



## Heal Our Land

### Part 1 – Love Each Other

Pastor Ted Cunningham

Welcome to Woodland Hills. We are coming out of a crazy time. I told my dad in the first service... After the Cubs won the World Series and this election, I'm shocked he is still alive. Can I get an amen on that one? I said, "Dad, you know if the doctor calls me anytime in the next few weeks and says 'Your Dad's not doing well; do you want to keep him on life support?' I'm going to say 'Nah, he's seen enough.'" Do you know what's really odd about that? I shared that and everybody laughed and my mom was back there applauding. It's a true story; I'm not exaggerating. She goes, "No, I was just shocked by the joke and I just clapped my hands together."

Preparing for this message on Monday and Tuesday, I was headed in a very clear direction with it. I knew exactly what we were going to say, and then at about 2:45 Wednesday morning, the message went in a totally different direction and then we came back this way. I'm going, "Dear Lord, heal our land." And that's where we are headed for the next few weeks.

I ask for a ton of grace from on this as we kind of walk through some issues and try to figure some things out. But, here's what we do know. We are dealing with division. We're dealing with anger. We're dealing with fear and frustration. I'm personally trying to work through it and I hope you're doing the same and that every day is not just a big rally, but that we are actually listening and trying to figure things out. We're not making fun of Miley Cyrus. Am I clear on this one? We see where these tears are coming from even when we can't understand them. As we kind of work through that, we have a series for three weeks that we're starting today called *Heal Our Land*.

Today we are looking at *Love Each Other*. These messages are going to have the exact words of Jesus as titles. Today, we are starting with the church and what it looks like and how we need to love one another. It's the command Jesus gave to the disciples. It's the command Jesus gave to followers of Jesus of how we, the body of Christ, love one another. That's going to be today.

Next week, we are going to look at *Love Your Neighbor*. Today is to believers in the family of God regarding how we love each other. Next week, it's how we love those that live close to us, but may be different, difficult, or democratic. You know I love throwing that one out there. We are going to learn how to love that person. By love them, I mean that we listen to them and understand what they are thinking and feeling, not necessarily agreeing with them, but I think it's important that we really spend a whole week on that. It's love your neighbor as yourself.

Then in the last week, we are going to look at *Love Your Enemy*. Be good to those who curse you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who curse you. These are people that scare you or seek to harm you. How do you love that person? It starts here in the church because the world is watching the church. The world is wanting to see if it's different in that church than outside. Do they love each other, care for each other? Is it authentic? Or do they put on a show? We can go through all of the thoughts and feelings that the non-Christian has about the church.

### **Jesus commanded us to love each other.**

Today, we are going to spend time looking at what it means to love each other. Here's where we are going to start. He commanded the disciples. If you have your Bibles, turn to John 13. If you don't have your Bible, it's no problem; it will be on the screen. This is actually a command that Jesus gives. We are under the authority of Jesus. We believe Jesus is our source of life. We believe he is the only way to the Father. We believe in Him. We live and move and have our being in Him. So, he is our source of authority. We can take the command alone, but we are going to look at three main thoughts in these two verses in Chapter 13: 34-35.

**34 "A new command I give you: Love one another."** Now, this is right after Jesus washes the feet of the disciples. This is Jesus giving a new command. When you first hear that, you're surprised that it says new. It's not a new idea. It's coming from Jesus and that makes it a new command because he's going to tell us that he is the source of this love. So, the bottom line is this. If you have someone you can't love... If you have a family member or a friend or even someone within this church body that's a professing believer in Christ Jesus that you can't love, I'm here to tell you today that is your issues, not theirs. That is your responsibility, not theirs.

Amy was the one that added the responsibility part because I was really strong with that. I was like "It's your fault, not theirs." She encouraged me to go with responsibility. But, it is on you. Why? It's because Jesus said, "This is a new command: You are to love one another." He's the source of life, he's the truth, he is the way. So, of all the one another commands given to the church in the scripture... We don't have time to go through all 100 plus of them, but I want us to look at nine of them.

As I was going through them this week, I was having so much fun with these nine and they are so easy to memorize. I want to encourage you to memorize them. I took them home on a piece of paper and I handed them to my 11-year-old and my 13-year-old. I said, "Memorize these in the next 10 minutes." How many of you want children who get along? Does anything bring greater joy in your life than when your children get along without you telling them to get along? Isn't that a good place? That's a great place. When you watch it and it happens and you had nothing to do with it, there's that moment where you're like, "I don't want to screw this up. I don't want this to stop. This is so good. It's unsolicited love. They just apologized to each other and I didn't tell them to." Then we back up and realize the Lord is at work in our children. They are not all demonic; they can all come around and Jesus can do things.

But, I handed the list of the nine to them. I have a first born, go getter and she had all nine memorized in seven and a half minutes. She asked me why we were doing this and I said, "Because next week we are putting them all on nine index cards and we going to carry them on us. When we practice one of

these, we're going to pull that out and drop it wherever we are." I hope our home is full... Just everywhere you walk, there will be a 3x5 index card laying around the house where we saw that happen. I believe in our home... and I hope it's true in yours. When you see Jesus lived out, you stop everything and you through a party. Can I get an amen on that? That's a big deal.

Let's look at these because this is what the world is seeing in us, follower of Jesus, the way we love other followers of Jesus. I watched the Garth Brook concert on Thursday night because I'm an American. How many of you watched it? Nobody knew it was on; it was on like channel 9436; it was an obscure channel. The whole theme was "love one another." I just wish we could break it down right now and understand this command to love isn't just a shotgun to the world; Jesus is speaking directly to the follower of Jesus. Model something that the world will see and go, "I want that." This is going to be key. And here is how we love one another. You'll see these are easy to memorize.

### **Forgive One Another (Col. 3:13)**

This is where some of you are starting. "I can love her, Ted." I always love messages like this. People catch me and they want to give me the exception. They're like, "I love what you said, but you left this little part out. Let me tell you what this person said and did to me." I ask if that person has apologized and they're like, "Yeah, yeah, but I think that is unforgiveable." I said, "Okay, you will be here for all three parts of this message." Forgive one another. Isn't forgiveness something that the world needs to see?

### **Serve One Another (Gal. 5:13)**

The text of John 13 is Jesus on the ground, washing the feet of his disciples. The son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life. We are to be watching where there are needs in the body of Christ and we are saying "I have the means right now, I have the time right now, I have the resources right now; I'm going to meet that need."

### **Stop Passing Judgment On One Another (Romans 14:13)**

We're going to spend a little bit of time on this one. Stop having negative beliefs about other people. When you hear something or see something, stop thinking you know why they did that. For example, I don't know if you noticed my shoes last week. Did anybody notice my shoes last week? They were awesome. They were sharp and classy and the most uncomfortable pair of shoes I've ever owned in my life. My wife and I have differences of opinion on the way I should dress. I believe you should come to church in what you just raked the yard or mowed the yard in. I like to be comfortable. Is anybody with me on comfort? Does anybody want to see my shoes today? These the most comfortable shoes that have ever been invented and I will wear these until the day I die.

Do you know what a negative belief is? A negative belief... It's this simple and we'll build this out at the end of the message. A negative belief is me standing up here saying, "My wife wants me to be uncomfortable." That's a negative belief. We have them all the time in our relationships. "I texted him

an hour ago and he has not responded to my text.” You start deciding what all the reasons are. Or... We’ve learned this, right; somebody had to finally tell me this. When you hit the decline button on your phone, it means it sends it right to voice mail. People have told me I have to let it play out so they don’t know I’m screening their call. I wish Verizon would have told me that when I got my phone. For the ones that didn’t know that either, I’ve just given you everything you need to know this morning.

When you hit that red button, think about the person on the other end. They’re not thinking you’ve got a meeting or you’ve got things going on or that you are in a very difficult spot or you’re driving. No, we start going “Why doesn’t she want to talk to me?” That’s where the negative beliefs begin. You start assuming and your mind starts running. My wife gave me those shoes because she wants me to start stepping it up a notch in my wardrobe, not because she wants me to be uncomfortable. How many of you would agree that in the church today, we’ve got to do a little bit better job of listening to one another rather than judging one another. Just find out what’s going on.

### **Bear One Another’s Burdens (Gal. 6:2)**

This is in Galatians 6 where it actually says to carry your own load. In other words, there are some burdens some of you have in here right now that you need to carry all by yourself. You have to step it up. You have to carry it, get grit, and go after it. But, there are some burdens that hit the follower of Jesus that are too much for one person to carry. And loving one another means we are on the lookout for the people that are carrying something too heavy. Love says “I’ll step alongside that person and help them carry that.

You did that last week with the benevolence offering. We take that offering the first Sunday of every month if you want to help those in need around here. We want you to know if you’re having a hard time paying the rent or the utility bill, whatever the struggle is, we will come alongside and bear one another’s burdens. However, you have a part to play. That’s why we don’t pay your rent for three years. We would like you to get this thing called a job. This is not the republican platform I share this morning.

Don’t you get excited when you find out somebody just got a job? There’s something about getting up, getting dress, and going to work and we want to help you do that. That’s a load that you must carry to provide for your family. If hard times hit you, we can come alongside and bear that burden with you, but I’m not going to get a second job before you get a first job. And all God’s people said... Amen.

### **Comfort One Another (I Thess. 4:18)**

Rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn. Do you know what the context of 1 Thessalonians 4: 18 is? That when someone in here loses a loved one, this is when all the body of Christ gathers around that person. And do you know what we do? We comfort them. What do we comfort them with? Paul tells the Church of Thessalonica you comfort them with the death and resurrection of Jesus. We believe Jesus died and rose again. In Verse 18, he says, ***Therefore encourage one another with these words.*** Continue to share that. We are to mourn with those who are mourning.

### **Encourage One Another and Build Up One Another (I Thess. 5:11)**

Spend time speaking blessing over other believers. This is all part of loving one another.

### **Be hospitable to One Another (I Peter 4:9)**

We get our word *hospitality* from the same place we get the word *hospital*. It come from the Latin, meaning "to heal." Are you a healing person? We get our word *restaurant* from the word that means "to restore." When you have a good meal... I love what Dan Cathy of Chick-fil-A says. He says, "A good meal should restore you 30% in the stomach and 70% in the heart, unless you are a teenager. Then it's flipped to 70% in the stomach and 30% in the heart. But let me ask you this. When other believers are in your presence, do they feel healing; are they restored? This is loving one another. Or, do they walk away from you with more anger in their heart. This is not just a spiritual gift; this is Christian service. We are called to be hospitable.

### **Confess Your Sins to One Another (James 5:16)**

What if the world sees us, followers of Jesus, confessing our sins to one another without passing judgment on one another, forgiving one another? Do you see the power in this? This is why Jesus commanded it. When you begin to forgive each other without passing judgment, the world looks in and says "I haven't experienced that. I want what they are experiencing."

I heard the story this week of four pastors that got together for coffee. As they got together for coffee, they said, "People are always coming up to us, confessing their sins to us in the office and stuff, but we don't really have a good place for that kind of accountability." One of the pastors led out and said, "What if the four of us did that for each other?" They all thought that was a good idea.

So, the first pastor said, "I come from a pretty conservative denomination that doesn't allow us to go the movie theater, but I like to sneak away a few towns over and go to a movie every now and then."

The second pastor goes, "Tobacco is way off limits in our denomination and in our church, but I have to admit I like to go out on the back porch every now and then and smoke a pipe."

The third pastor says, "Well, I pastor an independent, fundamental, pre-millennial, King James Version only Baptist church where they don't allow wine, but my wife and I like to go out and have a meal and pair it with wine."

Then the fourth pastor says, "I struggle with gossip and I can't wait to get out of here."

Can I just ask this question? Has anybody here been burned on James 5: 16? You've confessed your sins to someone and it became ammunition for that person. Loving one another leaves us vulnerable, but it's a risk worth taking. Confessing our sins to one another. Jesus commanded us to love one another, but now watch this.

**Jesus modeled how to love each other.**

Again, in the text, it's simply him kneeling down and washing the feet of the disciples. He modeled forgiveness. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing." He would bear the burdens with people that he came alongside and healed. In a moment, we are going to see him modeling what he leaves for us in that we are called to actually bear with one another. He put up with the disciples. Can I get amen on that one? There were a lot of times he loved them through challenges and teaching them and just going "Oh, they still don't get it. They're still not practicing this." But, Jesus modeled it and this is the second part of John 13: 34

**"As I have loved you..."** "What I've said and what I've done, I hope you guys have been paying attention because I am leaving this earth." Then the disciples got onto when he was going to establish his kingdom. That became their big issue and Jesus said "No, let's stay focused here... You guys have a job to do now. You are to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. I want you to go do this job and how are you going to do that? What's your testimony?"

**"...so you must love one another."** "I am the source of your love." For some of you having a hard time loving another follower of Jesus right now, in this congregation or in your family, I just want you to ask the question: "Who is my source?" If it's that person, you're not going to find what you need to love that person. Jesus is your source and he modeled it for you. But more than that, the third point you get out of the very next verse is this.

### **Loving each other is our identity.**

Follower of Jesus, church, the way we love each other is who we are and how we are known. Jesus said this, **35 "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples..."** By this, loving one another as I have loved you, everyone will know that you are my disciples, **"if you love one another."** Let's look at this a few different ways.

- 1. Unbelievers do not recognize us as followers of Jesus because of our doctrine.** There are just not a lot of lost people driving around town in Branson right now going "Hmm where can I go get a good study on Revelation?" "I wonder what that church believes about this?" This is why you know I've struggled for years with church signs. I've shared this with you. It's the marquee signs where they put their sayings and their beliefs and their thoughts. I drive by some of them and I wonder what they are thinking. What lost person is going to drive by that sign and go "I want to go there." Have you ever seen a person stopped on the side of the road, confessing their sin on the side of the road to the Father in heaven because of what they just saw on an offensive church sign?

I brought a few of them; I want you to see a couple of them. *Now is a good time to visit. Our pastor is on vacation.* So, some of them are funny. Some of them have a problem with sign placement. I like this next one telling you when the service times are with a sign next to a Porta Potty. With this next one, they put the wrong person in charge of thinking things through. It says, *Best sausage supper in St. Louis. Come and eat Pastor Thomas Ressler.* I have no words. How about this one.

This one says *If you don't love God, go to hell*. I don't know about you, but I'd rather go to the Porta Potty church because I think this church stinks more. Does anybody know what I'm talking about?

We have to get over this idea of stating your beliefs and then really just going at people... Jesus says, "You'll be known as my disciples..." People are watching and they are going to see how you get along, how you forgive each other, how you stop passing judgment on each other, how you love one another, and how you confess your sins to each other. They are watching all this and this is how you're known. Some of you are going to wrestle with these, but let's do it.

**2. Unbelievers do not recognize us as followers of Jesus because of our love for them.** I've been a part of multiple churches where we spent so much time talking about our love for the seeker and spending time planning a service for the seeker, but then when they show up, they say, "Yeah, I know you say you love us, but why is your church splitting? I don't understand. You say you love us and you're glad we're here, but you can't stand each other?" This is a problem. This is why *Love Your Neighbor* is next week. We've got to get it right in here before we take it out there. Some of you feel lost people are easier to love. Before we go love a lost and dying world, we have to get it right here with everyone. Love each other, forgive each other, confess our sins to each other, stop passing judgment on each other, bearing one another's burdens. We must practice this all.

**3. Unbelievers do not recognize us as follower of Jesus because of our benevolence to the poor.** Just be a church that's about ministry, get stuff done, yes, but take the love of Jesus out of the church where it is already being practiced. Francis Shafer says this about loving one another: "It's the mark of a Christian." If we don't get this right... Everything flows from it. We've got to practice it here.

Rick Warren says, "Snowflakes are fragile, but when they stick together, they can stop traffic." You and I, when we are bonded in the unity of the Spirit, when Jesus Christ is at the center and we are together and we are moving forward, loving one another, forgiving one another, not passing judgment on one another, bearing one another's burdens, building one another up, encouraging one another... When we are doing that, do you have any idea what we can do? We can stop traffic.

**Your neighbors and enemies are watching you.** Here's why this is so important as we look at the next two weeks in this series. They're watching you right now. They're watching right now how you're handling the election. Watching what's happening on some college campuses and watching the protests and watching all this going on, you're neighbors and your enemies are watching how you're watching that. They are watching what you post about that. They are watching your tone. They are watching your posture. To say, "I love Jesus, I love the body of Christ, I want to reach the world for Christ," but then to spew venom...

Amy has caught me on this because do you have any idea how many tweets I have started to send out? Then Amy talks to me and I hit that backspace button. I'm there with you because our feelings sometimes... It's just like, "Yes! I've got a great point to make and if the world doesn't hear my point, the world will end!" Does anybody know what I'm talking about? "They've got to hear what I'm thinking right now." No, they don't.

**Some of your neighbors have been rejected by parents.** Here's why this is so important. Their parents have abandoned them and told them they wanted nothing to do with them. So, imagine what they are thinking when they look in and see a family.

**Some of your neighbors have been rejected by children.** Imagine when they look in and see family done well. Imagine what they are thinking and feeling when they see moms and dads and grandmas and grandpas and husband and wives and children and parents loving each other in the body of Christ and saying, "I've never experienced that in my family, but it's going on there. I want to go experience that."

**Some of your neighbors have been rejected by spouses.** They are watching your marriage. They are watching what you say and do about other believers. They're seeing this come out of you.

When people are rejected and abandoned... They show up here all the time and all throughout the week. They've been rejected by family, by the system, by work, by whatever and they are turning to drugs and alcohol and everything they can to cope with it. They are showing up and they are saying something is different about them.

**Some of your neighbors have been rejected by Christians.** This is why we have the label of hypocrisy. When you say, "I am a Christian," all sorts of baggage comes with that for them.

**Loving each other within the body of Christ does not require that we always agree.** We're going to have differences of opinion. On Monday night, I was with a new friend, a pastor in Atlanta, Georgia. He is conservative, Southern Baptist. He's been at the same church for 35 years. He was the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Just put the title conservative on this man. Our core beliefs are down the line. We are in 100% agreement on when life begins. Life begins in the womb. Marriage is between a husband and a wife for a lifetime. The value and the sanctity of life. Jesus is the only way, the truth the way and the life. We believe in all that.

I sat in his office before going to... I was doing comedy for his deacons. He has over 100 deacons at this church and their spouses. This was one of the most loving groups of people I've ever been around. The pastor told me, "For the first time in 35 years, I stood before my congregation on Sunday and explained to them why I would not be voting for Donald Trump."

Remember last week when we shared that evangelical Christians are deeply divided over the character of the candidate, but we are together on the issues? He shared that with me and whenever I'm with a statesman, I always have a brief moment where I'm like, "I've made a terrible mistake!" He wrote someone in and I voted for someone... Like I'm trying to hide who I voted for. See, I'm one of those Christians that's conflicted by the vote.

The pastor and I disagreed on how to vote. It's the first time in my life I've ever experienced this because I would put this guy far more conservative than I am. For the first time in my lifetime, we didn't vote the same way, but do you know what we did do? We had dinner together. We laughed together. I hugged him... twice. If you know me, that's one time, maybe two times more than I'm comfortable with. As I'm driving away, headed back to the airport, I thought to myself, *that's fantastic; I hope we get to do more of that. I hope we can have differences of opinion on how things go...* We are on the same page with core beliefs, but we can have differences of opinion and still love one another.

I hope you understand that, follower of Jesus. This morning, some of you are celebratory and you came up to me and said, "Is it okay, Ted, that afterwards and at 2:45 in the morning, I did a happy dance?" Yes, of course you can celebrate. Some of you really see that we have a shot, we have a chance as a nation and that's your belief. There are others of you in here that are still torn apart.

I asked some of the deacons at the meeting. Can I just share with you what was said without you going to email or Twitter right now? One guy said, "I voted this way, hoping there would be an impeachment and then this guy would become the president." I heard all different strategies and reasoning for voting. I'm hope we move past all of this and begin praying for our nation, begin praying for our leaders, understanding we can love one another even though we don't all agree.

In Ephesians 4: 2-3, Paul puts it this way to the church at Ephesus and I think this is fantastic. **Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.** I love this text because scholars agree this actually means there are times loving one another means you tolerate one another. Think about that. Tolerance, kind of like the rainbow, has a bad name with it right now. Do you have anybody you love that you put up with, besides me. I made the mistake in the first service of asking how many had put up with me over the last few years and there were like 50 hands that shot up around the congregation.

Look what it says. **Make every effort...** Now he's explaining this is how you bear with one another. I met with a husband this week who told me his goal for meeting with me was so that he could say... He wanted me to check the box of "made every effort." I told him I couldn't because there were so many more efforts to make. The idea here is that you would continually bear with someone. The idea here is that you would be making effort **to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.**

Why do I have to make every effort at loving someone? Why can't I just say on the day I get married, "I love you Amy and it will get easier from here." Why can't I just say, "I love you. It's a command of Jesus; he modeled it; it's my identity; I'm just not going to talk to you. I don't want to spend any time with you. You wear me out. You exhaust me." I want to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Here's why it takes effort within the body of Christ with people you don't always agree with. We clash over **personality**. There are all sorts of personalities. We have detailed people in here, we have fun people in here, we have loyal people, we have leaders that are just going after it, we have all different kinds of personalities that require effort to get along.

There are all sorts of **passions** in here. Some of you are passionate about this people group or this nation or this part of the country and you're moving to minister. We have it all throughout our congregation. You're passionate about this program in the church or this idea. You have all sorts of passions. Don't look at someone who doesn't share your passion as though they are wrong. We have to bear with one another. We have to put up with one another. We have to love one another.

The other one very clear from scripture is **giftedness**. When Jesus left, he scattered the gifts among all followers of Jesus and said "When you come together, you will be the body of Christ." When you're exercising your gift and you bring those together... That's why we don't compare our giftedness. We understand that what happens in all the different areas of our church... It's all the body of Christ working together.

Some of you have different life **experience**. You can't relate to that person because they haven't been through what you have been through. Bear with one another and make every effort to find out why they think the way they think, why they feel the way they feel, and why they approach life that way.

Even with **strategy**. I thought about this with voting. We have different ways of getting things done in the body of Christ. There are different strategies at work, but we are going to bear with one another.

As you think about personality, passion, giftedness, experience, and strategy, and how we are to make every effort at peace, **loving each other requires that we work through assumptions and negative beliefs**. This is what I'm asking as part of loving one another, bearing with one another, making every effort at peace over the next several weeks and as we head into Thanksgiving and spend a lot of time around the table together. I ask that we will be great listeners; that we will want to discover why this person thinks and feels the way they are feeling. It's not what I'm thinking or feeling.

Let me describe negative beliefs so you can find them in your relationships and then attack them and work through them by listening. It's the only way marriage works. And all the husbands said... Amen. I shared the shoes, but let me tell you another one. My wife and I are doing some changes around the house right now. Again, we have completely and totally different worldviews when it comes to house restoration. I've explained to you how much I hate Chip Gaines and I'm seriously going to punch him in the face the first time I meet him because my wife thinks we can do anything.

Negative beliefs are assuming why that person said what they said or did what they did and you begin assigning motives to their actions or assigning motives to their words. For example, cleaning out the garage. This is how my wife likes to clean out the garage. We have a big garbage can and she pulls the lid off. She likes to go around the garage and just, in her term, "pitch, pitch, pitch." She loves to throw things away.

The anxiety and the stress that falls upon me... This is not a silly illustration. This is as serious an illustration as I've ever shared. I'm tense because she lives by a fundamental belief, not a negative belief, but a fundamental belief that if you haven't used it in the last six months, you don't need it. So, she's like grocery shopping through our garage for things that have not been used in six months. She'll hold things up and go "Hey, babe, have you used this lately?"

I'm like, "Honey, that's a hammer. Just because I haven't built something or hung a picture, every home needs a hammer."

This wears me out. She going through the garage and just fills up garbage cans like that. A negative belief is walking around saying "She's doing that because... She wants to frustrate me. She wants to annoy me." I'm using an extreme exaggeration here because this is happening in your relationships all day long, from the cell phones to what happens at work to what happens in your marriage to what happens with your children to what happens with your parents.

I can sit there and stay frustrated and angry and be like "No, no, no, that's a battery charger. If the battery dies this winter, I have to charge the battery."

"You haven't used it since last winter."

"That's because batteries don't die in the summer."

This is what we do for hours in the garage. I get attitude. I go, "Guess what? I'm throwing all the Christmas stuff away. We haven't used that for 11 months." Look how worked up I get. I'm frustrated right now.

Do you know what Amy is thinking? Honestly, this is what's in her heart as she's pitch, pitch, pitching. In her heart, it's, "Ted is going to sleep so much better tonight. This clean house is his castle." I'm not kidding you; this is honestly what she's thinking. "I'm keeping this place clean for him and he just loves it. He's going to be so grateful. I know the pain is but for a moment, but weeks and months down the road, he's going to be so grateful that we..." This is what's in her heart, but I'm sitting over there stewing in the corner because I'm assuming what's in her heart.

How do you find out what's in a person's heart? You listen, you understand, you validate. That's part of bearing with one another. That's part of listening. That's part of forgiving. That's part of stop passing judgment and listen. We're going to work through a lot more assumptions and negative beliefs as we talk about loving your neighbor and loving your enemy and what that looks like.

Father, it's in the name of Jesus that we thank you for our time together today. We pray for President Obama and his staff as they transition out of office and as President Elect Trump and his staff transition in. We pray for a smooth transition. We pray for these riots. We pray for the ones who are committing crimes, that they will quickly be arrested and punished, so we can begin to bring this back down. We pray for those who are peacefully protesting. We want to hear and we want to know, but we want to be a good testimony to the world.

We want to be known here by the way we love each other. We don't want to go do something outside before we first practice it here. May we be a church that is committed to loving and forgiving and serving and bearing with one another. May that be our goal, may that be our heart as we head out this week into our homes, our home groups, and spending time with others who profess Jesus Christ as Lord. And all God's people said... Amen.