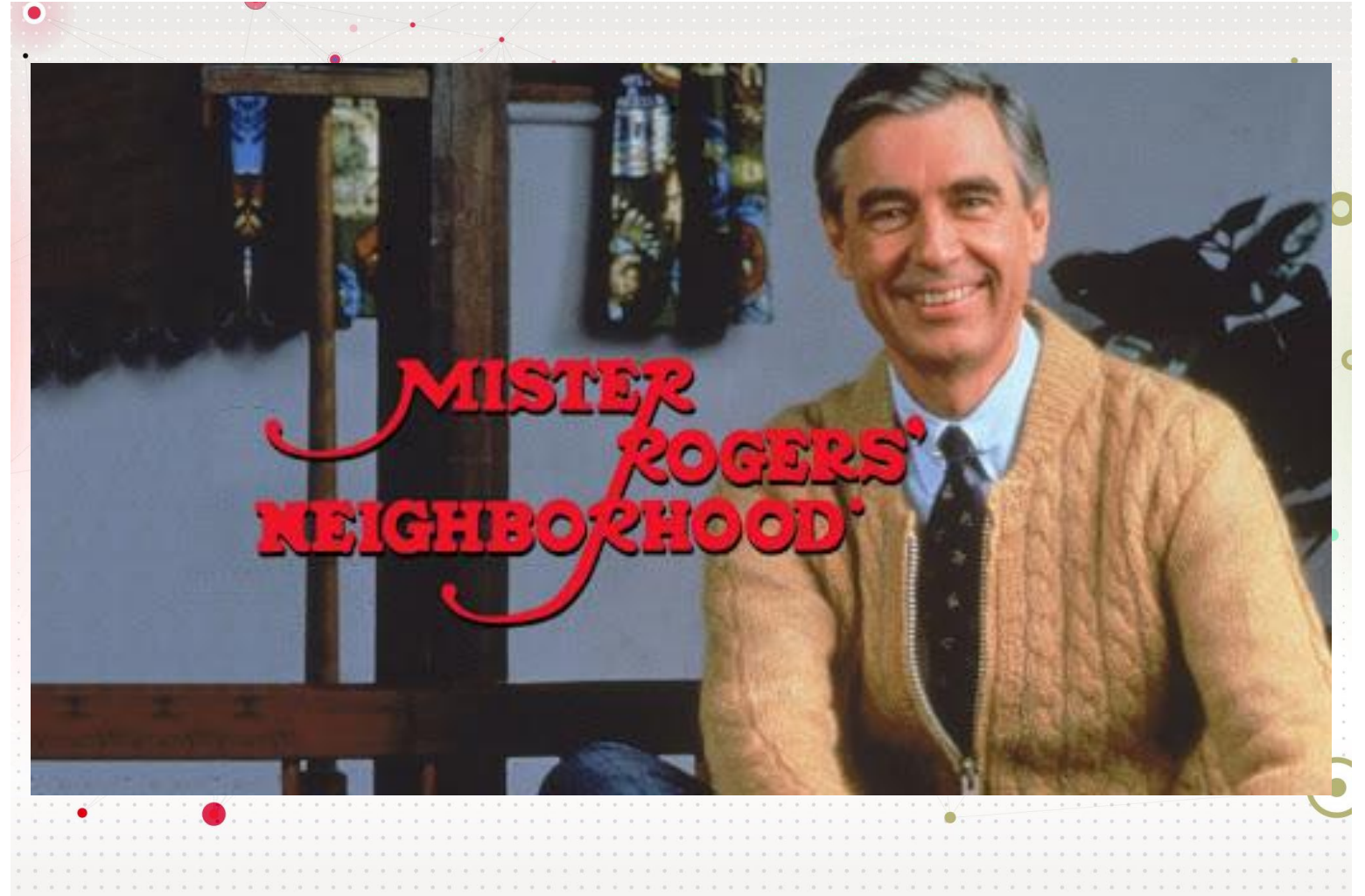


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# Won't I be Your Neighbor?

Toward a Biblical Ethic  
of Hospitality

*Rev. Dr. Rafael Rodríguez  
Professor of New Testament  
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

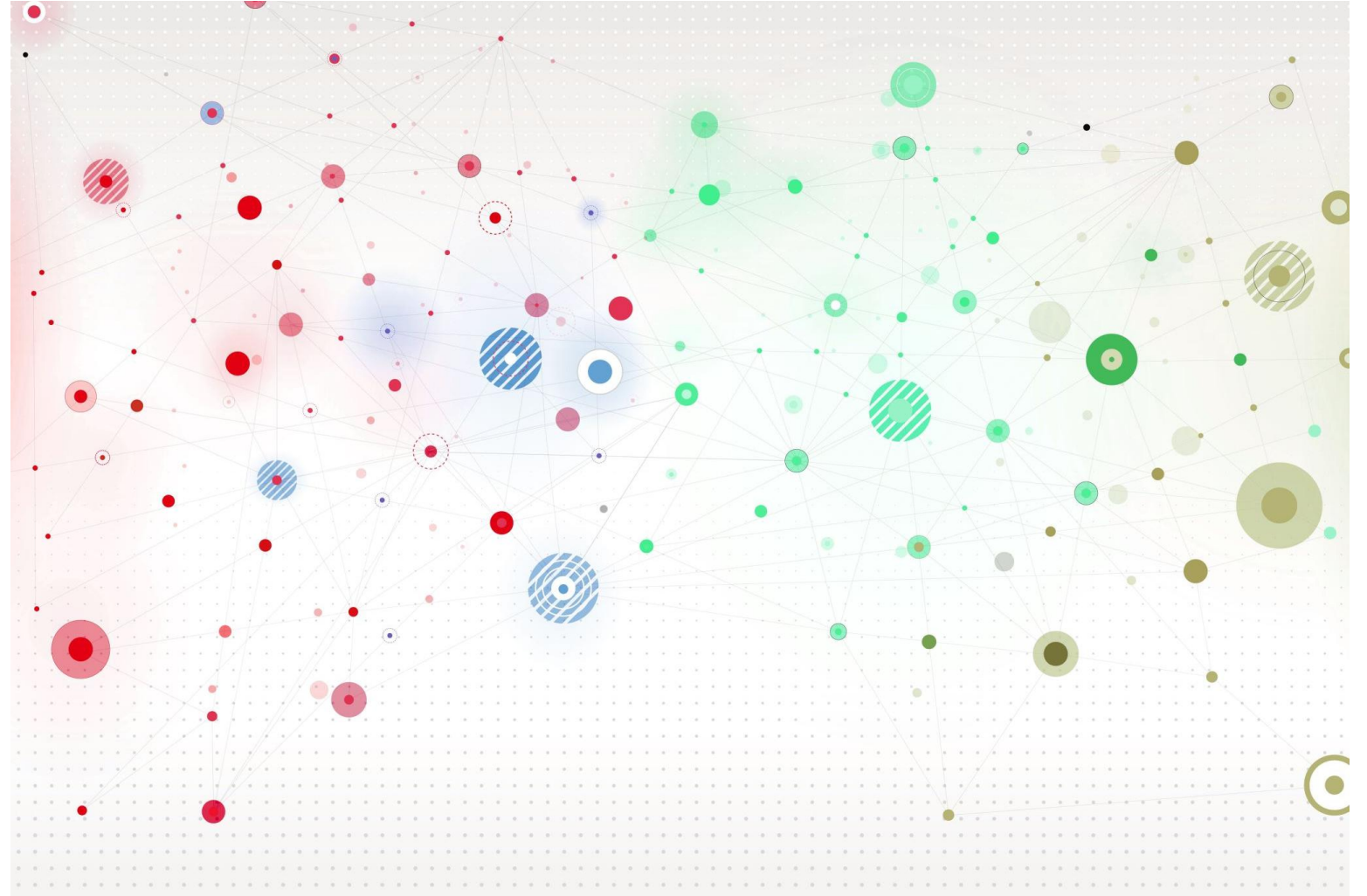


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# The Greatest Commandment:

Loving and Inviting  
the Unknown in the  
Synoptic Gospels

*Rev. Dr. Rafael Rodríguez  
Professor of New Testament  
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*



# The Greatest Commandment:

## Loving and Inviting the Unknown in the Synoptic Gospels



terrestrial symbols:

- Matthew [human being]
- Mark [lion]
- Luke [ox]

celestial symbol:

- John [eagle]

# “Your Neighbor” in Mark



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# “Your Neighbor” in Mark

<sup>28</sup> “One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well he asked him, ‘Which commandment is the first of all?’ <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, ‘The first is, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; <sup>30</sup> you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” <sup>31</sup> **The second is this, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.’**

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# “Your Neighbor” in Mark

<sup>32</sup> “Then the scribe said to him, ‘You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that “he is one, and besides him there is no other”;<sup>33</sup> and “to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength” and **“to love one’s neighbor as oneself”—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.**’

<sup>34</sup> When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’”

Mark 12:28–34

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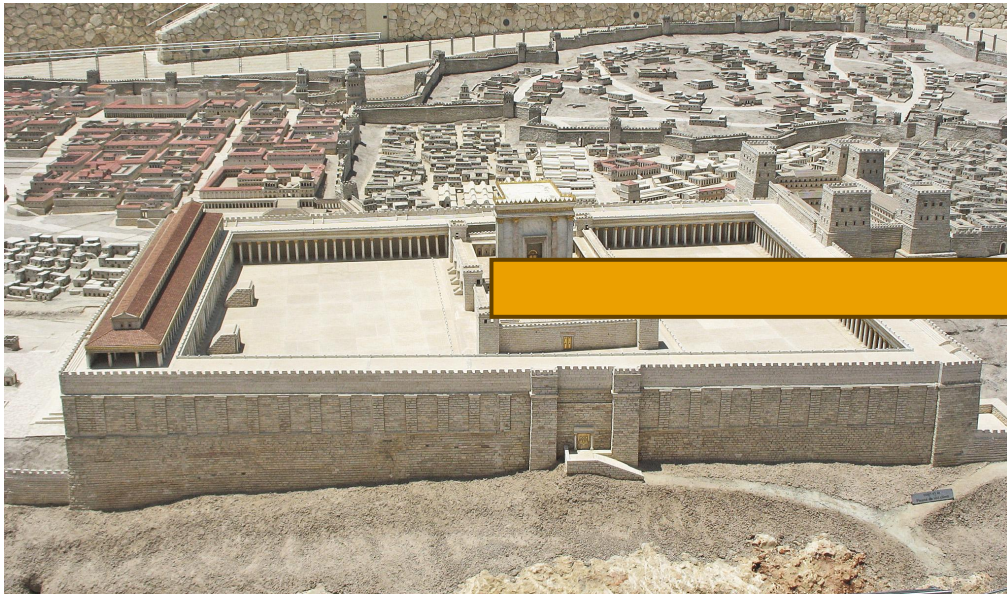
# “Your Neighbor” in Matthew

<sup>34</sup> “When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, <sup>35</sup> and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup> ‘Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?’ <sup>37</sup> He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” <sup>38</sup> This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> **And a second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”** <sup>40</sup> **On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”**

Matthew 22:34–40

# Greatest Commandment

Mark 12:28–34; Matt 22:34–40  
a debate in the Temple



Luke 10:25–37  
a frame for the Good Samaritan



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# The Parable of the “Good Samaritan”

Luke 10:25–37

“Teacher, what must I do  
to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the law?  
What do you read there?”

“love the Lord your God . . .  
and your neighbor as yourself.”

“You have given the right answer;  
do this, and you will live.”



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# The Parable of the “Good Samaritan”

Luke 10:25–37

“And who is my  
neighbor?”



“A man was going down from  
Jerusalem to Jericho . . .”





“Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man . . .”



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“And who is my neighbor?”



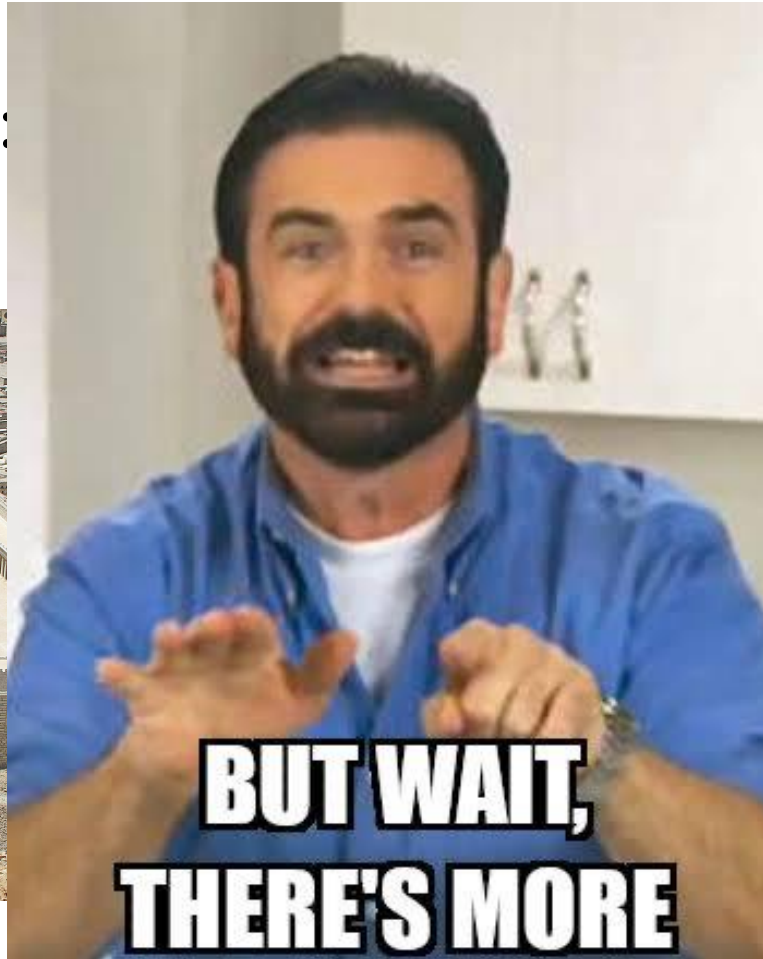
“Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man . . .”

being  
~~having~~ a neighbor



# Greatest Commandment

Mark 12:28–34; Matt 22:37  
a debate in the Temple



Luke 10:25–37  
the Parable of the Good Samaritan



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# “Your Neighbor” in Matthew

## Greek *plēsiōn* (πλησίον) in Matthew’s Gospel

- the Greatest Commandment controversy
- Jesus’s answer to the Rich Young Man

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# The Rich Young Man

Matthew 19:16–22



“Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”

“Which ones?”

“You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother. Also, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

“If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.”



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# Jesus's Reply to the Rich Young Man

## remember Leviticus 19

- each revere your mother and father (v. 3)
- keep my Sabbaths (v. 3)
- do not turn to idols or make cast images for yourselves (v. 4)
- you shall not steal (v. 11)
- you shall not deal falsely; and you shall not lie to one another (v. 11)
- you shall not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God (v. 12)
- you shall love your neighbor as yourself (v. 18)

---

# Jesus's Reply in Mark and Matthew

“You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. **You shall not defraud.** Honor your father and mother.’”

Mark 10:19

“You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother. **Also, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.**”

Matthew 19:18–19

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# Another Example of Neighbor-Love

## The Sheep and the Goats

(Matthew 25:31–46)



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# **Another Example of Neighbor-Love: The Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31–46)**

<sup>31</sup> “When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup> and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.”

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# **Another Example of Neighbor-Love: The Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31–46)**

<sup>34</sup> “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”

---

# **Another Example of Neighbor-Love: The Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31–46)**

<sup>40</sup> “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.”

---

# **Another Example of Neighbor-Love: The Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31–46)**

<sup>41</sup> “You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.”

---

# Another Example of Neighbor-Love: The Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31–46)

<sup>45</sup> “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.”

We encounter the Creator God of Israel in the poor, the unknown, the dispossessed, the oppressed.

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# “Your Neighbor” in Matthew

## Greek *plēsiōn* (πλησίον) in Matthew’s Gospel

- the Greatest Commandment controversy
- Jesus’s answer to the Rich Young Man
- the sixth (of six) anthesis in the Sermon on the Mount

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# **“Your Neighbor” in Matthew**

**<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, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.**

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# “Your Neighbor” in Matthew

<sup>46</sup> “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup> Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Matthew 5:43–48

We imitate the Creator God of Israel by loving even our enemies and persecutors.

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# Enemy Love?!

“But I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”

Matthew 5:44

“But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you”

Luke 6:27–28

# Enemy Love?!



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## What happened when a Klansman met a black man in Charlottesville



By [Mallory Simon](#) and [Sara Sidner](#), CNN

🕒 6 min read · Updated 8:15 AM EDT, Thu July 16, 2020



*This story was originally published in 2017. To learn more about Davis' life today, watch CNN Original Series ["United Shades of America with W. Kamau Bell"](#) Sunday at 10 p.m. ET.*

**Charlottesville, Virginia (CNN)** — Daryl Davis' home is filled with memories of the days he has spent with the Ku Klux Klan.

He is not a member of the white supremacist organization. He can't be. Davis is the descendant of slaves. He's a blues musician who has learned how to lift hate out of

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**Sunday, 3 May 2026**

The Greatest Commandment: Loving and Inviting the Unknown in **the Synoptic Gospels**

**Sunday, 10 May 2026**

Seeing the Unknown Neighbor: Receiving and Rejecting Jesus in **the Fourth Gospel**

**Sunday, 17 May 2026**

Welcoming a Foreign Enemy: Surprising Hospitality in **the Acts of the Apostles**

**Sunday, 24 May 2026**

Sincere Hospitality: Dissent, Welcome, and Pursuit in **Paul's Letters**