

Team Name: **Cornerstone**

Church: **Chinese Gospel Church**

More information and previous devotionals: www.cgygfellowship.com/Devos.shtml

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Softball Devo #4: Love your Neighbour

The Story (Read Luke 10:25-37): ³⁰In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³²So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

In the dialogue between the expert in the law and Christ, the expert rightly observes that the greatest commandments are to love God with all you are and then to love your neighbour as yourself (Luke 10:27). Quite pleased that Jesus said that he was correct, he went on to further justify himself, studiously asking, "Who then is my neighbour?" At this, Jesus responded with the story of the Good Samaritan (read the above passage). You can just picture the state of shock on the expert's face when Jesus did not choose the priest or the Levite (supposedly pious men) as the hero of the story but rather a Samaritan man (a half-breed that Jews despised). When Jesus ask him who was a neighbour to the wounded man, the expert could hardly contain his shock, answering, "The one who showed mercy to him" as opposed to just saying, "The Samaritan."

So then, who is your neighbour? He is the annoying kid at the front of your Sunday school class that seems to know everything but has never truly met Christ. He is the homeless person on the street that you skim by without a second thought. She is the girl in your youth group who is socially awkward and the subject of endless teasing. She is the lady that differs from you ethnically but shares the same needs and burdens as we all do. Your neighbour is everyone around you—rich to poor, healthy to sick, black to white, quiet to hyper.

So the question becomes, "Are we demonstrating the love of Christ to these people?" Noticing the order in which the expert recites the main two commandments, loving God for the Christian is prerequisite to loving others because when we grasp so great a love in Christ, we then are compelled to also love others (1 John 4:7,11). Have you felt the love of Christ in your life? Do you remember what it felt like to have all of your burdens lifted by the grace and love of God? If so, I will echo the words of Christ, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:37b) And if not, try hard to remember that vast love God has displayed to you through the forgiveness of your sins through the death and resurrection of Christ.

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Some practical tips on how to love your neighbour:

Lower yourself - (John 3:30, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8) Love requires that we put down our pride and replace it with a priority for others.

Offer yourself – (2 Corinthians 9:12-13, James 2:26) Love demands that we humbly take the initiative to help others.

Value others – (John 15:12, Philippians 2:20-22) Love necessitates that we genuinely care about other people irrespective of our prejudices or their sin.

Exalt Christ – (Ephesians 5:1-2, Colossians 3:23) Biblical love calls for a life that honours Christ and emanates Him, a life that follows closely to His example, not just His sermons, about love.

So what does this mean to you?

If you are a Christian, it means a high call to love all those around you—those easy to love and those hard to love. And when things get tough, think back to how much God himself has loved you. Think back to how much God has forgiven you. And then, go and do likewise.

If you do not believe in Christ yet, this how God demonstrates that He L.O.V.E.s you. He lowered Himself for you, forsaking the glories of heaven to redeem you from your sins. He offered Himself to you, you who have been alienated from Him because of your rebellion. And in the midst of it all, in spite of your rebellion, He valued YOU above all else. God loves you dearly and desires to be reconciled to you. Will you not consider accepting His love for you today? “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes in Him, shall not perish but have everlasting life.” Repent of your sins and believe that Christ has redeemed you and you shall be considered as His child (To all who receive Him, to those who believe in His name, He gave the RIGHT to become children of God. – John 1:12)

Grace and peace,

Jonathan Wang