**Hillside UMC Sermon Prep Sheet**

***Pastor Chris Neikirk***

**Date: Sunday, September 3, 2017**

**Sermon Title: On Purpose: Loving With Purpose**

**Scripture: Matthew 22:34-40 (*The Message*)** 34-36When the Pharisees heard how he had bested the Sadducees, they gathered their forces for an assault. One of their religion scholars spoke for them, posing a question they hoped would show him up: “Teacher, which command in God’s Law is the most important?” 37-40Jesus said, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.’ This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: ‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’ These two commands are pegs; everything in God’s Law and the Prophets hangs from them.”

**1 John 3:16-20 (*The Message*)** 16-17This is how we’ve come to understand and experience love: Christ sacrificed his life for us. This is why we ought to live sacrificially for our fellow believers, and not just be out for ourselves. If you see some brother or sister in need and have the means to do something about it but turn a cold shoulder and do nothing, what happens to God’s love? It disappears. And you made it disappear. 18-20My dear children, let’s not just talk about love; let’s practice real love. This is the only way we’ll know we’re living truly, living in God’s reality. It’s also the way to shut down debilitating self-criticism, even when there is something to it. For God is greater than our worried hearts and knows more about us than we do ourselves.

**1 John 4:13-21 (*The Message*)** 13-16This is how we know we’re living steadily and deeply in him, and he in us: He’s given us life from his life, from his very own Spirit. Also, we’ve seen for ourselves and continue to state openly that the Father sent his Son as Savior of the world. Everyone who confesses that Jesus is God’s Son participates continuously in an intimate relationship with God. We know it so well, we’ve embraced it heart and soul, this love that comes from God. 17-18God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in us, so that we’re free of worry on Judgment Day—our standing in the world is identical with Christ’s. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love. 19We, though, are going to love—love and be loved. First we were loved, now we love. He loved us first. 20-21If anyone boasts, “I love God,” and goes right on hating his brother or sister, thinking nothing of it, he is a liar. If he won’t love the person he can see, how can he love the God he can’t see? The command we have from Christ is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You’ve got to love both.

**Call to Worship: (8:30 only)**

Leader: Scripture calls us to intentionally bless the Lord at all times. As his church we have the unique opportunity to praise his name together. Let’s read [Psalm 34:1-3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2034.1-3), as we are reminded and encouraged to magnify the Lord together on this day and every day.

**People: I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad.
Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!**

**Basic Theme: *A Christian life is a life lived on purpose that begins and ends with God. To discover our purpose, we must first realize that our identity is grounded in a relationship with Jesus Christ. In his book The Purpose Driven Life, Rick Warren writes, “Without God life makes no sense.” If you want to discover your purpose and bring greater meaning to your life, you must begin with God–“Everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him.” (Colossians 1:16b, Msg) Our ultimate purpose is to glorify God in all we do… on purpose!***

**Sermon Snapshot (Key Points): We were created to be loved by God, to return that love, and to share that love with others. You are not an accident and living a life marked by love does not happen accidentally. Surely there must be more to life than work, play, possessions, happiness, trials, and temptations? Jesus Christ offers us a life of freedom and empowers us to love others on purpose. We each have a specific role to play within the kingdom of God. How we spend our time, use our talents, invest our money, and value our relationships is a reflection on the God whom we worship and love.**

**So What? Did you ever wonder, “Why am I here?” or “What was I put on this earth to accomplish?” Do you want to find out? Are you willing to do the work and soul-searching necessary to discover your kingdom purpose? Are you a hoarder of God’s love or a conduit through which God’s love flows? Who has God sent you to love… on purpose?**