

Our church values - a church that is locally rooted

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[0 : 00] Father, thank you for bringing us together again, for allowing us to look at your word, to be encouraged with confidence in what you have done, in your sufficient power, not in ours or anything we can do, but only in the work of Christ on the cross, Lord.

We thank you and we commit this time to you and your glory in Jesus name. Amen. Nice one. So we're going to talk about values once again. And so just for the sake of consistency, what are our values?

Come on. Gossypily centered. Gossypily centered. Well done. Keep going. Lovingly diverse.

Lovingly diverse. Prayerfully dependent. Servantly led. Kingdomly minded.

Locally rooted. Nice one. See, you guys made fun of me from my LYs, but that's how you remember them now, isn't it? It's a little mnemonic device that you just didn't know you needed.

[1 : 25] So we're going to look at locally rooted today. And then next week we'll look at the final one, which is kingdomly minded. We've already done the other four.

So we're on the last two. And these are kind of at least the way I've imagined it in my own since I get to talk about both of them. It's kind of part one and part two. So we're going to look at some of the same texts this week and then next week when we do the last bit.

But before we get too far, I will say it's not lost on me in the irony that I'm up here talking about being locally rooted.

Probably of the people in the room least suited to be talking about being stuck in locally, other than the fact that I've lived here for now five and a half years.

And I'm very happy to say so. And if the government allows me to, they'll make me a permanent residence any any time now. We're still waiting. But so anyway, all that's saying.

[2 : 31] There's well, let me say this while I'm on that subject. So the irony of that, I will say some of you all have lived here and know this area incredibly well.

And so I feel certainly I'm at a disadvantage in terms of understanding various things. There's there are things that I see and I don't understand what's happening or why they are the way they are. On the on the other hand, though, right, like there's this idea of pattern blindness where you look at you'll get something for long enough.

You think you know what you're looking at, but you don't see it anymore. Right. And so there's it's helpful that there's a church full of people with different ways of looking at things and different experiences and different paths.

ones that bring certain things to light and others that can bring the other side of it to light. And then that's how these things work really well. So it's not insignificant.

And we're really thankful for those of you who have been here your entire lives and were amazed by that. And so I hope that those of us who have not been can bring something of value to a conversation like this and help it.

[3 : 40] But anyway, question for you all with with a neighbor just to get this thing started. So we're talking about local church. Right. And we've spent basically the.

Interesting. So as I was trying to study for this, there's there's not a lot of writing that's been done on what it means to be. Local church in terms of like not just one unit of this larger church.

So it's interesting. So here's the question. How is a local church or the local church distinct from God's universal church? And I think that's a helpful way for us to get started.

Right. So how is the local church or a local church distinct and unique? And how does that fit in with God's broader kind of global church? Two minutes. Just discuss that amongst yourselves.

All right. Good conversation. I feel like we know we know all the answers now. Just for the sake of sharing.

[4 : 50] What did some of you say? Any ideas? What makes the local church distinct? Anyone? Not all at once.

Do you think that the universal church, that's basically the same thing that we believe in the world is? The church operates with the different ways, the different places.

The church in the second century, the second century, the different worships.

I think that's the key to the church. Sure. Yeah, so the universal church should be at least all kind of doing the same things, but the localness of a particular body would look different based on its cultural context, etc.

Yeah, I think that's part of it. What else? Anything besides that? Jeff said that it was about concern for a local area.

[6 : 00] So it's like the concerns that the global church has, but it's like landed in this area. So it's like responsibility. Yeah, concern for a local area.

So sort of the application of the biblical truths to a specific people and place at a particular time.

Good, yeah?

Can I... So in the book of Revelation, Jesus writes to the local churches.

And he says he knows their works, he knows their deeds. And in some way, she starts thinking.

Part of being the local church is understanding that God actually wants us to be people who are... people who are followers of him. And so part of us being the local church, maybe, before we do all the other things, is actually coming to the Lord and asking him to, first of all, examine us as a local church, what it is, what are our deeds, where it is that we're not possibly pleasing him.

[7 : 22] Yeah. Before we can begin to sort of think that, here, which is all we have to do. Yeah. But each church had a different thing that Jesus was pointing to. Different sort of flaw or blind spot, if you will.

Local churches, so he spoke to them. Yeah. So how is God speaking to us as a local church here in Kilby? This church... Yeah. Forget Donbleton and the others.

How is God speaking to us? I can sit down now and we can just talk about that. No. I mean, that's it. That's... I think that's the point, right? That how is God speaking to us and how does he want to use this group of people in this specific spot?

And I think that's hopefully what we'll sort of get to. So thanks for considering that. So we're going to look at a few passages, kind of jump around a little bit, and then I'm going to bring it together by looking at the church in Antioch from the book of Acts.

So you can flip around if you're quick. So we're going to start in Matthew 22. That's on 9, 8, 9. No, it's not. 9, 9, 0.

[8 : 36] But actually, it's going to be 9, 9, 1 by the time we actually get to the verse that we're talking about. So 22, 34 to 40 is where we'll start. This is the greatest commandment.

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together, and one of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question. He said, Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?

And Jesus replied, Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself.

And all the law and prophets hang on these two commandments. So we've got this greatest commandment that came from Jesus, right?

And interestingly, in the Luke version of this, it's slightly, it may be a different event, but it's the same basic context. So in Luke chapter 10, you see, it says, 10, 25, 10, 41 is the page number.

[9 : 47] It says, On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. He's a teacher. What must I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus responds with, Well, what is written in the law? How do you read it?

And the man answered, Well, love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus says, You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.

But he wanted to justify himself. And so he asked, Who is my neighbor? And then Jesus goes into the parable of the Good Samaritan, which I'll read. Why not?

In reply, he said, A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest

happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

So, too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side of the road. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was.

[10:46] And when he saw him, he took pity on him. And when he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine, and he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day, gave him two denarii, or gave them to the innkeeper, and said, Look after him.

And when I return, I'll reimburse you for any extra you may have spent. And Jesus asked, Which of these three do you think was the neighbor to the man who fell into the hand of the robbers? And the expert in the law replied, The one who had mercy on him.

And so Jesus said, Go and do likewise. So you've got this sort of explanation from Jesus, talking to, in this case, a Pharisee, a kind of expert in the law, someone who knew his stuff, was trying to test Jesus.

And Jesus gives us this greatest commandment, which the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God, right? But the second, being like it, is love your neighbor. And so there's a specific command to the people who are following Jesus, the church, to love our neighbor.

And obviously, in the Good Samaritan, he gives us a description of who our neighbor is, or what a neighbor looks like, really. So to be a good neighbor, we have to understand what a good neighbor is.

[12:04] Obviously, in this context, we're thinking about being neighbors to actual neighbors, people who live in the general area. So that's one aspect that Jesus brings to us. If we go back to Matthew, I'm going to run fast through these, but there'll be a point.

Matthew 28, so this is page 1000. So we get to the Great Commission. So we have the Great Commandment, now we have the Great Commission.

In verse 16, there at the bottom, it says, Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some had doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, So we've got the Great Commandment, and we've got the Great Commission.

And so in the Great Commandment, really the second greatest, Jesus is telling us, telling the church to love our neighbor. And then in the Great Commission, he's telling you to go make disciples and baptize them.

So go to your neighbor, and then tell them about me. Right? So love them and tell them. This is kind of the two things that he gives us, in a sense of how to do this.

[13:21] Right? And so let me just look at one more. Why not while we're here? So James, so flip back to that one.

James, James, James, James, where are you? Someone shouted out when you get it there. James 1, so this is 12, 13 in the Church Bibles.

James 1, starting in verse 19. It says, My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this. Everyone should be quick to listen, but let me just look at one more.

Let me just look at one more. Why not while we're here? So James, so flip back to that one. James, James, where are you? And the sisters, take note of this. Everyone should be quick to listen, so to speak, and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. But do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves.

[14:28] Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in the mirror and after looking at himself goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues in it, not forgetting what they have heard but doing it, they will be blessed in what they do.

And it says, Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this, to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

So it's an interesting way to add that James adds to do something with our faith, not to just look at ourselves in a mirror and then forget what we look like, right?

So sort of, I hear things in one ear and out the other. That's one of the phrases that my mother used to tell me all the time. Anyway, so all of that, I want you to keep those in your mind while we read from Acts about the church in Antioch.

So it's Acts 11. We'll start in verse 19. So that's 11.05. It says, News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

[16:25] And when he arrived, he saw what the grace of God had done, and he was glad and encouraged them to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

And then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. So for a whole year, Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people, and the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

So, Antioch is a church. So Antioch, it's in what is modern-day Turkey, kind of right at the bottom, close to where that would touch.

I guess that's Syria there on that line. And so, Antioch is kind of the biggest city between Rome and Alexandria.

So if you imagine sort of the Mediterranean kind of in this sort of backwards C-shape, you've got Alexandria in Egypt, and you've got Rome up here. Antioch is kind of halfway between on the land route if you went there.

[17:25] It had gotten large because it was part of the Silk Road and everything, taking things from the east back to the center in Rome. Anyway, all that to say, there's a church there.

And what we see in this church there is that after people had the Christians, the early Christians, though they weren't called that yet, left Jerusalem because of the persecution that was happening after Stephen was stoned.

Some of them ended up in Antioch, and they just start doing things. And what I want us to look at is how does the church in Antioch exemplify the qualities that we saw in the Greatest Commandment and the Great Commission, exemplified by the stories of the Good Samaritan and sort of James, right?

So just think about it, right? This is a local church in an area, in a city, and they're put there. And so what do we see just even in these few verses that gives us evidence that the Greatest Commandment and the Great Commission are happening there?

One minute to talk about it, and then we'll come back here. All right. How do we get on? We have some thoughts? How does this church, this one in Antioch, show us things like from the Greatest Commandment and from the Great Commission?

[18:49] What do we see in there? You guys were doing a lot of talking, so I know there's things. Unless you're talking about something else, which is highly possible.

So they just sit there and think of some of them and they spread the word to the Gentiles. That's right. So being ethnic Jews, they find themselves in another place.

Some start by talking to Jews, but then they start talking to the Greeks as well. So the other people that were in the area. That's good. We'll let someone else. We'll come back to you, Mike, if we need to.

Verse 24, a great number of people will walk through. So that's the great question. Yeah, so... Speaking of the Gospel to the Lord. They must be sharing the Gospel, because they're coming to the Lord.

Yeah, that's good. And the Jewish church was concerned about it, to send some of the iconocles. They obviously had to plan with him, so they would have felt the loss of sending him out.

[19:50] Yeah, that's interesting, isn't it? That they're like, what's going on up there? And so they send one of their guys out to kind of check it out. But he comes back with good report. So they're doing it right.

They seem to be giving money to help people in the first 29th. Yeah, we didn't actually read that far, but yes.

Provide help for the brothers and sisters living in GDS. Yeah, so there's a generosity. There's something they're sacrificing in some capacity to help.

Or loving their neighbor and connect. Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, that's good. It might be something that there was a risk to reading success, because it's before that, isn't it?

I think it's the awareness of God's grace flowing through it. Because actually, God either caused it or allowed them to be persecuted, for the message to be spread.

[20 : 52] It tells us innately that they would not spread. It would probably stick to that word and all that. So in God's grace, like that was a tool God used for the gospel to read to the dead of our world.

That's right, yeah. So the persecution is what sends them out. But they don't just keep to themselves, hide in a basement. They're out, they're telling people.

They're sharing the good news that they've heard. Which is essentially what we're called to do.

There's an interesting dynamic in the church today, meaning like current era, not necessarily 2025 in particular, but current era.

So really post, you've got the Constantine, right? When Constantine makes Christianity not illegal, right?

Then you have this period of time where Christianity becomes dominant. It's the largest thing. And so particularly in the West, the model had been for a long time, basically open the doors to a church building and people come in.

[22 : 02] And then that's how you serve your neighborhood, right? That's how you serve your area. You can argue about when that may have changed, but let's say in the relatively recent era, that isn't the way it works anymore, right?

This was a long period of time where you could have done, you could have planted a church by building a building and opening doors and people would come in and they'd find themselves in it as a church. But now that's not necessarily the case.

And so it's almost like going back to that pre-Constantine era where churches were mostly kind of in houses and they had to go out to the community to reach them and then bring them in and be part of the church.

So that's an interesting dynamic, right? And so we find ourselves here and we're kind of looking at, well, what is the church locally, right? Going back to our original question, what is the local church actually called with?

We know that it's the proclamation of the gospel. We know that it's discipleship of the saints so that we can grow up and know Jesus. And we know that we care and love for one another once we're here.

[23 : 10] But all of a sudden, if we're only talking to ourselves, that becomes a pretty closed, it's a river that goes into an end and doesn't keep flowing, right?

It just stops. And so that we can proclaim the gospel all we want in this room. But if no one in here has not heard it before, right? It's good. It's helpful to us. But it's not the only thing, right?

So there's got to be something else. And if we're not inviting new people in, we're not getting that message to new people, then we're not being a good neighbor. We're not fulfilling the second greatest commandment to love our neighbors like ourselves.

So as we transition, so sorry about that. I felt a little academic. I think it was helpful because what we're next going to talk about. So thinking about West Kilburn, thinking about this patch of dirt that we happen to stand on on Sundays and other days during the week, this area that many of us call home, depending on how far you come from to be here, right?

This is our community, right? What is our local community? And who is it? Just shout those out. We don't have to stop.

[24 : 25] Who is our local community and what is it? Yeah. Who are they, Jeff? Yeah.

Who lives around you, Jeff? Like what kind of people? Who do you see?

We're in the country. Okay. Yeah, just people. Just people. We see just people like ourself, but we don't know. Yeah, yeah, yeah. We don't know if our people don't know.

That's our culture. Yeah, our culture. Yeah, our culture. Yeah. How about demographically? Who's in our local area? Who is our local community?

Mosque. We have a mosque next door, okay. The Albanian mosque. There's lots of young people. There's a lot of young people. What kind, give me more description on that.

[25 : 28] There's also, say, children, we keep down here, there's school children. School children, yeah. And the final school lost price for the children. And then, yeah, I've been in Queen's Park

since then.

It was about 400,000, 25-year-olds sitting on the grass. Yeah, today. Absolutely. So one of my colleagues described Queen's Park this past week as a bit yummy mummy.

So, if... A bit. So, young families, children, young people, 20-somethings. Are they new to the area? Have they been here a long time?

Yes. Yes and no? Yeah. The ones that were in Queen's Park were probably pretty new to the area. Yeah. Be my guess. Yes. Yes. That's right.

It's not as easy of a question to answer, is it? There's a lot of people here. And there's a lot of different people here. Lola's not here. Lola and I were talking about this a week ago as we were thinking through some stuff for kind of marketing slash, you know, it's not a great term, but like brand marketing for the church.

[26 : 53] And we've got people who have lived here their whole lives. We've got people who have just moved in. We've got people who, you know, ethnically are, you know, Afro-Caribbean.

We've got people who are ethnically very different than that. And we've got South Asians. We've got Middle Eastern people. You know, there's a mosque up the street. Two Islamic schools at the top of Salisbury School, Salisbury Road.

You know, there's all kinds of people around here. There's a bunch of wacky Americans that find their way here as well. Right. So it's like kind of both ends of the spectrum.

If it was a spectrum, it's more like some sort of star thing where they're going all directions. But we've got a lot of people from a lot of different things. And there's young people, the youngest of people.

And there's people who have been here for a long time. And they're up in age, let's say. Right. And so there's this interesting diversity of people in our area, which is interesting.

[28 : 01] What about geographically? What would we consider our area? Right. What are our ends, if you will? What is the area that we serve as a church?

West Kilburn. What is West Kilburn? What even is that? Oh, that's just this little. That's just little. They call that South Kilburn. They call that Queen's Park.

They call that Queen's Park too. That's Kinzel. West Kilburn is this church and that church and like this bit of space in between. Those are the only two things that are called West Kilburn.

Just to say, you know, at this point, I had the best estimate to allocate people. Yeah. It was using coffee shops.

We had, in the good spot, Gale's people, Starbucks people, Costa coffee. But they cost it. Closed. Closed. So I'm not going to be my sister. Just a point.

[29 : 02] Make of it what you will. Right. So it's interesting, right? So these are things we have to think about in terms of reaching our area.

And so given that context, right, whatever we make of that, and hopefully this is not the only time that we sit and think about it. But given that context, how might we, as West Kilburn, interact and exemplify the qualities of the Great Commandment, the Great Commission?

How do we look like the Good Samaritan? How do we act on and not look at ourselves in the mirror and then walk away and forget what we look like? How do we do like the church in Enioch did, who found themselves sharing with people that were unlike them and seeing a great number of people come and be brought to the Lord such that the disciples were then called Christians?

How do we do that? Right? That is the big, you know, million pound question for us as a church, right? How do we serve our people well such that we're out talking to those people and lovingly caring for our neighbors and seeing them as people that we should care about and not walking past them quickly to get to Gales or the Tube or wherever else we're going, right?

Like, that's the question for the local church, particularly in our area. Should we have some ideas?

[30 : 43] I don't know. That's a big question. Liz? Liz? I think it's a really, really good question. But I just wonder whether we, over the years, have not really loved our neighbor as we should have done that particular moment.

Because we haven't had the heart to see what it is. Because we're sitting right on the mission field. There's so many different groups.

But the life, I think what we have done is that we know it's out there. And somehow we're waiting for God to, which he can do, to magically bring the people in.

And I'm not saying God will do that. And I'm not saying God will do that. Right. But I think the desire of really wanting to speak to others about Jesus has in a way has got to be a consuming desire. And something that we should be really praying for and asking God to help us to see the need. Because if we don't see the need, we can talk about it.

[31 : 56] That's right. We can talk about it. And we can say, yes, we must do that. But we've got talks. We've got news work. And we've got whatever else we've got. But unless God gives us that desire to see there is a loss there with hundreds of young people and older people going every single day to a lost eternity, unless we see that, unless God does that in us, we can do all this.

That's it. And it does nothing. So I think the first thing for me is that God's got to really pin it out and just show me one who came, one who died, and that he died for those people out there.

He's got to be working us. That's it. You know, otherwise this becomes academic. Exactly. Yeah. Absolutely. Jen? Yeah. I'm not taking anything from what you just said, but maybe there's a whole group of members that are living in a living that's not here tonight, and they just say what they are actually doing is not a church in it, but they're living it out there.

Yeah. They're speaking to it, and they sort of mustn't take that away. No, no. You need to encourage it more and more. That's it.

Yeah. It's good. I made a... Sorry? It's just inspiring that Acts 11 seems to suggest that we can share the possible people that are not like us and see great groups because our community is so diverse that finding someone like you is quite a funny way.

[33 : 55] Right. So this is just really encouraging you to get older than that. Yeah, that's good. Absolutely. I mentioned kind of offhand earlier, you know, talking about if we come in and we're proclaiming the gospel just to us, right?

But this is what we're talking about, Liz, in terms of we need to hear the gospel such that it changes us to the point that we go and we want to share and we want to love our neighbors in this way.

We want to be this kind of church that the doors are open and we're inviting people in or first to our homes or first to have a coffee or whatever the case may be, right?

This might not be the first place that they encounter Jesus. It might be that they've been to ours and we've had a meal with them and then all of a sudden now they're willing to come to church and see that, right?

And inviting someone to church may not be the first port of call, but into our lives may be more a way to start. Good.

[34 : 58] We didn't, we just cracked the surface here. But this is, so I would say, I think when the leaders were sitting down and we're talking about, well, what is, what's important for us to focus on?

And it was, it was not that we know what we need to do exactly or know what, how to do this, that meant that this should be a value of ours. It was really a recognition that we don't know and we probably haven't done it well, but we need to focus on it and spend some time thinking about, well, who is our community?

How, how can we reach them with the gospel? What are the things that we should do? How do we make sure that we're, we're aware of it and caring about it such that we can preach the gospel to ourselves?

So that we'll be able to do it. And so that's, that's where the value comes from. It's a recognition that we need to, we may not be good at it yet and we may not know how to do it yet, but that's a task for us as we go forward as a church.

So there we go. Shall we pray? Let's pray. Father, we come to you in the, sitting here in what is called West Kilburn, surrounded by people from nations and tribes and tongues that span the globe.

[36 : 25] Father, you have in your wisdom, in your sovereignty, brought those people to this place at this time in the same way that you've brought us here.

And Lord, we recognize that in your grace, you use people like us to reach those.

That just like in Antioch, the Jews didn't know why they landed there other than they were running for their lives. And yet God used them mightily. And the church in Antioch became one of the greatest sending churches to make a difference in the world for your kingdom.

That you use that, those people in that place mightily. And so Lord, we pray, God, would you open our eyes to see our neighbors, to love them as ourselves, and that our love for you would spill over to those who live around us, live next door, that we see walking down the street.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.