

**May 19, 2019**  
**Sermon Manuscript**

**John 13:31-35**

<sup>31</sup> When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. <sup>32</sup> If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. <sup>33</sup> Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’ <sup>34</sup> A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

**Love Over Fear, Part 1: The Third Option**

So our gospel passage this morning is taken from the Last Supper. After Jesus has shared the meal with his disciples when he instituted Holy Communion and Judas has just gone out to betray him, Jesus begins a series of teachings that will continue for the next four chapters of John. And after he spends a few verses predicting his impending death and resurrection,<sup>a</sup> the key verse here is 34, where Jesus says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”

Now what is ‘new’ here is not so much the command to love, but the means by which the Lord intends to empower his disciples *to* love: through the model of his own sacrifice and the power of the Holy Spirit. You see, by this point Jesus has *long* been teaching this command to love:

- in his Two Greatest Commandments that we recite each Sunday – that “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-40)
- and perhaps most radically in his Sermon on the Mount, where he commanded us to love our enemies.<sup>b</sup>

But our First Lesson today from Leviticus (19:1-2, 9-18) shows the love command is rooted in the Old Testament, where God instructs the Israelites in the way of love, teaching them:

- “When you reap the harvest of your land” or “pick the fruit of your vineyard” leave some for the poor and the sojourner,
- and “do not to steal, do not be dishonest”;
- He tells them to be people of their word and to honor his name;
- to care about the welfare of their workers and the disadvantaged,
- “do not show partiality to the rich,”
- “Do not slander”,
- “do not harbor hatred in your heart” or take vengeance or bear a grudge”

And then he sums it up (at the end of verse 18) – and this is where Jesus takes it from – God says “you shall love your neighbor as yourself: (because) I am the LORD.” #

So today I want to begin a mini-series focusing upon this command to love our neighbor, which Jesus identified as the characteristic that should distinguish Christians from others. But I need to make clear which neighbors we’re talking about. While Jesus’ command to love our neighbor most certainly *applies* to those who are closest to us – our spouse, children, friends – and perhaps it applies to them *most* of all, the neighbors I want us to consider how to love are those who are *less* familiar. That is, the individuals or groups of people whom we might label as “them”, as in “us versus them”. So our enemies:

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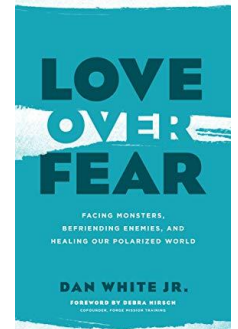
<sup>a</sup> Dale Bruner on verse 31-32. In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, & Luke), Jesus’ cross/passion is seen as his humiliation, but in John it is presented as Jesus’ glorification. The Father’s glorification of Jesus through the cross comes by strengthening Jesus to remain remarkably and miraculously faithful through everything horrendous moment of his passion, but will culminate in the Father raising him from the dead

<sup>b</sup> Matthew 5: <sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

the people for whom we are most inclined to feel hatred or contempt, and yet whom Jesus has clearly still called us to love.

You'll recall that in Luke chapter 10 a Jewish expert in the moral law, having just cited the command to love thy neighbor from Leviticus asks Jesus "And who *is* my neighbor?" And Jesus is compelled to respond by telling a parable about a Good Samaritan" (v25-37), knowing full well that Jews and Samaritans hated one another.<sup>c</sup>

Seeking to love our enemies is a very different venture than trying to love those closest to us.<sup>d</sup> So to explore what it looks like to live out this command toward the "thems" in our life, I want to share some of the musings of author and pastor Dan White Jr.<sup>e</sup>, whose recently published book<sup>f</sup> identifies our biggest obstacle to this love, which he suggests is fear. ##



### What's fear got to do with it?

When I was a little kid, there were a few years there where I was convinced that Freddy Krueger lived under my bed. For those of you who are not familiar Freddy, he is the villain of the horror film series *A Nightmare on Elm Street* who uses a gloved hand with razors to kill his victims in their dreams. And even though I had never seen any of these films – in fact, I still haven't – I had seen enough posters of the movies and copies of the videos at Blockbuster with Freddy on the cover that my imagination took over from there. And fearing that Freddy had taken up residence under my bed led to many nights where it was difficult to get to sleep.

Well, I'm happy to report that I no longer *fear* that Freddy is under my bed – as adults we graduate out of such fears – but White suggests that this doesn't mean you and I "have rid ourselves of monsters that may not really be there." Instead, "as adults, we outgrow specific fears, trade them in for new ones, and learn to mask them with a certain amount of sophistication."

While a certain level of fear is expected in children, in adults it's commonly viewed as weakness. White once asked a man who had come to him for some pastoral counseling, "What do you fear?" But the man shot back: "Fear? Fear is not an issue for me; I'm just afraid my family won't turn out the way it should!" {Repeat:} "Fear is not an issue for me; I'm just **afraid** my family won't turn out the way it should!" White says the guy couldn't even hear the confession he'd just made. You see, even though so much of what people think and do is motivated by fear we find creative way to dress it up and hide it.<sup>g</sup>

But Jesus knew. White says as Jesus ministered and disciplined people...they often came at him with their doctrines, spiritual clichés, and religious status, but Jesus had X-ray vision to see that much of that was masking fear. Consequently, there are almost 40 occasions in the gospels where Jesus asks his disciples or the crowd "Why are you so afraid?"<sup>h</sup>

<sup>c</sup> The Jews and Samaritans avoided all contact with each other. The Jews looked down on the Samaritans because they were religious half-breeds. They were ethnic gentiles who centuries before had adopted the Jewish concept of God, but they had never embraced Judaism in full. Specifically, they saw no reason they needed to go all the way to the temple in Jerusalem to worship God. Instead they had their own temple where they thought they could worship God just fine. So consequently the Jews and Samaritans didn't like each other.

<sup>d</sup> White: "There is no way around it: to love those on the "them" side of the fence is a different kind of love, a love that stretches beyond our current relational fences."

<sup>e</sup> Dan White Jr. co-leads Axiom Church, a developing network of missional communities in the urban neighborhoods of Syracuse, New York. Dan is the author of *Subterranean: Why the Future of the Church is Rootedness* and co-author of *The Church as Movement: Starting and Sustaining Missional-Incarnational Communities*.

<sup>f</sup> *Love over Fear: Facing Monsters, Befriending Enemies, and Healing Our Polarized World*, Dan White Jr., Moody Publishers: 2019.

<sup>g</sup> White suggests that most of us don't recognize the signs of fear in our lives and instead opt to use words 'control' and 'concerned' instead of the words 'fear' or 'afraid'.

<sup>h</sup> White's summary words, not mine.

Christian Philosopher Søren Kierkegaard identified fear as the core illness in the human condition. And we fear *all sorts* of things, but according to White it is our fear of the other – the one who is different from us – that causes us to create *monsters* out of human beings.

Now, our fear of the other is rooted in our survival instinct, which in the early days of humankind was most commonly activated in response to threats from “a wild animal or a rival tribesman”; in other words, kill or be-killed situations. But as the world has changed and developed to where our physical well-being is not at risk multiple times a day, the threats we are most prone to perceive now come in “in the form of ideas and opinions”. In other words, *now* (in today’s world) we are likely to perceive those whose morals or politics or race or religion is different from ours who as threats to our well-being. As White says, “Fear thrives in the shadows of our opinions, our rants, our judgments, and our preferred labels” and causes us to turn those who *view the world* differently or *live* differently than we do into **monsters**. He says, “People don’t have to do heinous evil things for us to see them as monsters; we just have to feel a tad better than they are...”

So who is it that you or I have made into a monster? It could be Muslims or Mormons, democratic socialists or those who wear MAGA hats, white nationalists or environmentalists, Wall Street 1-percenters or people on welfare, gun rights advocates or champions of gay marriage, or those on the opposite side from us of the abortion debate or the creation-evolution debate. White brings the point home when he says for some right-leaning folks Jesus’ would’ve told his parable of the Good Samaritan as “The Good Progressive” while for those who lean to the left he would have told it as “The Good Conservative”.

We have turned people into monsters when we no longer see them as we see ourselves. But the problem with making monsters out of anyone is that scripture teaches us that all people are created in the image of God and are loved by God. Therefore, He calls us to love them, too. #

### Fear Casts Out love

I took the liberty of changing our Second Lesson today to 1 John 4, as it was a little more on-topic. There, in verse 16 John writes, “God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.” And White explains that

“Love ultimately pulls us outward, toward others, toward the stranger, the widow, the foreigner, the poor, and most shockingly, toward our enemies. This love is the Spirit of Jesus in us, around us, available to us, which is why we are invited to “live (or abide) in love”.

But two verses later John explains, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear” (v18). And what this teaches is that love and fear are opposed to one another. Therefore, while the perfect love of God casts out fear, perfect fear will seek to cast out love. White explains,

“Fear wants to flat-out crush any compassion for *anyone unlike me*—my neighbor, the stranger, and my enemies... (Fear) limits our senses for feeling, knowing, and recognizing what love looks like in any given situation.”

Ultimately, fear shuts down any potential for relationship.

### We Come By Our Fear Pretty Honestly

But where does fear come from? Well, we already talked about our survival instinct. But our life experiences can also contribute to our propensity to fear. All of us have probably experienced someone stealing from us, injuring us, letting us down, which can cause us to become over-protective of ourselves and to feel that fear just *makes more sense* than “the generous, open posture of love,” which can make us vulnerable to harm. Across our society today, people “feel deeply that if we don’t stay on high alert,

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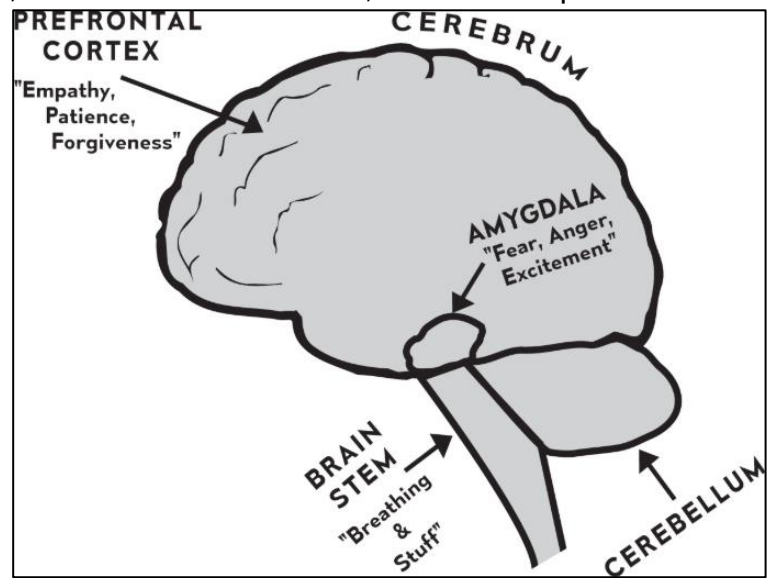
<sup>i</sup> Review the following list for question #4

identifying what and who could hurt us, we are naive or even stupid.” White observes that if the recent election cycle reveals anything, it’s a society riddled with fear.<sup>j</sup> But he says,

“It’s not just threats of terrorism, economic collapse, cyber warfare, the police state, and government corruption; we fear each other, we fear strangers, we fear our neighbors, we fear those who vote differently, we even fear those who parent unlike us.”

We’ve come to “see *each other* primarily with the glasses of fear.”<sup>k</sup>

But there is also physiological component to our fear problem. I know it can sound counter-intuitive, but fear *feels good*. It reminds me of a story I saw a few years back where scientists found the what draws people to carbonated drinks is actually the slight sensation of pain they cause on our tongues.<sup>l</sup> But the way our brains are wired actually inclines us toward fear. In your bulletin I included a diagram of our brains from White’s book that shows the different parts of the brain and the functions they control, so let me take a moment to explain. At the bottom is the brain stem, which controls breathing, heart rate, digestion, excretion, and so forth. Then, we have the cerebellum, which “is responsible for voluntary movements such as posture, balance, coordination, and speech.” But the biggest part of the brain, known as the cerebrum, has *two different sections*: the amygdala and the prefrontal cortex. Well the amygdala is responsible for our emotions that tend to be more impulsive or reflexive like disgust, laughter, fear, excitement, sex drive, and anger; in other words, things that just happen. However, in contrast, higher brain functions that require some contemplation, “such as empathy, forgiveness, self-control, patience, hospitality, and listening (not just hearing)”, these occur in the prefrontal cortex. So, as you can see, even our physiological makeup reflects that fear is a



<sup>j</sup> White: “The raw experience of fearing a common enemy bands us together and can energize us to action. In the early 1980s, a group of psychologists developed a way to study how fear influences our behavior. Their approach to understanding fear is using the Terror Management Theory. These psychologists were able to determine that, in general, when fear influences our decisions, we can be made to respond in wild ways....”

Positive language does not energize nearly as much as fear-based language does. Not surprising, this psychological Terror Management Report has become a formal guidebook for writing political speeches (Tom Pyszczynski, “What Are We So Afraid Of?: A Terror Management Theory Perspective on the Politics of Fear,” *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (Winter 2004)). Both Republicans and Democrats use this report as a framework for peppering their speech with fear-based code words. Our political candidates have become masters of leveraging the psychology of fear.

Donald Trump delivered a speech that passionately used fear and threat: “The attacks on our police, and the terrorism in our cities, threaten our very way of life,” Trump thundered. “... [Many] have seen the recent images of violence in our streets and the chaos in our communities. Many have witnessed this violence personally, some have even been its victims.”

Hillary Clinton wasn’t any better, using the same tactic but for her preferred causes: “I’m the last thing standing between you and the apocalypse,” she said. Fear is the language of our media powers. They understand that to make their political interests become your political interests, they must trigger your moral gut. They must stimulate you to feel angry, or indignant, or threatened. This is their strategy to make you see monsters in the faces of other people.

<sup>k</sup> White: “After the 2016 election, it was discovered that 47 percent of those who voted for Hillary Clinton did not have one close relationship with someone who voted for Donald Trump. Similarly, some 31 percent of Donald Trump supporters had no close friends who supported Hillary Clinton.”

<sup>l</sup> “What’s all the fuss about fizzy drinks?” Jul 29, 2015, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/science-says-seltzer>

more automatic response, while empathy and forgiveness and so on – basically what scripture identifies as the fruits of the Spirit – requires that we transcend our more primal reactions. Is it any wonder that we need the Holy Spirit's help for this?

But to make matters worse, the emotion of fear actually causes the amygdala to release dopamine and serotonin, the brain's feel-good chemicals, which encourages us to indulge it more, while the prefrontal cortex does not produce the same feel-good chemical cocktail.<sup>m</sup> So all of this may explain why even "though the prefrontal cortex is the largest part of our brain, it is the least utilized part by the majority of the population." Would you believe that scientists estimate "that only 10% of the population uses their prefrontal cortex on a regular basis"?<sup>n</sup> {don't answer that ☺}

So, as you can see, there are even physiologically challenges working against our moving beyond fear and into love. But how do we *know* when we are operating out of our amygdala, acting in fear?

### Responding From Our Amygdala

Well, when something scares us, our impulse will be to deal with it in one of two ways: either to attack it or avoid it.

White tells a story about a beautiful Monday morning when he was sipping his coffee and enjoying his day until he made the mistake of checking his email. And there was one waiting for him with the subject line "YOU ARE A LIAR". Upon opening it he found his acquaintance had written a tirade against him, assassinating his character, using words like "jerk, insensitive, dishonest, careless, power hungry, fake, manipulative" and he later found out they had already been saying such things to their mutual friends. So there he felt it: it was **him against them**. And he found himself torn between two responses: 1) to quickly fire back an email in response or 2) to imagine how he might avoid ever responding at all. But when our only options are "to quickly lambaste<sup>o</sup> or run in the opposite direction of everything that freaks you out<sup>p</sup>" that's when we know we are operating in fear, that we have been polarized. When we believe change will come through attacking back or we retreat to find people we agree with and limit our relational connection with those we disagree with. And these are the symptoms of polarization.

Now some may believe polarization is a necessary evil to tolerate, but White insists it is a fear-based evil to *obliterate*. He points out that when Satan is identified in Revelation 12 as the accuser, the Greek word is *categor*, where we get our English word category, because Satan is constantly encouraging us to categorize people as either good or bad, dividing us and fueling animosity between us.

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<sup>m</sup> White: "Because the amygdala is the source of fear, it produces a dose of dopamine and serotonin as a reward in our bodies. Think about that—fear gives us a dose of drugs, a feel-good chemical. As counterintuitive as it sounds, fear feels good.

<sup>n</sup> White reports: "Theoretically, it's possible to go your whole life and never use this part of our brain (the pre-frontal cortex)."

<sup>o</sup> White notes that many Christians today see Jesus as a violent warrior who sought to argue and destroy everything that resisted His purposes. He writes, "This was certainly what the Old Testament prophets seemed to describe and what many expected of the Messiah. This violent expectation is often the lens many read the book of Revelation with as well." And yet, a close reading of Revelation reveals that the saints overcome "not with physical weapons but by 'the blood of the Lamb' (Rev. 12:11), not by shedding other people's blood... the symbolism suggests Jesus goes to battle and ultimately wins by shedding His own blood—this is sacrificial love."

<sup>p</sup> White explains the avoidant approach as follows: "Passive relating tends not to say anything in the moment of hurt but later vomits on someone unrelated to the situation. This is dishonest relating. This was not the relational approach of Jesus."

And while many Christians believe conducting themselves in a polarized fashion is what faithfulness to Jesus looks like – I know I can certainly struggle with this – White contends polarization is actually indicative of spiritual immaturity or emotional regression.<sup>q</sup>

He recalls one time when his son was three, he was tucking him in and said “I love, buddy” as he had a thousand times before. But this time his son responded, “I **ONLY** love momma. I don’t love you. I just love momma.” Now, I have to confess I’ve had some similarly unpleasant experiences as a parent,☺ but this is actually fairly standard for that stage of childhood development; the idea of being able to love **both** his mom *and* dad was a tension his son was struggling to comprehend, so he sought to eliminate the tension by making his world binary, where everyone is bad or good.<sup>r</sup> But “life isn’t so cut and dried. Tension feels uncomfortable and unsafe,” but part of spiritually maturing means coming to grips with that, coming to live *in* that.<sup>s</sup>

Now don’t get me wrong: moving beyond fear and polarization doesn’t mean we stop believing in right and wrong. But it does mean we move beyond viewing **people** in such simplistic ways.

### The Third Option

So what would it look like to move beyond polarization and love our neighbors who even feel like our enemies? Well, White suggests that instead of responding to the monsters in our life from our amygdala – by attacking or avoiding – Jesus presents us with a third option – what we might call the prefrontal cortex option – and that option is to seek to **cultivate affection**. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus teaches, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven” (Mt 5:43-45). Now, the world believes this teaching is absolute nonsense! As one person has said, “Try this method of love on a tiger and see what happens.”<sup>t</sup> And that’s a fair point – practicing enemy love toward a tiger is probably an unwise approach – what if it’s different with humans?

After all, this is precisely what God has done toward us in Christ. When we were *polarized against God* in our sin, He could have justifiably responded by attacking us or avoiding – abandoning – us. But instead – in Jesus – *God moved toward us with affection*. When we were polarized against God, He built a bridge toward us by making himself vulnerable. Might we begin to creatively imagine how we can build similar bridges? #

Returning to the nasty email White received, he decided to move beyond the temptations to attack or avoid and experiment with responding in affection. He says,

“In trembling fear, I pieced together a gift basket for him, and planned on delivering it to his house. Every item chosen for that basket brought to mind his face and his

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<sup>q</sup> White: “Black-or-white thinking doesn’t allow for the many different variables, conditions, and contexts in which there would exist more than just the two possibilities put forth. It frames the argument in ways as to create a side to take and therefore a people to fear. “Part of Carl Jung’s study was in human development and whether humans were willing and able to move beyond opposite poles and embrace tension and complexity in their life. He discovered that polarization is not a result of intellectual enlightenment or informed thinking; it is a result of emotional regression. We slide back to childhood when we particularly fear something about a person or people group and deem it necessary to find ways to accumulate a burning mound of facts about why we should hate “them.” Our primal brain (amygdala) takes over, convincing us there are only two options in polarized times—attack or avoid. Let me say it plainly: when Christians respond in polarized ways, we are not growing up in Christ, we are acting as spiritual infants.”

<sup>r</sup> White notes this went on for nine months.

<sup>s</sup> White: “This polarized approach to relating with others can continue through adulthood, causing us to relate primarily in either/or, Us vs. Them categories. When we see through a fear-based lens, it is effortless to think in terms of opposites with a false choice kind of logic: If something is this way, it cannot be that way. But this isn’t how the world is. For example, most people think that the opposite of white is black. But there are shades of black—from blackberries or blackbirds—that have nothing to do with white. The most beautiful moments are beyond the poles. When we see the blending of colors at dusk, or when the sea converges with the beach under our feet, or when we taste the salty and sweet mixed in that decadent dessert.”

<sup>t</sup> Here White quotes Eli Stanley Jones

vicious words. Yet at the same time, I had to pick things with care and thoughtfulness. I had to imagine what *he* might enjoy.

He says it took him *a week* to put that basket together and driving it over to his house was excruciating. And he says

“when I knocked on the door, and he answered... Like a deer in the headlights, he wanted to run away. (But) I blurted out, ‘Before you say anything, I just want to give you this gift; I made it for you, I really care about you, I know you love wine and cheese.’”

And after spending the next two hours talking at his kitchen table, they parted still disagreeing about some things, *but they had forgiven each other*.

Now, White admits there is no guarantee that every such situation would turn out so positively. But the reality is that most of us don’t even **consider befriending our enemies as an option!**

And yet, why does cultivating affection for our enemies have such transformative potential? Because the greater the distance between us and our enemies, the more fear thrives. There’s a term “siloiing”, which refers to our tendency to interact with mostly like-minded people.<sup>u</sup> White says, “We know we are siloiing when we are unable to relax and relate with people who don’t share our convictions.”<sup>v</sup> A friend of mine recently said they can’t imagine ever moving away from California to states where they’re seeking to take away a woman’s right to choose. But I’m guessing some of you may feel the opposite and are perhaps tempted to pack up and move to my home state of Alabama. ☺ Well, that is our impulse toward siloiing.

But scripture shows Jesus actively working against this. Returning to our gospel passage for a moment, some may notice Jesus’ command to the disciples is first of all to love one another. He says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another...” But remember, when he selected the disciples he chose twelve individuals from all across the divide of a very polarized Jewish society, both politically and economically.<sup>w</sup>

Jesus modeled this third option for us, the path of affection. Having just shared a meal with them Jesus says, “just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” And if we desire to imitate him and further his kingdom it will come through similar means of vulnerable presence. Now, I’m not suggesting you should put ourselves in danger. But let us be sure not confuse danger with emotional stress, which is sure to come with any effort to befriend our enemies.

Well, next week I want to return by talking about how we might go about cultivating affection, but I wanna close with one final story White tells about a guy named Daryl Davis, who has chosen this third option.

*Daryl Davis is a descendant of slaves – a black man – who for the last thirty years has chosen to engage with members of the Ku Kux Klan. He knows the KKK is an organization that hates him, yet this does not deter Daryl; it has actually compelled him to pursue ongoing conversation with Grand Dragons and Imperial Wizards. Sometimes he is the first African American they have ever talked to. His work is not marked by tossing insults or*

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<sup>u</sup> A PEW Research study revealed: “28% of people say that ‘it’s important to live in a place where most people share my political views.’ Similarly, 63% of those described as ‘consistently conservative’ say most of their close friends share their worldview, while 49% of those who are ‘consistently liberal’ say the same.”

Barna research has exposed that “Christians are even more likely not to have friends who are different from them, especially when it comes to religious beliefs (91% mostly similar), ethnicity (88%), and political views (86%).”

<sup>v</sup> This is why social media stokes the fire of polarization, because it’s not only dominated by media with a vested interest in stoking our fears, but it’s also a medium that reduces our capacity to empathize with one another, because it’s not face-to-face.

<sup>w</sup> White: “In the selection of His disciples, Jesus gathered three Zealots who were militant nationalists, a tax collector who favored the Sadducee party, six fishermen who lived hand-to-mouth and were exploited by Roman taxation, one member of the Sicarii party, and a wealthy nobleman who was linked to the Pharisees.”



even winning verbal shouting matches but by relational presence with them, sitting with them, eating with them, and showing them a bit of affection.

In December of 2017 Daryl reached out to Billy Snuffer, who is a proponent of the Confederate South and thinks the mixing of races is horrible for the country. Daryl has mastered the art of listening: make eye contact, sit still, ask questions, don't interrupt, stay curious.

And he even showed up with Billy when he was summoned to court. Billy had fired a gun into the air near a school in Charlottesville during a rally against taking down a Confederate monument. The judge was going to sentence him harshly, but Daryl proposed to the judge that Snuffer meet with him instead for a regular conversation to hear about the people he sees as inferior.

Now, you'd think Daryl's hopeful outlook were delusional if not for a peek into his bedroom closet, where the shocking symbols of transformation hang: KKK robes from those who have left behind the Klan. Every time he inspires a white man to quit the Ku Klux Klan, they surrender their garb to him. It is a powerful sign of the fruitfulness of Daryl's love-work.<sup>x</sup> #

Now I must confess that I myself am fairly new to this third option of seeking to cultivate affection for my enemies all that much. But I am confident that it's the way of love the Lord calls us to and the purpose of His Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

### Appendix: A Community Peacemaking Initiative

With the help of a peacemaking initiative in my neighborhood, a cluster of people were brought together for a three-month Police and Community Dialogue of sharing a meal, swapping stories, and working through hostility. This was a place-based community experiment that understood that there was the elephant in the room—neighborhood residents and the police force had deep fear of each other. There was a faction growing between those two groups in my neighborhood. A diverse cross-section of people were pulled together—a white female professor, a Republican business owner, an unemployed Hispanic woman with two kids, a Middle Eastern man, a black homeless gentleman, a longtime black social worker, and my wife, a white, educated church planter. As these neighborhood residents came together, three police officers joined as well for the dialogue.

A mediator led discussions on racism, violence, religion, governance, and our neighborhood history. Every week was filled with spicy dialogue; contentious labels were tossed around, disagreements were clarified. But something slowly grew in the gaps between neighbor to neighbor, and neighbor to police officer. Where there was antagonism and automatic anger, something more shocking started to sprout up—affection. A black man shared with officers his experience of being pulled over, bullied around, and assumed to have already done something because of his skin color. He shared through tears of pain what it was like to see an officer come his way, raw and real. One officer began to shed tears; he had no idea. He asked insightful questions to find out more. A connection began to form between that white officer and that black man. They even decided to go out and get a cup of coffee together.

Another officer shared about his time in the neighborhood, the panic attacks, the times he'd thought he'd never come home to his family again. The violence and blood he saw, the PTSD he was embarrassed to share that he had. Something began to uncork in the room. The homeless gentleman shared he had panic attacks as well. They stumbled into moments of common humanity. After consecutive weeks sharing meals and stories, the officers and residents were so vulnerable that the Republican small-business owner said: "I feel like I found some new brothers and sisters."

Excerpt from *Love Over Fear* by Dan White Jr.

<sup>x</sup> This excerpt is modified from *Love Over Fear* by Dan White Jr.