



grow. pray. study.

**June 13, 2021 Streaming This Sunday: A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood
“The One Who Showed Him Mercy”
Scripture: Luke 10:29-37**

Jesus saw preciousness that others missed

MONDAY 6.14.21 Mark 10:13-16

Fred Rogers said, “I think the best thing we can do is to let people know that each one of them is precious.” * Jesus inviting children to come to him spoke volumes to the adults who were bringing their children to him, and to the children themselves. We must realize that first-century culture did not value children. “Children, along with women, old men, and slaves, were viewed as physically weak burdens on society who had little value to the wider life of the community.” ** Jesus consistently used words that uplifted the marginalized and corrected those who thought too highly of themselves.

- Valuing children is more than cute photos and fuzzy emotions. “Children are more treasured these days, but caring for children often isn’t valued. Child-care workers are frequently poorly paid and the work is often considered a low-status profession. Parents who leave the workforce to care for children...lose income but sometimes even more: a sense of identity, a relationship network, and even a feeling of worth. What if we valued caring for children the way Jesus did?” ***
- *The Message* rendered Jesus’ forceful words in Mark 10:14-15 as: “Don’t push these children away. Don’t ever get between them and me. These children are at the very center of life in the kingdom. Mark this: Unless you accept God’s kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you’ll never get in.” **** What aspects of childlikeness do you most need to be more open to God’s Kingdom? How could those childlike qualities deepen and enrich your relationship with God?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I need you to hug me and bless me. And I need your spirit to fill me, guiding me to bless even the smallest people who need me to show them your love and kindness. Amen.

* From <https://butfirstjoy.com/beautiful-day-in-the-neighborhood-quotes/>

** From <https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1-300/jesus-loved-children-11629553.html>.

*** Karen Chakoian, study note on “Childcare” in *The CEB Women’s Bible*. Nashville: Common English Bible, 2016, p. 1241.

**** Peterson, Eugene H. *The Message Numbered Edition Hardback*. Navpress. Kindle Edition.

What do we do with what life brings us?

TUESDAY 6.15.21 Matthew 16:21-27

The reporter asked Fred Rogers, “What’s it like to be famous?” Mr. Rogers replied, “Fame is a four-letter word. What matters is what we do with it.” * When Jesus told his closest followers he would die on the cross, Peter (the most outspoken disciple) tried to talk Jesus out of that. After all, Jesus was famous and popular. But Jesus “doubled down,” saying he called ALL his followers to “take up their cross.” What would be the point, he asked, of giving up God’s offer

of eternal life just for earthly wealth or prestige? “Why would people gain the whole world but lose their lives?”

- Peter, like most first-century Jews, expected a triumphant Messiah, a figure of daunting power. He struggled to understand Jesus’ words about self-sacrifice. What assumptions about life, success and greatness do you have that make it harder for you to accept Jesus’ teaching about a truly great life? What has helped your thinking to reach beyond those inherited cultural assumptions?
- When Jesus said this, no one sold “cross” jewelry. A cross was a horrible tool of torture and death. Pastor John Ortberg quoted columnist Garret Fiddler as writing, “Really, the cross does not belong on the Christian; the Christian belongs on the cross.” Ortberg added, “The cross is a reminder that there is something in me that needs to die.” ** What is there in you that “needs to die”? In what ways are you asking God to help you more clearly fully commit to finding your true life by losing it?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, so many voices say avoiding pain and sacrifice is the way to a good life. Your call is highly counter-cultural. Let my lesser self die so that a greater self you’ve shaped may be born. Amen.

* From <https://www.moviequotes.com/>

** Garret Fiddler, *Yale Daily News*, April 21, 2011, quoted in John Ortberg, *Who Is This Man?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012, p. 192.

The father ran to his undeserving son

WEDNESDAY 6.16.21 Luke 15:11-24

Fred Rogers told the reporter, “I don’t think anybody can grow unless he really is accepted exactly as he is.” * Jesus’ story vividly pictured a selfish, naïve young man who rashly used up his resources. Only then did he come “to his senses” (verse 17). His father watched for him, not to scold but to welcome: “While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion.” The father’s accepting love embraced him with robe, ring, sandals and the fattened calf, saying, “This son of mine...was lost and is found!”

- Scholar N. T. Wright noted that “in a culture where senior figures are far too dignified to run anywhere, this man takes to his heels as soon as he sees his young son dragging himself home.” * This is one of Jesus’ great pictures of what God is truly like. Do you picture God intimidating, looking down on you sternly? Or do you see him as a loving parent always eager to run to you and throw his arms around you?
- Our culture wants children to “grow up and leave home.” But Wright also wrote that in Jesus’ day, this was a story of shameful behavior, “with the younger son abandoning his obligation to care for his father in his old age.” * Have you ever been like the younger son in Jesus’ story, eager to leave the constraints of family and faith behind? What, if anything, brought you to your senses to turn homeward to your heavenly father?

Prayer: Lord God, sometimes I’m careless, sometimes I’m stubborn. Keep bringing me “to my senses,” making me willing to come home to you, again and again. Amen.

[Click here](#) for a video a pastor in the Philippines created using striking cross-cultural images to help bring Jesus’ story to life.

* From <https://www.moviequotes.com/>

** N. T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, both quotations from p. 188.

Jesus welcomed honest questions

THURSDAY 6.17.21 John 3:1-10, 16-17

Most of us, like the reporter in the film, struggle with Mr. Rogers' idea: "Sometimes we have to ask for help, and that's ok." * Nicodemus, a Hebrew leader, faced the same struggle. He saw Jesus' obvious power, and wanted to talk to this new teacher. But he came at night, not ready to risk his status as a leader. Jesus spoke of being "born again" (a serious pun—the Greek word *anōthen* rendered "again" also meant "from above"). It led to a key verse: "In [John 3:16], we find the essence of Christian theology." **

- With keen irony, John wrote that Jesus went on to tell Nicodemus (who came "at night"), "This is the basis for judgment: The light came into the world, and people loved darkness more than the light, for their actions are evil" (John 3:19). That must have jolted the cautious, secure Pharisee. When has someone or something brought you up short, and given you reason to think, hard, about your values and priorities? How has God brought you from darkness into the light?
- Jesus invited Nicodemus to live in the light of God's kingdom. Their talk seems to have gradually changed Nicodemus (cf. [John 7:45-52](#); [John 19:38-42](#)). How did Jesus connect the ideas of "birth" and "new life" as he spoke with Nicodemus? In what ways (if at all) do you believe your eternal life has begun due to the impact of God's love on your life?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, keep breaking me free from any ways in which I love darkness. Keep drawing me to your loving, light-giving, new life-giving presence. Amen.

[Click here](#) to see how the 2003 film *The Gospel of John* visualized Jesus' talk with Nicodemus (roughly the first 3 minutes of a 5 minute film of John chapter 3).

* From <https://lolalambchops.com/>

** Adam Hamilton, *Christianity and World Religions*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005, p. 115.

Jesus saw the person, not the brokenness

FRIDAY 6.18.21 Luke 7:36-47

Resisting Fred Rogers' intrusion in his personal life, the reporter said, "You love broken people like me." And Mr. Rogers replied, "I don't think you're broken." * Jesus, too, saw people, not brokenness. The uninvited woman at the Pharisee's home was "a sinner." Women in that day had few options. They couldn't embezzle or be tax collectors—"sinner" almost always meant a prostitute. Simon only saw that, but Jesus said he'd forgiven her "many sins." To Jesus, Simon (who felt no need for forgiveness) was in greater spiritual danger than the grateful, forgiven woman.

- Jesus asked Simon a telling question: "Do you see this woman?" (verse 44) "Simon only saw sin, but Jesus saw the woman and her lavish display of humility, nurture, generosity and love." ** He saw a beloved child of God, cause for a party in heaven (see his stories in [Luke 15](#)). How did Jesus' contrast in verses 41-47 show how spiritually hollow Simon's pious front, fed in part by his cultural notions of male superiority, really was?
- Jesus was famous (in some circles, infamous) for forgiving. He gave this woman the priceless gift of freedom from guilt, which also freed her from feelings of shame before others. If not, she would not have been able to express her gratitude and love to Jesus so boldly. Have you ever, for any reason, felt "ashamed to show your face"? How can opening your life to God's forgiveness and love set you free to live more fully?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Simon didn't see the woman, just the "sinner." You saw her, valued her and forgave her. Show me how you see me, and help me see others through your eyes. Amen.

* From <https://juliebozza.com/quotes-a-beautiful-day-in-the-neighborhood/>

** Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, "Portrait" note on "Woman Who Washed Jesus' Feet" in *The CEB Women's Bible*. Nashville: Common English Bible, 2016, p. 1301.

Healing, helpful words change the world

SATURDAY 6.19.21 Ephesians 4:29-5:4

In *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*, we hear Fred Rogers say, “Sometimes we get to change a broken world with our words.” * (The movie *Harriet* reminded us that hate-filled words played a crucial role in setting our country on a course that cost over half a million young men’s lives in the Civil War.) Too often (e.g. on January 6 in Washington, D.C., or more recently in Gaza and Israel) we see harsh words and actions tear down unity and set people against one another. Being kind is not just bland “niceness.” It takes letting God transform the inner sources from which our words and actions spring. Through the apostle Paul God called us to be a community in which we “Only say what is helpful when it is needed for building up the community so that it benefits those who hear what [we] say.”

- Imagine the apostle Paul on trial before the Roman Emperor Nero. The great scholar F. F. Bruce cited “T.R. Glover’s comment on a Roman Emperor’s condemnation of the Apostle to the Gentiles—that the day was to come when men would call their dogs Nero and their sons PAUL.” ** Paul’s words (like today’s, with many, many others) have changed the world far more, and for the better, than anything Nero said or did, despite all his seeming “power.” When have someone’s words of empathy, caring or kindness changed your world for the better? Scholar N. T. Wright wrote, “People who are enslaved to anger and malice may think they are ‘free’ to ‘be themselves’, but they are in bondage.” *** When have you used hurtful words, and then wondered, “Why?” What helps you see your feelings and motives better, so you don’t blurt out negative words? Before you forward an angry e-mail or post a tart social media response, can you ask, “Does this give grace? Does it build up? Can I picture Jesus sending this?”

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you fearlessly faced up to true evil. But you took no delight in tearing down reputations, or sharing juicy gossip. Help my words to reflect you well, and to change my broken world for the better. Amen.

* From <https://lolalambchops.com/>

** Quoted in F. F. Bruce’s dedication of *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* to his granddaughters and grandsons, one of whom is named Paul.

*** N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, p. 56).

Prayer Requests – cor.org/prayer *As a church family, we care for and pray for one another.*

Please pray for our church family members who are serving in the military, and those listed below who have recently lost loved ones.

Jeanie Meyer and family following the death of Don Carlson (brother), who died 5/30/2021

Carrie Smith and family following the death of James “Jim” Reibold (father), who died 6/4/2021

Vicki Pelkey and family following the death of Aleen Venturella (mother), who died 6/5/2021

Mark Mawhiney and family following the death of Bill Mawhiney (father), who died 6/5/2021

Kay Thomson and family following the death of William “Dick” Thomson (husband), who died

6/8/2021

If you would like prayer, please submit a prayer request [online](#), and our pastors and prayer team will pray for you.