

July 25, 2021

Love Your Neighbor. Really.

Mark 2:1-12

This week's Focal Passage got me thinking about my neighbors. Not my friends who live in the same city or my community in general, but the people who live in the homes adjacent to mine, my immediate neighbors. They've changed over the years, and we're all friendly enough. Our kids play together, and our dogs bark at each other. We aren't social outside of our small plots, but we get along.

When I read this week's lesson, I thought of the families that live on either side of me. I wondered if my neighbors would be willing to carry me on a stretcher somewhere, rip the roof off a house, and lower me down into it. I mean, that's asking a lot of my husband or close family; could I ask that of someone whose last name I don't know? Would I do the same for them?

The Focal Passage doesn't elaborate on the relationship of the four people carrying the mat and the paralyzed man. They might have been friends, neighbors, or family. The important thing is they were full of love and mighty faith. They knew that someone near to them needed help, and they knew that Jesus Christ was the one to help him. They were going to do whatever it took to get the paralyzed man the help he needed, even if it meant ripping up someone's roof.

I look at my neighbors differently now than I did before reading this lesson. I want to talk to them about their lives. I want to learn their last names. I want to know where I can help and how I can be a better neighbor. I want to grow love for them, and I want them to grow love for me in return.

1. What is your relationship like with your immediate neighbors?
2. Who in your life is in need of healing? How can you be a good friend or neighbor to them in their time of need?
3. In what ways can you become a better neighbor to those around you this week?

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