

“What did you see? Let’s list them...”

- We finally looked at the epoch in which we live: Engagement
- Each epoch was characterized by events that have eternal ramifications
- The epoch of Engagement was characterized by Jesus leaving and God coming to dwell within us
- We talked about the overwhelming burden of the law, the number of laws in the Bible and the number of those in need, and we looked at the vignette with the boy with the backpack
- We talked about Jesus saying, however, that His burden is light and John saying that His commands are not burdensome
- Then we looked at the three meta commands: love God, love your neighbor and love one another
- We noted that they were all focused on true agape love, the crown jewel in the nature of God
- We wondered if these comprised the “law of Christ”
- Then we looked at the three verses that said everything had been summed up in one command: love your neighbor
- Del said this was stunning to him
- We talked about the Bible being the consummate book of the understatement
- We then looked at the words in this command, agape and the word for neighbor, plesion, and we restated it as:
 - Have a steadfast, sacrificial zeal for the true good, the shalom, of the one who lives near you
- We asked the question:
 - Why would we want this to mean the one who lives far?
- We then contemplated the perspective of what would happen if the 80 million evangelical Christians in the U.S. began to simply engage three neighbors around them and that would be the entire population of the U.S.
- We then contemplated the vision:
 - That God has entrusted the primary work of the kingdom to the common, Christian family
- We then looked at the common “but waits”:
 - Aren’t we supposed to love God first
 - and we looked at the Scripture that linked loving God with doing His commands
- What about “the great commission”?

- And we recalled “multiply and fill the earth” and contemplated that maybe the great commission was to be primarily fulfilled one neighbor at a time
- And we contemplated this vision for our missionaries
- And we contemplated how the early church spread, household to household
- Isn’t this just a philosophical command?
 - And we looked at C. S. Lewis’ statement that loving Humanity was just an excuse for loving nobody
- What about the good neighbor story?
 - And we looked at Jesus using the story to explain what a good neighbor looked like: sacrificial, zealous, seeking the true good, the shalom, of another
- What about the poor and hungry?
 - And we looked at how God looks at the heart and we contemplated that our neighbor who might have a nice house might be poor, wretched and miserable in the eyes of God
 - And we contemplated that we drive right by them, just like the priest and the levite did in the good neighbor story
- Isn’t this the work of the pastor and Christian ministries?
 - And that was left for us to answer
 - We looked at a grade for how well the body of Christ was doing the Royal Law, having a steadfast, sacrificial zeal for the true good, the shalom, of the people who live near us
 - And the grade wasn’t good
 - We contemplated the reasons why we don’t do this and maybe we should as well
 - Del told the story of their neighbors and the hogs that destroyed his wife’s flower beds
 - And that God will answer our prayers to do this, in spades
 - And we contemplated how simple the command was and yet how brilliant to reach the world for Christ
 - And we looked at the simple vision:
 - The common Christian family committed to the shalom of their neighbors, turning the world upside down, one neighbor at a time

What else did you see?

So, what struck you?