

MESSAGE 11-04-2018 Jane Simkin

Love your neighbor as yourself

Hymn 251 IF THOU BUT TRUST IN GOD TO GUIDE THEE

What gain is there in futile weeping, In helpless anger and distress

READINGS

Love your neighbor as yourself **Mathew 22:39 Luke 10:29**

Who is my neighbor Samaritan **Luke 10: 30-35**

Corinthians sounding brass **I Corinthians 13:1-2**

Mr Rogers It's you I like

It's you I like,

It's not the things you wear,

It's not the way you do your hair--

But it's you I like.

The way you are right now,

The way down deep inside you--

Not the things that hide you,

Not your toys--

They're just beside you.

But it's you I like--

Every part of you,

Your skin, your eyes, your feelings

Whether old or new.

I hope that you'll remember

Even when you're feeling blue

That it's you I like,

It's you yourself,

It's you, it's you I like

Hymn 161 HAVE THINE OWN WAY, LORD

Thou are the potter I am the clay... Wounded and weary, help me I pray

JOYS AND CONCERNS

MUSICIAN'S CHOICE

PRAYER

Hymn 324 HOW COULD ANYONE EVER TELL YOU, YOU ARE ANYTHING LESS THAN BEAUTIFUL How could anyone ever tell you, You are anything less than beautiful?

How could anyone ever tell you You are less than whole? How could anyone fail to notice That your loving is a miracle? How deeply you're connected to my soul?

The core of what I have been trying to pull together for this message is ways that Love of self and love of the other are two parts of a whole.

Two parts: love myself -- love others

there is a tension here

Mr. Rogers and the hymn are the affirmations of self that we need as we are growing. Growing into adulthood and as adults we need to learn to self affirm with much the same message.

The thought that I might have a message to share came after traveling about 4000 miles by car with my teenaged granddaughter.

I observed that during the trip her needs seemed to be taking priority.

We rushed to get to Columbus so she could spend time with her boyfriend.

I gave up a hoped for stop in the picturesque Ohio town where some of our ancestors had lived. We agreed to a stop at the Colo town where my parents grew up. Once there the smells and flies of an agricultural area overwhelmed her. The stop was a very partial success at showing her and her mom around the community that had nurtured her great grandparents.

I confess to having experienced some puzzlement. I was traveling as an elder with some level of disability. When I was growing up young people were expected to give precedence to the needs of elders.

A parent often sets her own needs aside in favor of kids. A grandparent may have an opportunity to teach about needs of the other. Are there times when attempts to be unselfish become selfish? For instance when there is a chance to nurture an outward look in a young person?

Enlightenment came near the end of the trip when our granddaughter shared the discovery that she has been making that she needs to pay attention to her own needs and speak up for them. In social situations she would have had a tendency to go with what others wanted.

Affirmation of self, speaking up for one's own needs, is a message for any age. It should grow out of a healthy love for oneself. But I believe that there should also be some modifiers. Bob Simkin liked to remind us of the importance of distinguishing between wants and needs.

More important for this message is that without the balance of loving our neighbor or the other—we become sounding brass. We are to love our neighbor as ourself. This says to me that both are necessary. And our golden rule gives us further guidance to do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Again an awareness of the world from the double perspective of self and of the other.

We express love through actions of caring. Always the tension between care of self and care of the other

If caring is pictured as a circle, a disability can tend to diminish that circle.

I am forced to accept that I am currently living my life as a person with a disability. I am seeking new meaning in the tension between care of self and care of the other and of the size of the circle of caring.

These are some of my insights and experiences: Sometimes it is necessary to ask for help. Those times have become more frequent

You know your difficulty is showing when strangers ask to help you or even insist on helping without asking. I haven't learned to refrain from

sounding ungrateful when help is offered that I don't need or at least would prefer not to accept.

Yet I can also be quite perverse and wonder why the other never noticed how difficult it is for me to pick up a paper that I dropped. Ever patient Paul is beginning to lose patience with these inconsistencies.

Sometimes I provide the opportunity for parents to teach their children to hold a door open for a stranger. One of those grandparenting opportunities. On those occasions I try to respond with a smile and a big thank you.

My personal challenge as my mobility issues tend to make the circle contract is to avoid over absorption with self care and find ways to continue to widen the circle of neighbors.

This meeting community and our doors into worship and outward from worship helps to expand the circle for me

My Goal is to know the difference between my needs and my wants. To be able to meet my needs with a minimum of assistance

To respond from that place to calls from a wider world.

At the same time that I have been forced to recognize the contraction of my own circle our NATIONAL DISCOURSE is also in the direction of diminishing our circle of caring.

Instead of perceiving ourselves as a nation blessed with great resources and advantages and able to share with those beleaguered by disasters or man made.

We hear the messages that other nations are taking advantage of us, that refugee families are invading our territory.

Many in our meeting have been seeking or finding ways to respond to this challenge.

Our meeting offered the regional Fall gathering program on "reaching the sacred across the divide"

I have had thoughts of seeking a way to Join the AFSC in person or by proxy to welcome the caravan at the border

Many of the messages with which we have been blessed have carried inspiration for love of our neighbors Several from our meeting have been involved with activities that precede the election that is coming up on Tuesday. All of us can vote on Tuesday.

Historically people from this community and this meeting have traveled to many parts of the world and brought back messages from far away.

In the early decades of the 20th century Robert and Margaret Simkin were in China.

Emily and Isabel Howland traveled widely.

Rod and Joan Morris, Bob and Thelma Simkin, and AT Miller spent significant amounts of time in Kenya

Dill Otis was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nigeria

Dill and Sally Otis and Paul Simkin were AFSC volunteers in Mexico

Jane Simkin was in Central America and Colombia

Miranda Buffam Hallett was in El Salvador and has become an expert on El Salvador

Multiple trips by multiple people have been made to the San Pedro sister community

Exchange students to SCCS from Japan in 1960's and the 90's

The Otis family hosted students from Ukraine, Norway, Finland as well as mentoring other exchange students.

Erica Richter was a student in Finland and Pilgrim in Spain,
Phyllis lived for years in Guatemala

AND EVEN WITH THIS LIST THERE HAVE NO DOUBT BEEN OMISSIONS

High on My list of how to expand the world wide circle of caring is

Help to refugees and

Alleviation of conditions that cause refugees:

Targeting

Torture

Poverty

Warfare

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I hope we are all thinking YES we need to keep expanding the circle of those throughout the world that we know and count as neighbors, as Friends. Yes we need to try what Love will do, not only in our families and our meeting but also on this larger stage.

Hymn 332 GOD BE WITH YOU TIL WE MEET AGAIN

BENEDICTION Keep love's banner floating over you
Love thy neighbor and Love Thyself.