



## First Principles Project

American Awakening | National Association of Evangelicals | Christianity Today

### Sermon Outlines

#### PART 3. Citizens of Our Community

##### SERMON OUTLINE:

1. *“Where you stand depends on where you sit.”*

Most of our beliefs are informed by family of origin and first communities, where we hang out as adults, who we are constantly around, what we give most of our time to, what websites we frequent, and what cable news we watch. Social scientists, psychologists and neuroscientists call this our “cognitive biases”. It’s not necessarily damning or wrong — it’s just part of being a human being. It makes us unique, but it’s also limiting. We need to be aware of this limitation.

2. *Your neighbors are your actual neighbors.*

The people you interact with in a real embodied way every day, week, and year. As a Christian it’s your job to love them well. To be localized and embodied. It means developing real relationships — because God has them in your life and next to you for a reason.

3. *“Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile...”*

In Jeremiah 29, God commands the entire remnant of Israel to build up the city and serve it. Notice he didn’t say country. He said city. The place you actually live. That’s where change should be poured in, and where change will actually come out. Basically, Jeremiah summed it up by saying, “you want to get out of exile? Be a really, really good neighbor!”

4. *Loving our neighbor individually, and collectively.*

Politics enables us to love our neighbors on a systemic level. To love our neighbor is to want our neighbors to have the same opportunities, the same freedoms, and the same protections that we enjoy — even when those neighbors are very different from us. This means when I step in the voting booth I’m not simply asking which candidate will do right by me, but which will do right by my neighbor, even the neighbor who lives in a different neighborhood than I do.

5. *Loving our neighbors is a first principle of all Christian moments of awakening and renewal.*

In approximately AD 360, Roman Emperor Julian was attempting to inspire a pagan revival. He looked at the obstacles created by the Christian witness, and observed the following. “Why then do we think that this is sufficient and do not observe how the kindness of Christians to strangers, their care for the burial of their dead, and the sobriety of their lifestyle has done the most to advance their cause?” He went on to say the Christians of his time “support our poor in addition to their own.”



As the distinctly Christian upholding of the dignity and sacredness of every human so changed the Roman Empire, our commitment to “love our neighbor” can transform our communities today.

#### SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES:

##### *Jeremiah 29:5-11*

5 “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6 Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. 7 Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” 8 Yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. 9 They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,” declares the Lord.

10 This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

##### *Micah 4:4*

4 Everyone will sit under their own vine  
and under their own fig tree,  
and no one will make them afraid,  
for the Lord Almighty has spoken.

##### *Galatians 3:28*

28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

##### *Ephesians 2:14–18*

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

##### *Colossians 3:11*

11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.