

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

Cure Found For The Pandemic Of Hate

By Ken Woodley

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Okay, Jesus, but who *is* my neighbor?

The most common dictionary definition tells me it’s the person who lives next door. That means there is a neighbor to the left and to the right of me.

Sounds a bit political.

Might I somehow love the whole wide world by simply loving my next door neighbors?

Could a “relay of love” spread household by household and neighbor-to-neighbor until one day there is nothing left in the world but love?

A cure for the pandemic of hate?

Sure. Right. Anything you say, Lord....

....But, seriously, the clouds will become chocolate chip cookies before that happens.

Haven’t you heard, Lord, that there’s a pandemic and everything is more upside down and inside out than ever?

Still, I must admit, kindness can spread kindness. A smile may beget a smile. I’ve seen and felt both happen.

Jesus knows that the biggest answers to the toughest questions all come from the same place: the human heart.

Every evil. All goodness.

Darkness and every light are born in the human heart before they ever flip a single switch in the world. That is why Jesus took relentless aim at the human heart, even to his dying breath of forgiveness on the cross.

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” he tells us, beseeches us, begs us. An upside down and inside out world needs it now more than ever, he’d add.

And we don’t need clinical trials or FDA approval to do it because we are the disease, but we are also the cure.

Everything Jesus ever said is easier to say than it is to do—until we actually go out and do it, and then we wonder what took us so long.

But before we begin this healing mission there is a singular first step.

We must begin by loving ourselves. Not in a selfish, egotistical way, but as a child of God—vanity replaced by humble, joyous gratitude at the beauty all around us, and within us.

Beauty that COVID-19 cannot reach. Only then can we recognize, and love, the child of God next door, down the street and on the other side of every border.

The borders between nations and the borders we create between each other.

From that moment we may begin to realize that our neighbors fill every nook and cranny in the world.

We are all different.

And we are all the same.

Why hate each other and, therefore ourselves, any longer?