these abortions feel so necessary.

Here's the quote, Midwest Health Center for Women provides quality health care and advocates and promotes reproductive freedom and healthy sexuality. Annually, Midwest provides abortions services for 3,000 patients. We also seek to expand public awareness and gather support for reproductive rights and health care.

As an abortion provider, we are prepared for a long political battle over reproductive rights. Continued attacks from anti-choice minority threaten access to this legal and safe procedure through legislative action and regulatory burdens. For example, the so-called Women's Right to Know, which became Minnesota law in 2003, added \$80,000 annually to the clinic's operating budget, close quote.

Number two, Meadowbrook Women's Clinic. It's in the building just down the street, four blocks from our church, 825 South 8th Street. Here are a couple of glimpses into their work in the FAQ section.

Question, how long will the abortion take? These are women going there to read about what they're facing. How long will the abortion take? Answer, if you are less than 14 weeks, the abortion will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes. If you are 14 to 21.6 weeks, the length of time will be somewhat longer, 20 to 30 minutes.

Now take a deep breath. 21 and a half weeks. Do you have any idea what this baby looks like at 21 and a half weeks? If you don't, you should be ashamed of yourself.

Living in the 21st century, knowing that these babies are being killed regularly, four blocks from here, and you don't even know whether it's a peanut or a potato or blob or... This baby's about 10 or 11 inches long, weighs about a pound, does everything almost, is about two to three weeks away from being able to live outside the womb. Steve Calvin, friend and former member, works down at the neonatal high-risk unit at Abbott, wrote an article in the Minneapolis Tribune in August when the big flap was over whether these babies feel pain, because some big shot had said they don't. And Steve works with these babies, operates on them, delivers them in the womb.

He wrote, recently I performed an amniocentesis on a 21-week gestation because of a possible infection. On ultrasound, the fetus pulled away from the needle when it grazed her arm. It is clear to me that this

fetus felt discomfort and that she would feel horrible pain if she were dismembered in the exercise of an unjust constitutional right.

The dismembering of a human being routinely in 30 minutes on an outpatient basis or on any basis is barbaric. Four blocks from our church, all year long, like churches within the smelling distance of Auschwitz and Dachau and Bergen-Bels and Buchenwald. What's that smell? It just can't be what we think it is.

Number three, Robbinsdale Clinic, 3819 West Broadway, Robbinsdale. They strike a defensive political posture on their website, don't give much information. Quote, it is the responsibility of all American women and their families to work to keep abortion safe and legal by voting for pro-choice officials and working with various organizations to ensure this basic fundamental right of reproductive freedom.

Please remember, while over 70% of Americans believe in the right to choose, a small but vocal minority of narrow-minded anti-abortion forces could make a major impact on the threat to women's rights. Those are not quite accurate numbers, depending on how you ask the question. Number four, Mildred Hanson, MD.

This is just down Chicago, off to the right as you get to Abbott, just take a right on 24th and it's on the fourth floor of that building down there. The website calls her late abortion specialist, and then boasts in this distinction with these words, first and second trimester abortions by a woman gynecologist, the first physician in Minnesota to perform the second trimester D and E procedure, dilation and extraction. And then the business is very clear and simple, five to six weeks, \$475.

Seven to 10.5 weeks, \$420. 11 to 12 weeks, \$515. 13 to 14 weeks, \$615.

15th week, \$820. 16th week, \$920. 17 to 18 weeks, \$1,070.

18 to 19.4 weeks, \$1,320. 19 to 20 weeks, \$1,520. Number five, Planned Parenthood, Highland Park.

Go down Hiawatha, take a left on 42nd and get there in about two minutes. 1965 Ford Parkway in St. Paul. Out of the 13,000 plus abortions that are done in Minnesota yearly, about 23% are done by Planned Parenthood.

Their website describes how caring this is. Quote, with many years of experience, our physicians and staff provide caring, confidential, affordable abortion services. The parable of the Good Samaritan will not leave it there.

It beckons us closer to home, doesn't it? The abortions you've experienced, this is the part of the sermon I told you I would get to. The abortions you've experienced. Your girlfriend, your wife, your daughter, your granddaughter, yourself.

Jesus hates abortion. And Jesus loves you. And when you feel both of those, the way Jesus wants you to feel both of them, you will weep with broken hearted joy.

It's the only kind of joy worth having for sinners like us. It's the only kind. If you minimize it, you may not weep.

If you maximize it, you won't weep with joy. But if you get it right, that Jesus hates abortion and Jesus loves and dies for you, then you will weep with broken hearted joy. Husband, wife, grandmother,

grandfather, boyfriend, girlfriend.

I know women at Bethlehem who have walked through it, been broken by it, and emerged strong in the Lord and in the cause of life. Be patient with your healing. The time for your courageous engagement in the cause of life will come.

Let it come in its time. Oh, how many things I would like to talk about from this parable. It is a rich parable.

I think I could conceive of ten sermons easily from this parable. I have one basic observation to make. And if you're disappointed it isn't the one you were hoping I would make, then it's all yours to preach from when you get home tonight.

When you get home today. The point is this. The parable begins, verse 29, with the question, Who is my neighbor? Asked in a self-justifying way.

And the parable ends in verse 36 with a different question. Which of these three do you think prove to be a neighbor? So Jesus tells a story to switch the question. When the question is asked, okay, which is my neighbor? Jesus tells a story that changes the question.

It never comes back to that question. He switches from what kind of person is my neighbor to what kind of person am I. He switches the question from what status of people are worthy of my love to the question, how can I become the kind of person whose compassion disregards status? That's the miracle of this parable. That's the wonder of this parable.

It will not even address the question that the man asked. Now let's make sure we see this. The lawyer comes in verse 25.

Get your eyes on the parable now if you have a Bible. The lawyer asks in verse 25 about eternal life. He's not sincere.

It says so. He's asking this to test Jesus. He does not want to know how to inherit eternal life.

He wants to trap Jesus. Now Jesus was faced with this kind of thing all the time and he doesn't like it. So he's testing Jesus.

He's a hypocrite. He's duplicitous. He's got a double angle.

He's got a forked tongue. Jesus turns it back to him in verse 26 to reveal his duplicity. That's what Jesus is doing.

What does the law say? You're asking me? He turns the question back because if he gets this right, you know he's asking for another reason besides wanting to know. And he does get it right. Love God with all your heart.

Love your neighbor as yourself. So, you already knew the answer, didn't you? And he's trapped. He knows he's trapped.

And everybody is watching him. Jesus has cornered him. And so what does he do? That's what we often do instead of repenting and admitting and weeping and saying, I'm sorry.

You saw right through me. Forgive me. No, no, no, no.

He crafts a question which the text says explicitly is designed to justify himself. Make himself look okay. And how does it work? You say, Jesus, you've got the answer.

Just go do it. And I'm telling you, Jesus, that answer you think I've got is complicated. It's complicated.

It says love your neighbor. That's complicated. Because I'm not sure which people are in that category.

Now, that question Jesus hates. So, if you wonder what's he going to do with it, he tells a story. And he never, ever comes back to that question again.

Which kind of people qualify for my love and which kind don't is not a question Jesus will answer. Every race qualify? Every age qualify? The unborn qualify? He falls, this guy going down from Jerusalem to Jericho in this story falls among robbers. Verse 30.

They stripped him and beat him and departed leaving him half naked. So, Jesus sets up a situation where a man has been terribly abused and is dying. And the first person who goes by is a priest.

And he goes by on the other side. And the second person who goes by is a Levite, another kind of religious person. And he goes by on the other side.

And then comes the Samaritan. Not even a Jew. And the key phrase is in verse 33.

Because it shows up again later. And it's the phrase, he had compassion. You see that phrase? If I had a pencil, I'd underline that phrase.

Because that's what I want to be. I think this parable is designed to make John Piper a more compassionate person. I take it very personally.

I was on my face often this weekend saying, This is for me, Lord. It's not first for these people. It's not for people who have committed abortion.

It's not for abortionists first. It's for me. I want to be more like this.

I want my default emotion to be compassion. I hope you do too. So you see what's happening.

He's totally shifted the question around. It's not the question, what kind of man there is dying? What kind? What qualification? What category is he in? Now, Jesus has shifted over on. We've got three kinds of people.

Priest type, Levite type, and Samaritan type. The issue is that. So, Jesus asks, Not was the wounded man a neighbor? But, verse 36, Which of these three? Are you with me? Which of these three, Do you think, Prove to be, Be, Be, A neighbor to the man who fell among thorns, I mean robbers? Verse 37, He answers again.

The one who showed him mercy, This guy's pretty good. That's two in a row. And Jesus said to him, He's going to do likewise.

You know enough. Your problem's not knowledge. Your problem's not knowledge.

My problem's not knowledge. I know plenty. My problem's right here.

Right here. Right here. Splunk.

Now, the Greek word, guts, is compassion. His guts rumbled when he saw that guy. He couldn't walk by.

He was just deep inside. Something was going on here. So, Jesus won't answer the question, Who is my neighbor? Instead, He turns it into, Go become a new kind of person, Piper.

Ezekiel 36, is a promise of the new covenant, which according to Luke 22.20, Jesus bought with His own blood. And Ezekiel 36.26 says, A new heart I will give you, And a new spirit I will put within you. And that's what I need.

That's what you need. I don't need to know who my neighbor is. I need a heart that can't walk by on the other side.

Whoever's over there. If they're even close to being human. If there's any possibility we could be killing humans.

And Jesus said, This cup at the Last Supper, which is poured out for you, is the new covenant in my blood. Jesus died to purchase for that lawyer, A new heart. And for you and me.

You wonder, where do you get the new heart? Where do you get to be like that? How do you get to be like that? You can't go out of here tonight and say, I'm going to screw that up. I'm going to make that happen. I'm going to be compassionate.

You become more self-righteous than ever. You just get out on your face and say, It's not the way I am. It's the way I want to be.

Christ, You died just to wipe out all my lack of compassion. All my laziness. I just flick the television channel.

I get another coke. I'm not passionate about anything. You get on your face and you say, God, if you died to make me zealous for good works, If you died to give me a new heart, So that out of my heart would flow compassion, Whatever the form is out there, Would you please come and just begin to work a new work in my life? When all the arguments are said and done About the status of the pre-born human life, When the unborn qualify or don't qualify, When all the arguments are done With whether mom and dad and grandma and granddaddy And unborn baby qualify for our compassion, The decisive question remains unaddressed.

What kind of person am I? Does compassion rise in my heart for both mommy and daddy And grandmama and granddaddy and this unborn baby? All of them. All of them. Or do I just get another coke and change the channel? Look at verses 34 and 35.

Isn't it incredible? I think Jesus really enjoyed these sentences. I think He, you know, parables, He's just making these up. He can say anything He wants in these stories, right? He's just making them up.

And look at the particulars He puts on this man's love, This man's compassion. Really dirty hands. This guy's got blood all over his shirt.

Inconvenience. 300 bucks out of his pocket. Let's read this.

He went to him and bound up his wounds. So He went. He went.

He moved. Unlike the priest in the New Testament. He moved.

He bound up his wounds. That's a mess. Probably gross.

Pouring oil and wine. Costly. Then He set him on His own animal.

So instead of riding, He walks. And this guy, he doesn't even know Him. He's riding.

He brought Him to an inn. This story could have stopped anywhere in this Bible. This guy would be a hero.

He took Him to an inn and took care of Him. So He stayed a while. And the next day, He took out two denarii.

A footnote. A denarii is a day's wage. I did a little computation on like \$40,000 a year.

About \$150 a day. So \$300. \$300 on the table at the motel.

Take care of Him. I'll try to get back. Gave the innkeeper saying, take care of Him.

And whatever more you spend, I'll repay you when I come back. I mean, that's amazing! I mean, Jesus went over the top on that, right? Does anybody live like that? Oh, that we would be, be, be a neighbor. And stop arguing whether or not this or that person is one, including the unborn.

So my prayer, for me mainly, and for us as a church, and for the whole Christian movement, is that we would be like this. A heart of compassion. Hands-on.

Messy. Sacrificial. Time-consuming.

Stressful. I mean, if He dies, we're going to get sued. Now back to the clinics.

And I close. Midwest Health Center for Women. Meadowbrook Women's Clinic.

Robbinsdale Clinic. Mildred Hanson. Planned Parenthood.

Doing roughly 13,000 abortions. A year within stone's throw of this church. Both campuses.

Have real owners, real administrators, real employees. And what they need most is to be saved by the gospel of Jesus Christ. They need Christ.

So I want to ask you this. I want to do more with this. I don't know how or what yet, but I'm going to do more with this, with you and perhaps beyond you.

What might God be pleased to do if 4,000 of you, in these six services this weekend, what might God be pleased to do if 4,000 of you, concerned Christians, committed yourselves with me to pray daily that Christ would manifest His saving grace in those places? What divine encounters of compassionate involvement might happen with you and others? I say as clearly as I can, Bethlehem, let there be no violence. From our side. There's enough violence inside those buildings.

Let there be no violence from our side. The gospel of peace is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes. The Jew first, also to the Greek, also to abortion clinic owners, administrators,

nurses, doctors, assistants, receptionists.

If the owners, I ask you, if the owners and administrators and employees of these five clinics met the living Christ in answer to your prayer, and perhaps your witness, and were saved, and their sins were forgiven, and they became glorious trophies of grace, would we not love to have them with us in heaven? Would we not? And they became glorious trophies of grace. Would abortion be offered in Minnesota any longer? Or would they have to go to Denver? It's interesting, when you type in abortion in Minneapolis into Google, and you get a name, abortions in Minneapolis, and you hit it, it gives you all of these except Planned Parenthood and one in Bismarck and one in Denver for abortions in Minneapolis. So abortions wouldn't stop, but they might not be done here anymore if they all got saved.

Our job as a church is not mainly political. I'm going to march tomorrow. That's a piece of who I am.

I'm a citizen on planet Earth in a country that's responsible in a democratic process to make laws. But that's not my main job. My main job is to preach the gospel and equip you to preach the gospel, and it's the gospel that would bring this down.

And so I just wonder, I just wonder, if we could commit to praying daily that that would happen. That they'd get saved. That the owners, administrators, and employees of those five clinics would get saved by faith in Jesus Christ and then stop doing what they're doing and begin to become part of a movement.

There is more that you can do than pray, but this much I ask you to do, would you pray? And perhaps I'll prepare for us a little card that we can put in our Bibles. I'll put all the names on it and help us remember in a week or so, try to provide you with that. But pray regularly that the owners, the administrators, and the employees of Midwest Health Center for Women, Meadowbrook Women's Clinic, Robbinsdale Clinic, Mildred Hanson, and Planned Parenthood would be saved.

And then, I don't know what more, but I believe that while you're praying, this happens to me a lot, while I'm praying about something like that, the rumblings start happening in my heart, there is something more you could do, something by way of education, something by way of mobilizing children, something by way of helping teenagers. I know Corrine and Brian felt there's something more we can do, and you're going to look at it in just a minute out there in the main hall. There's more we can do.

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