

Weird Love.

We are supposed to love God and our neighbor, how are you doing with those neighbors you don't understand, that frustrate you, and live very different from you? To love them is strange, often unexpected, and most certainly requires supernatural power - simply put - its weird. Let's become weirder together and love more and love better.

Weird – involving or suggesting the supernatural, strange, bizarre.

John 13:34-35 - So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

This is essential to the ongoing effectiveness of the Church – especially in the Urban Context. The Church of the Nazarene, especially through the first generation, was urban. Breese and others focused their efforts in the Holiness movement in urban centers like LA, Brooklyn, Nashville, etc... This early movement that become known as The Church of the Nazarene was steeped in love for others. They had deep concerns for society as they built rescue mission, homes for unwed mothers, and the like.

There is a list of things that happened in our world and society that caused our denomination to shift from our original heart. (See David Busic’s book *The City* for more information)

“December 1981 proclamation by BGS in *Holiness Today* – “Where Christian holiness is truly alive, compassion is its beautiful fruit...Nazarenes should always be seeking to good to the bodies and souls of humanity, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and the imprisoned, and ministering to the needy, as opportunity and ability are given.” This was followed by a pastoral letter in 1983 that affirmed, “A new social consciousness has moved across our church. The send of holy compassion was an authentic expression of the American Holiness Movement’s roots in the Wesleyan Revival. The ministry of compassion was emphasized in such a manner to place it very near to the center of the fundamental reason for the church’s existence....In light of the Biblical perspective as well as our distinctive mission...such social ministries should be incorporated in the total program of evangelism... to the entire community without exclusion of people from lower socioeconomic levels.” (Busic – *The City*)

This is what we need to get back to if we want to have an impact in our cities. To do this we have to be willing to be weird – to love the ones no one else will love, to stay when everyone else is leaving. When we love like this, the world notices – it stands out. In the city, where everyone is out for themselves, someone stopping to actually love someone creates a light.

I. Weird Love

- a. It Is A Command – Do it because you are a disciple of Jesus – it is not based on your feelings or emotions
 - i. “Compassion is the natural outpouring of our holiness” Jay Height
 - ii. Compassion is part of our DNA. If we are a holiness people we should be a loving people – Carla Sunberg
 - iii. The word here is “agape” – generally assumed to mean moral goodwill which proceeds from esteem, principle, or duty, rather than attraction or charm. ¹
 - iv. The essence of “agape” is goodwill and willful delight in the object of love. Agape moves us from just feeling love to living love - it is an act of the will. In the Bible the word is almost always used to describe the kind of love God has for us.
 - v. We love – because God loves us.
- b. It is the biggest testimony to God’s love in the world – can’t be just words but must be deeds

¹ White, R. E. O. (1988). [Love](#). In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 1357). Baker Book House.

- i. This love isn't just about word or going through the motions either. Agape requires action.
- ii. God's action – giving Jesus.
- iii. God's expected action on our behalf – feeding, helping, healing, housing, mercy – think least of these and Good Samaritan
- c. Not just for fellow believers – but everyone – even the people not like you – See Good Samaritan
 - i. It is easy to love your friends and people that agree with you – the real display of power is to love your enemy, love the stranger, love the person you don't understand, and even the person that makes you feel a bit uncomfortable.
- d. How do we love? I think we have to choose to love people before we serve them. God loved us and then He served us. How do we develop this love for people? If I don't feel like loving them what does that look like, what do we do?
 - i. Learn their names
 - ii. Learn their stories
 - iii. Listen
 - iv. Be their friend –
 - 1. we are facing a poverty of relationship more than poverty of resources. We have to learn to be friends again, how to live in community again...
- e. Lessons we have learned in having weird love
 - i. Messy
 - ii. Set Boundaries
 - iii. Stand on your convictions/foundation (Grace and Truth)
 - iv. Keep the main thing the main thing – doing this for God and not them (will get taken advantage of, will get used, etc...) - not a result oriented love
 - v. Not a short game – it's the long game