

Debt Of Love
Romans 13:8-10
Pastor John Miller

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. 9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Romans 13:8-10

I want you to follow with me beginning in verse 8. Paul says, “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another,” there’s one of the famous ‘love one another’ in the Bible, and he gives us the reason, “for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. 9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” In John 13:34-35, Jesus said these words, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another;” and then He qualified that love, “as I have loved you,” and then He gave us the reason. He said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.” Love is the distinguishing mark of a believer. If we say we love God but we don’t love our brother then we lie, the Bible says, and we do not the truth. How can we say we love God whom we have not seen and not love our brother whom we have seen? This passage is a commandment for believers to love. It puts us in an interesting context of a debt that we owe the unbelieving world.

Paul picks up on the subject of love again for the second time in Romans. Back in Romans 12:9 he said, “Let love be without hypocrisy,” and then he spoke to us about a relationship to the state and to civil authorities, and now he speaks to us about our treatment of the people or the citizens of the state. How are we to treat our fellow citizens? How are we to treat other people? I might add, lest I forget and not make it clear, it is clearly taught in the text that we love people that are different from us. Even as a Christian, we love people that don’t love Jesus, we love people that are hostile toward God, we love atheists, agnostics, people of other religions and other races. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,” and if God so loved the world and gave His Son, how is it that we cannot love others and give ourselves to them? We need to demonstrate God’s love. So often we think that our love is only to be for believers, but this passage actually is talking about just loving all mankind, and the believer is to be a person who demonstrates God’s amazing love. Notice it in verse 9, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Verse 8, “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.”

The word “love” in the Greek is agape. This is a love that is not an emotion, it’s not just a feeling, and it loves even when the object loved doesn’t deserve to be loved. So often our love is conditional. If you’re nice to me, I’ll be nice to you; if you love me, I’ll love you; if you treat me good, I’ll treat you good. That’s kind of a mafia love—that’s not really a Christian love, by the

way. Even the mafia loves those who love them. Christian love is the love of God which is a love even for the unlovely. It goes beyond emotion and feeling. By the way, love is a verb. Did you ever think about that? Love isn't just a feeling, love is an action. Love is something you do. In a marriage relationship, if a husband says to his wife, "I love you," and if it's true love, he's going to demonstrate it by his actions and words. All the women say, "Amen! Preach it, Brother!" If a wife loves her husband, she's going to demonstrate that by her actions, words, and attitude. Love isn't just a feeling or emotion or something you say, it's something that you actually do. It's showing people love, and we are going to see how love is the fulfillment of the law in this text. He tells us that we are to agape others.

There are three things I want to point out, three verses and three aspects of love, verses 8-10. First of all we want to look in verse 8 and see love's debt. If your taking notes, write that down, "love's debt." It's very clear in verse 8, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Paul has already spoken several times in Romans about the believer's debt. It uses this phrase of a debt. In Romans 1:14, we are debtors to the unbelieving world to share the gospel. In Romans 8:12, we are in debt to the Holy Spirit to live a holy life. In Romans 13:6-7, we are in debt to the state to pay (I know this hurts but here it is) our taxes, "tribute to whom tribute...honor to whom honor," and without skipping a beat, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another," and now Romans 13:8, let no debt remain outstanding except (there is one exception) the continuing debt to love one another.

When Paul says in verse 8, "'Owe no man any thing," what does he mean by that? Are we to take this with strict literalness and say that Christians should never buy a house by taking out a mortgage? That Christians should never buy a car and make payments? That Christians should never use a credit card and have debt owing anybody anything? I don't really think that's what Paul is saying, but what he is saying, listen carefully, is that if you have a debt, pay it. If you owe someone, pay your debt. There are good Christians that use this statement "owe no man any thing" to believe that you should pay cash for everything, that's not stupid, that's pretty smart, and you shouldn't go into massive debt. There are far too many Christians in too much debt, paying too much interest on loans and credit card debt. The sad thing is that they are buried in debt and can't really use their money to further the Kingdom of God or eternal purposes. I think it would be fitting from this statement to use that as a warning that we shouldn't go into unnecessary debt. Think about that. We don't want to be in bondage to any man. When you are in debt to someone you are that person's slave, but we often don't even think, "Oh, just put it on plastic," or "I have another credit card just buy stuff." We buy things we really don't need to try to keep up with the Joneses in order to impress people that we really don't care about—God help us. If you want to apply it that way, feel free. I don't think there is anything unwise or wrong about that. If you do owe somebody something, pay them back. If you borrow something from somebody, give it back; and if it's a book from the Pastor's study, then make sure you return that book. I shouldn't even have mentioned that. I'm not running a library, okay, those are my tools, but if you borrow something give it back. Sometimes we borrow something from somebody, "Oh, they don't really need it," or "If they want it back they'll ask for it," and then when it blows up or you borrow a lawnmower and it throws a rod, "Here's your lawnmower back." Don't do that. Just make sure that you are not indebted to anyone

except for one exception, and this is what Paul is saying, the one exception is love. We owe others a debt of love. Pay off your debt of love which is never paid up.

This early church Father, Origen said it like this. He said, "The debt of love remains with us permanently and never leaves us. This is a debt which we pay every day and forever owe." I think that's the one thing that really struck me from this verse, that I am forever in debt to everyone around me. I have a debt to love them. You know when you owe somebody money how uncomfortable you are when you see them and you haven't paid them off? You kind of feel like, "Oh man, I know they're thinking about the money, I need to pay them what I owe." That same consciousness when you're around other people, and I hope you take this verse seriously tonight when you leave here; everyone you meet, everyone you encounter on the freeway, you work with, you live with, every other person, you have a debt to them. Do you know what that debt is? That debt is to love them. God is telling us in His Word that we have a debt—we owe a debt to love other people. You say, "Well, I don't like them." That's too bad, you're in debt to them. "Well, they are mean to me." So what? You still are in debt to them to love them. "Well, they're not nice to me." Well, you still have a debt to them, and this is a debt that we can never pay off, we'll never be free from. We're always going to be in debt to love other people. We can never say that we have done all the loving we need to do. Paid in full. I quit. I don't need to love anymore. We reach a point of, "I've paid my debt. I can be mean now. I don't need to love anybody," and we just go on with our lives. No, love is the great need in our world today.

I believe, if Christians would put this into practice, that we would see far more unbelievers come to know the Lord if we would love one another and start to love the world. I believe there would be far less divorce in Christian marriages, far less divorce in the world, far less crime, and really a world without even hatred, if we would just learn to love each other. We're going to see that this is a supernatural love. As I said, it's agape love. This isn't something you can muster up. This isn't something that you can go to a love seminar and for \$39.99 over the weekend—10 Easy Steps: You Too Can Be a Loving Christian. It ain't gonna happen. Usually, in order to teach us how to love, God puts us with people who are unlovely. It would be easy to love if everybody was nice, if everybody was what I like and they're nice to me, they look like me, they like what I like, they get out of my way, and when we're in the grocery store and I only have one item and they have a bunch, they're in front of me and they let me go in front of them. That would be nice, but this isn't the world we live in. In the rough and tumble of nitty gritty of a dark hostile world, we have to take out this Christian love which is not easy. We need to remember that every person that we meet we are indebted to—we owe them love.

For love, verse 8, is the fulfilling of the law. "For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." That's my second point, if you're taking notes, love's duty. He now puts it into shoe leather. It's not just theory, it's duty. Notice verse 9. "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We see love in the fulfillment of the law. They came to Jesus and asked, "What is the greatest commandment?" Jesus answered by saying, Matthew 22, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is

the first and great commandment.” That is your vertical love. You first start with a great and full devotion of love to God. One of the reasons why there is so much hatred in the world is because there is so little love and devotion to God. If we were more godly we would be more loving. Secondly, Jesus said, “And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Of course, Jesus was using the two tablets of the law we call the decalogue or more commonly known as the Ten Commandments.

How many of you have heard of the Ten Commandments? Not the ten suggestions, the Ten Commandments. By the way, pray tell me, what’s wrong with putting them in public classrooms on the school campus? I mean, if you’re so pushed out of shape about it, just put the last five on there which we’ve read. What’s wrong with: don’t kill, don’t steal, don’t commit adultery, don’t murder? Because we’ve rejected God, we’ve rejected His standards. I have every intention on Sunday morning to preaching a series. I’m going to take 11 weeks to go through the Ten Commandments, one a week, because I think these are laws for living. I think these are laws for life. Now, we don’t keep the Ten Commandments in order to be saved, but we keep the Ten Commandments because we are saved—there’s a big difference. We keep the law because God, by His Spirit, writes His law on the fleshly tablets of our hearts and we live them out in our daily lives. Sometimes people say, “You Christians, you’re not into the law. You don’t think you’re saved by law so you disregard the Ten Commandments.” No, we don’t disregard the Ten Commandments, but we believe that the Spirit of God writes them on our hearts, that our heart becomes the fleshly tablet that God writes His law, and when we walk in the Spirit we don’t fulfill the lusts of the flesh, and the Holy Spirit brings to us love, for the fruit of the Spirit is love. If you’ve been born again, you have a divine capacity, a divine enabling to love others as yourself which is the fulfilling of the law.

As I mentioned, there are two tablets of stone—five commandments on one and five on the other. Some dispute that and say four and six, but I believe there are an even five commandments on each tablet. There were two tablets of stone in which God, with His own finger, actually wrote them. Can you imagine if archaeologists found the Ten Commandments? That would be amazing—written with the very finger of God! I believe, by the way, the same finger that wrote in the earth in John 8 when they were pressing Jesus, “This woman has committed adultery. What does thou sayest?” Jesus stooped down to write in the sand. I believe that same finger was the one that wrote on those stones—that was the finger of Jesus.

The first five commandments, and they’re not the focus of this passage, deals with our relationship to God, and I want to mention them to you.

Commandment 1: Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

No other gods before Him—we’re to love God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and no one is to take the place of God in our lives.

Commandment 2: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of God,

and you're not to bow down to or worship it.

Commandment 3: Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.

This would obviously be when we use God's name in vulgarity, cussing or swearing. It would also be used for taking God's name in claiming to be a Christian and a follower of Christ and living inconsistently with that profession. If I say, "I'm a Christian," and I use filthy language, then I've taken God's name in vain. If I say, "I'm a Christian," and I lie, steal, or cheat, I'm taking God's name in vain. I've taken the name "Christian" and I'm not living that in my daily life.

Commandment 4: Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

I think the principle is that we should take a day and devote it to God. Again, I don't think legalistically that God cares what day of the week it is we worship. Some people argue over, "You gotta worship on Saturday. That's the Sabbath. Why do you Christians worship on Sunday?" My answer is because that's the day Jesus rose from the dead. That's the day the early apostles switched from Saturday to Sunday, the first day of the week, but it doesn't really matter. God doesn't look at the calendar and say, "Sorry, you can't worship right now. It's not Saturday." The New Testament is very clear that one man esteems one day above another, some men esteem every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. I think we should worship God every day of the week. Amen? I think every day should be the Lord's day, but take a day to rest, to spend time worshipping God.

From the beginning of the church age Christians met on Sunday. I think you should do everything within your power to at least have a Sunday when you come to church and make it a priority and you don't let job, sports, activities, hobbies, or other things get in the way. It's a priority, and you make a commitment to that. You don't do that so God loves you. You don't do that so you get to go to heaven. You do that because God has saved you and you want to be a blessing to other believers. You want to draw near to God, and all the benefits and blessings that come from being committed to being with God's people as they gather on the Lord's day. The New Testament actually uses Sunday as a reference to the Lord's day.

I didn't plan on saying all that. I planned on kind of moving a little faster, but let me say one more thing about the Sabbath. As a matter of fact, I answered this question this Friday on the radio, which we're kind of switching the last Friday of the month on Revival Radio to a Q&A kind of thing. People are giving us questions and we're answering them on the radio, so check this out.

Of all the Ten Commandments there is only one that is not repeated in the New Testament. Can you guess which one that is? That's the Sabbath day commandment. That's the only one of the Ten Commandments that is not repeated or rephrased in another way for Christians to believe that they have to keep because it was made with the nation of Israel. The important principle in all the commandments is to realize that we're saved by grace through faith, it's not of ourselves, it's a gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.

Commandment 5: (I believe belongs on the first tablet of stone) Honor thy father and thy mother. That's the first commandment of the ten with a promise—that it may be well with you; that thou mayest live long upon the earth.

I have scars because I didn't obey my parents. I wouldn't be scarface if I would've done what my mom told me not to do. I wouldn't listen to my mother. Isn't that frustrating how your kids don't listen to you until they're parents themselves and then their kids won't listen to them? Don't you wish your teenagers would come to you, "Father, Mother, I know you're wiser than me and God has told me to honor you, so I will do whatever thou tellest me to do." They would even use King James English. It's like, "Wow! Praise Jehovah! My kid has gotten saved!" We honor our parents by obeying them, and then when you're an adult you honor them by respecting them, taking care of them, and honoring your father and your mother. It's a promise that God will bless you and be with you.

I mentioned these first five because in our text we come to the second tablet of stone. Paul quotes five prohibitions from the second tablet of stone which deals with our relationships to people. The first five are our relationship to God. You say, "How does honoring your parents have anything to do with your relationship to God?" I believe that parents are God's authority in the home. I believe God placed parents in the home to mold, shape, guide, direct, and influence their children. That's a great responsibility that you have as parents, and you better take it seriously.

I want you to notice here that love works no ill to his neighbor. Love is the fulfilling of that law, and he lists them for us. We're going to look at them one at a time there in verse 9. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Adultery is commandment 7. He doesn't put them in sequential order, but you'll find these Ten Commandments, by the way, in Exodus 20:3-17. If you've never gone there and looked at it or marked it in your Bible, it's Exodus 20:3-17. As I said, I want to preach a sermon on each one of these commandments and we will do that, but here it says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Sex is for the sacredness of marriage, and you are not to go outside of marriage to satisfy your sexual needs or desires. Sex is sacred. It's ordained and designed by God to be enjoyed in the covenant relationship of marriage. Sex outside of marriage or extramarital sex, infidelity in the marriage commitment, is sin plain and simple.

Back in 1631, there was an edition to the King James Bible made that had a horrible typo in it. It was called the wicked Bible. It was the seventh commandment, and the Bible actually read, "Thou shalt commit adultery." The Bible forgot to put the word "not" in there! Needless to say, that Bible was destroyed and didn't see a second printing, but trust me the "not" belongs in the commandment. "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

You might say, "Well, I'm single. I'm not married," and maybe, "I've never been married, and we're in love. We need to see if we're compatible, so we're going to get involved sexually to see if we really have the spark and know whether or not we should get married, and that's not really

adultery so that's okay." Not so! The word "adultery" is to be used, I believe, in a generic term for sexual immorality. If you don't buy it there from the Ten Commandments, you certainly have to understand that's the case in 1 Thessalonians 4, we got it just a week ago Sunday night, where Paul says, "For this is the will of God," for you, talking to Christians, "even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication," or sexual immorality. The word is porneia in the Greek, so it's sexual immorality. Any sex outside of marriage between a husband and wife when a husband and a wife are married, if you are involved sexually outside of that relationship, (there's only one person that can meet your sexual needs) then you have committed porneia or you have committed adultery.

A couple of quick words before I pass off this subject for those that are married. Be on guard. Center your life on Jesus Christ and His Word. Do you know what the best anecdote is for an adultery-proof marriage? A commitment to Jesus Christ. A rock-solid devotion, fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Make sure that you are committed to and obeying Jesus, and then follow the Bible's teaching for your marriage, for the wife and for the husband. Make sure that your spouse is a priority. In 1 Corinthians 7 it says, "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that satan tempt you not for your incontinency," or lack of self control. Unless you don't understand what Paul is saying there in those verses I just quoted, then open your Bible when you get a chance and read them. That's a married partner's conjugal rights. One of the reasons why adultery will often come into a marriage is because a person in the marriage isn't obeying that important passage of Scripture.

Lastly, I would say, avoid relationships that might tempt you. I tell married people flat out, "Don't hang out with the opposite sex other than your spouse." "You know, I have to work around them." Well, then work around them but don't go out to lunch alone or to coffee or to Starbucks. Don't sit in an office alone; don't get too involved. The minute you begin to feel some kind of an attraction, you better have purposed in your heart that you're going to nip that in the bud and you're not even going to go there because the minute you start going down that direction you're headed for destruction. You're like a calf that's been fatted for the slaughter. It's a dangerous place to go. You don't even want to go there. You don't ride in the car, don't go to lunch, don't go to dinner, don't hang out, don't work late in the office alone together. You need to keep your distance. It doesn't mean you're rude, "I don't talk to anybody else. Oh, it's a female, I don't talk to her. Don't touch me!" I mean, that's just flat out stupid, okay? You know what I'm talking about. I've seen enough people, they start with just a social thing, then they're alone and they spend time together, and they talk. The guys and girls at work are all dressed up, nice and friendly, and they think he's wonderful. He comes home and his wife asks him to take out the trash or change a diaper. He's thinking, "I'm going back to work!" You need to be careful. You need to adultery-proof your marriage.

David committed adultery, and I'm going to get there in just a moment, but David committed adultery because he was idle and wasn't where he was supposed to be. He was walking on the housetop and was looking at things he shouldn't be looking at. Be wise. Put up borders,

boundaries, hedges and protect yourself.

Here's the second command and, by the way, the point of each one of these commandments is that if you violate this commandment you're not showing love. So, if someone says, "Yes, I committed adultery, but I love her or I love him," not so. What Paul is saying is that is an unloving act. You're not loving your neighbor as yourself if you commit adultery. That's what he's saying—every one of these. Now, the second commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." In the commandment, he's referring to murder. He's not saying you can't step on a cockroach or kill a cow for an In N Out hamburger, praise God! He's talking about homicide.

I remember years ago being in the LAX airport getting ready to take off on a flight, and a Hare Krishna guy wanted to come up and pin a flower on me getting me to give him some money. I said, "No, no. I don't need your flower, but I'd like to tell you about Jesus." "Oh, you're a Christian?" "Yeah, I'm a Christian." "Do you eat hamburgers?" I said, "Yeah, I love them!" Then, he quoted, "Thou shalt not kill!" He turned and ran off down the airport. It's like, "Hey! Wait a minute, Dude." It's thou shalt not murder. That's what he's talking about—homicide, the murder of another individual.

I opened up a can of worms the other night when I talked about the coming election and issues that are happening, but I believe abortion is murder. Amen? I know that I tread on people's feelings and emotions when I start talking politics, and I'm not endorsing any candidate, but I'm saying that as a Christian, any candidate that believes that it's okay to abort a child in the womb is not going to get my vote—that's for sure. I can't wait to get there when I preach on the Ten Commandments because I will preach an entire sermon on "Thou shalt not murder." We hear the argument, "Well, a woman should have power over her own body." Those are not her hands, those are not her feet, that's not her heart, those are not her ears, those are not her eyes, that is not her mouth—that's not her body. She doesn't have the right to kill an innocent human being, so I think we need to be in prayer when we come up to this election about our Christian convictions. When the Bible says, "Thou shalt not murder," I think we should really take that to heart. Jesus even said, "If you have anger in your heart you've already murdered." God looks at our attitude as well as our actions.

The third is in verse 9, "Thou shalt not steal." So, adultery is unloving, murder is unloving and stealing is unloving. That's commandment 8, by the way. There are many ways that we can steal. We know what it means to steal, but we can also steal from an employer when we do not give him/her the best work of which we are capable, or we steal if we overextend our coffee or lunch break or leave of absence or we leave early. We can also steal if we waste products which we're working with. We can also steal if we borrow and we don't return, so there are a lot of different ways that we can steal from people.

The fourth mentioned is the ninth commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." Not all translations have this in Romans 13:9. It is in the Authorized Version only, but I do believe that it should be included here in this text, so he tells us that we are not to lie or bear false witness. It's the ninth commandment. We can lie by a half-truth. We can lie by not saying something

when we can say something and bring clarity. We can lie by exaggeration. There are no “white lies” by the way, and sometimes we exaggerate or embellish and in reality what we’re really doing is lying. We need to be very exact in our words, our ‘yes yes’ and our ‘no’ should be ‘no.’ Don’t bear false witness, and it’s unloving when we do that against somebody and destroy their character.

Lastly, the fifth mentioned is “Thou shalt not covet,” which is the tenth commandment. Do you know that this is the most searching of all? Do you know that by coveting, you can break the last five commandments? By coveting, you murder someone, you commit adultery, you covet your neighbor’s wife. By coveting, you will lie to cover up your sinful actions. Coveting leads to the commitment of all these other things. We covet people’s money, property, position, but in Exodus this commandment says that we shouldn’t covet anything that is our neighbor’s—his house, wife, servant, ox, donkey—anything that belongs to your neighbor. It was David coveting his neighbor’s, Uriah, wife Bathsheba that caused him to commit adultery, that caused him to lie, and by committing adultery he stole his neighbor’s wife and then murdered her husband to cover his sin. See how one sin of covetousness can lead you to break these other commandments? Indeed, it is a very unloving thing! So, “Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself? Some misinterpret that statement, and they create a third category. We’re to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, those are two categories. The third category, and please listen very carefully, they say, “You can’t love others until you first learn to love yourself.” That’s not what the Bible says. I understand what they’re trying to say, but I respectfully disagree. The Bible says love your neighbor as you love yourself. Self preservation is there within all of us. Now, we may say, “I don’t love myself,” but the truth is if you really didn’t love yourself, you wouldn’t care that you were ugly. I’ve had people say, “I just hate myself, I hate myself, I’m so ugly.” Now, that might be that you have low self esteem and you haven’t seen yourself in Christ, but if you really hate yourself you’d be glad that you were unattractive. Am I wrong? Again, I know it’s like, “Lord, why do I keep getting so controversial?” I’m going to run everybody in this church away. Do you know the Bible says that we’re just wretched, miserable poor sinners, but God loves you and He sent His Son to die for you and your value or worth is in Christ because God loves you and He redeemed you. You’re made in the image of God, but we don’t deserve God’s blessings, we don’t deserve God’s love, we don’t deserve God’s forgiveness but the thing is get over yourself, get off yourself, quit focusing on yourself, quit worrying about yourself. Do you know what love does? Love thinks about other people. Love is more concerned about others. Can you imagine if this were applied in a marriage relationship? If a husband began to really love his wife as he loves himself and a wife really loved her husband as she loves herself? And we loved other people and treated people in society the way we would like to be treated doing unto others, the golden rule, as you would have them do unto you?

This Scripture says that there are two categories—you love other people the way that you love yourself and you make those people the priority. It’s a call to neighborly love, but you say, “Well,

who's my neighbor?" The question is: Who is my neighbor? Is my neighbor only people that I like or live by me or the same religious persuasion or have the same color skin or are American? Are those my neighbors? They asked Jesus this question, and Jesus gave the parable of the Good Samaritan. Samaritans were a despised race by the Jews, but he became the hero of the story. Jesus was saying in the parable of the Good Samaritan, my neighbor is anyone who has a need—anyone who has a need. It doesn't matter. We need to show love and concern to anyone. It doesn't matter who they are or what country they're from or what they're like. We're to love other people—loving our neighbor as we love ourselves.

Lastly, I want you to quickly notice verse 10, love's desire. This is really a summary. He said, "Love worketh no ill," the word means evil, "to his neighbour." That's really what it means to love your neighbor as yourself, you're not going to commit adultery, you're not going to steal, you're not going to lie to them, you're not going to covet, you're not going to murder them. Love works no evil to his neighbor. "Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." I love what John R. Stott said. He said, "The last five sins forbidden in the Ten Commandments harm people. Murder robs them of their life, adultery of their home and honour, theft of their property, and false witness of their good name, while covetousness robs society of the ideals of simplicity and contentment. All these do harm to the neighbour, whereas it is the essence of love to seek and to serve our neighbour's highest good. That is why love is the fulfillment of the law."

Love fulfills the law not only out of debt but also duty and of desire. When the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, God gives you an actual desire to love other people. So, I want to challenge you tonight. If you're a Christian and you don't have a desire to love people, get on your knees and ask God to change your heart. Start with your spouse—a good place to start. Right, Lord? Help me to love my wife. Lord, help me to love my husband. Help me to love my kids. Lord, help me to love my enemies. Help me to love other people. Now, this is a supernatural love, so first you have to be born again. If you're not a Christian, you haven't been born again, you need to be born of the Spirit. When you're born of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit brings God's love, Romans 5, and it's shed abroad in your hearts. In Ephesians 5:18, Paul says, "...be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

I want to encourage you tonight to make sure you're born again, and secondly, to surrender your life to the Holy Spirit. Be filled with the Spirit—the Spirit-filled life. The fruit of the Spirit is love; and love is patient, love is kind, love is gentle, love is not boastful, love is not proud, love practices self control. The fruit of the Holy Spirit will be love if you'll surrender to His control tonight. Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer.