

Sermon Summary: Things to Remember

The final message in the *Can I Be Your Neighbour?* series looks at Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4 and asks what it means to truly love our neighbours. The Good Samaritan teaches us that loving our neighbour is a command, while Jesus' interaction with the woman at the well shows us what neighbouring looks like in practice. Jesus doesn't simply teach about loving others—he lives it out.

1. Not Alone

Jesus “had to pass through Samaria.” While many Jews would take a longer route to avoid Samaritans, Jesus was being led by the Father toward a divine appointment with this woman. His encounter reminds us that God can order our steps and guide us toward people he wants us to love and encourage.

Neighbouring is therefore not simply about trying harder. It is about working with God as he brings his love and compassion into the world. We can ask, “God, who do you want me to see today? Who do you want me to encourage?” The same God who sets up the moment can lead us into it and give us the words and wisdom we need.

2. People Not Projects

Jesus crossed significant cultural, racial, social, and religious barriers to speak with the Samaritan woman. While others might have seen barriers or labels, Jesus saw a person made in the image of God. He listened, engaged her, allowed the conversation to develop naturally, and treated her with dignity.

The temptation in Christian service is to turn people into projects—with goals, outcomes, and things we want to accomplish. But Jesus reminds us that people are not projects.

- A project asks, “How can I fix you?” Dignity asks, “How can I walk with you?”
- A project says, “I have something you need.” Dignity says, “We both have something to give.”
- A project seeks an outcome. Love seeks a relationship.
- A project measures success by what changed. Love measures success by whether someone was seen, valued, and loved.

Jesus also did not reduce the woman to her past. Likewise, we are not the sum of our mistakes. God sees people as valuable and worthy of love and dignity.

3. Expanding Mercy

The woman encountered Jesus' mercy and immediately carried that mercy back into her community. She told others about the man who knew everything she had done and still showed her mercy. Her experience became a catalyst for others to encounter Jesus.

This illustrates how mercy can multiply. Small acts of compassion can ripple through families, workplaces, neighbourhoods, and communities. Even something as simple as smiling and saying hello can communicate that another person is seen and valued.

But neighbouring is not ultimately about outcomes. Sometimes we love someone and see little or no visible change. Jesus himself experienced this when the rich young ruler walked away despite Jesus looking at him and loving him. Our calling is faithful obedience—not controlling the results. We love people where they are and leave the transformation to God.

What's One Step?

The challenge is to move from seeing → compassion → action. Rather than simply agreeing that loving our neighbours is important, ask God, “What is one step I can take this week?”

Practical examples include:

- Go out: Take a prayer walk and ask God to help you see your community through his eyes.
- Invite in: Practice hospitality by creating opportunities for neighbours to gather, eat, and connect.
- See people: Smile, say hello, start conversations, and notice those who may be isolated.
- Follow God's leading: Be willing to respond when God draws your attention toward someone.

The central question is not, “Will you be my neighbour?” but “Can I be your neighbour?” We are called to take active steps to walk with Jesus in the world around us and allow his love and compassion to flow through us.

The closing prayer captures the heart of the message: “Lord, give me your eyes. Give me a soft heart. Take my hands and help me take practical steps to love my neighbour.”

Discussion Questions

1. Open up your time together with a word of prayer.
2. Read John 4:1-42 out loud together.
 - A. What stands out to you in this story as you view it through the lens of neighbouring?
 - B. What questions arise as you hear the text?
3. In John 4, Jesus intentionally went through Samaria even though Jews commonly avoided Samaritans.
 - A. What does this teach us about allowing God to guide us toward people and “divine appointments”?
 - B. Have you ever experienced what seemed like a coincidence that may have been a God-ordained opportunity?
4. The sermon emphasized, “You are not alone when you neighbour.”
 - A. What difference does it make to think of loving our neighbours as *joining God in what he is already doing* rather than simply trying harder to serve people?
5. Jesus saw the Samaritan woman as a person, not a project.
 - A. What are some ways we can unintentionally treat people as projects—especially when we want to help, evangelize, or see someone change?
 - B. What does it look like to treat someone with dignity instead?
6. The sermon contrasted “project” and “dignity”:
 - “How can I fix you?” vs. “How can I walk with you?”
 - “I have something you need” vs. “We both have something to give.”
 - Seeking an outcome vs. seeking a relationship.
 - A. Which of these contrasts challenges you most, and why?
7. The Samaritan woman received mercy from Jesus and then carried that mercy into her community.
 - A. What are some small acts of mercy, compassion, or hospitality that could have a ripple effect in your family, workplace, church, or neighbourhood?
8. The sermon ended by asking, “Can I be your neighbour?”
 - A. Rather than trying to solve every need around us, who is one person or one practical step you sense God may be inviting you to notice, pray for, encourage, or walk alongside this week?
 - B. Is there a way your group could work together to show mercy to the world around you?
9. Close your time in prayer as you lift the needs present in the group to the Lord who hears and cares.