



## Week Three: Callousness / un-Kindness

### OPENING PRAYER:

Dear God, we adore you and magnify your holy name. We give thanks for your loving kindness. Soften our hearts towards others so that we may reflect your love and mercy through acts of kindness.

### ENCOUNTERING GOD:

Where have you seen God at work in your life this week?

What good have you done for others this week?

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# WEEKLY SCRIPTURE READING:

Text: Luke 10:29-37

“But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ Jesus replied, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So, likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, “Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.” Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?’ He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’”

## SUMMARY AND CONTEXT:

*After fruit rots, it dries out and become hard. I know this fact all too well, I have a four-year-old and a seven-year-old, who somehow manage to drop their food in the car. While removing a car seat, I am embarrassed to say that I have discovered rock-hard fruit, and other food underneath or between a seat, way more times than I am willing to admit. If we are not careful, our hearts can become just as hard as these pieces of dried-out fruit because it often happens without us even noticing. It takes time for our hearts to become hardened.*

*In Luke, the legal expert asks Jesus, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus refers the legal expert back to the law and asks him to read it. However, in Matthew 22:34-40, the legal expert asks, “Teacher which commandment in the law is the greatest?” In Mark 12:28-31, the legal expert asks, “Which commandment is first of all?” Jesus provides the answer in Matthew and Mark. In Luke, Jesus makes the legal expert recite the greatest and second greatest commandment, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus tells him to live according to what is written. When the*

*legal asks a follow up question, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus explains what it means to be a neighbor by telling a parable.*

*In our text, a certain man had been robbed, stripped of his clothing and left half dead in a ditch on the road to Jericho. The man’s name is not given, his ethnicity or religious affiliation is not mentioned although, it has been widely assumed that he was Jewish. All we know is he is in need. The man in the ditch could have been any of us. The priest, followed by the Levite, sees the man but crosses over to the other side of the road. The Jewish audience hearing this parable would have expected the third person to be an Israelite. After all, the priest was holy man who made atonement on behalf of the people, the Levite assisted the priest and was responsible for maintaining the temple, and the people of Israel were a holy people. However, the Samaritan saw the beaten man and had compassion on him. Jews did not want anything to do with Samaritans. Why did the Samaritan have compassion on the man, while the religious elites did not?*

*Perhaps, it is because the Samaritan understood what life was like in the ditch. The Samaritan was looked down on by Jews because of where he was from, where he worshipped, and his mixed ethnic identity. The Jewish elites knew what life was like in the Temple. They showed their love for God by strictly adhering to the practices of the temple. They practiced their religious piety while neglecting the needs of humanity. They had a soft spot for God, but had hearts hardened towards humanity. However, Jesus teaches in the parable that one of the ways that we demonstrate our love for God is how we treat our neighbor. Loving God and neighbor are not mutually exclusive. Jesus also teaches that our neighbors are not defined by where they are from, where they worship, their ethnic identity, or any other human social construct. A neighbor is someone who shows kindness. Kindness is humbly giving ourselves in love and mercy to others who may not be able to give back.*

# GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

## Encounter the Head:

Define kindness in your own words.

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Who is your neighbor?

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Is it possible for love God without loving your neighbor?

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## Encounter the Heart:

Share a time when you where in need of help and someone stopped what they were doing to help you. What did you learn about God? Yourself? Others?

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Share a time when you sacrificed time and energy to help someone. What impact did it have on the other person?

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# GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Which person in the parable do you identify with the most?

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**Encounter the Hands:**

**Share** are your prayer concerns and celebrations.

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**Announce:** An Encounter Group Huddle will be held March 22 in Evans Hall at 12:15, following the 11 a.m. worship service. We will be discussing next steps for our groups and doing a mission project: assembling hygiene kits for the homeless.

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# PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

## Encounter The Hands:

Please go around the group and have each person share a praise for this week and a prayer request/

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## CLOSING PRAYER

Have a volunteer lead closing prayer: asking for prayer concerns and lifting up the needs of the group.

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# DAILY REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

We encourage everyone to do a daily reflection. This can be done alone, as a couple, or with your family. This spiritual practice will help answer the questions you have and it will improve your ability to see where God is at work in your life, and in the lives of those around you. Please answer the following questions during your personal devotional time at the end of the day.

Where have you seen God today? For the children, we say, “what made you happy today?”

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What broke your heart or made you sad today?

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What good thing did you do for someone else today?

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What are you thankful for today?

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