

# New Beginnings: Opening Our Hearts and Doors |

## Mark 10:13-16 and Hebrews 13:2

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Preacher: Pastor Patrick Dailey

[ 0 : 00 ] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we're dedicated to encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. Located in Ontario, Oregon, Pastor Patrick Daley preaches insightful sermons from the Word of God, offering practical applications for modern living.

We're delighted to share this sermon with you. Father, we thank you for this time and this opportunity to be together.

We are in a new year, and we're here in a new season. We come together as the community, as the body of Christ.

And as we are starting this new year, let us be encouraged to do your will. Let us be a church, the body of Christ, that exhibits your love and truth from your word.

And Father, as we ask that you are with us this morning, as we are going over a new sermon series, this new year, and a new opportunity for us to reach out to the community and to be the light of Christ.

[ 1 : 17 ] It is in Jesus' holy name that we pray and we all say together, amen. Amen. You know, yesterday I found it great pleasure to look outside my door and to see snow and to see not just little tiny pieces of snow, but to see big, large chunks if you were, falling down from the sky.

And it's really just a great time where, you know, you open the door, or you open your window, and you look out and you can just see all of the snow falling down from the sky.

And it reminds me of when I was a child, my sister and I, we used to love going out into the snow and play. Now, growing up in Southern California in the desert, and we were by a mountain.

And so every so often we would get snow. And in those rare times that we'd get snow, we'd go out and play. It reminds me of how my children now, when they see the snow, they're still getting used to it.

You gotta realize that, you know, being a couple years in Hawaii, and a little bit of their time in California, they didn't really have snow. So it's still a very new thing for them, and they get very excited about it.

[ 2 : 30 ] I mean, when is the last time you have been excited about the snow coming down? I know for us adults sometimes, we're like, ah, it's snowing again. That means I'm gonna have to get up early and turn the car on and clean it.

But it's certainly a wonderful time, a wonderful season for that. It's great to be here in the year 2024. And it just seems like yesterday that we were concluding 2023.

We're in this colder season. We're in a new year together, but it's a new time. We were reflecting. We were concluding 2023 with a sense of gratitude and being thankful for how God has worked in and through our lives.

And this year, I want us to be excited for who God is, the promises that he keeps, the truth from the word of God, and being a part of the body of Christ, sharing in Christ's love with others.

And this is the title of the sermon series for this month of January. I wanna go ahead and put it up. This is the title of our sermon, which is New Beginnings, Opening Our Hearts and Doors.

[ 3 : 48 ] Right? And let's go to that next slide. That's actually the title of the sermon series, which is Building Community, Little Hearts to Loving Hands. And with this title up here, I wanna ask, I want you guys to take a moment.

Let's turn to the person next to her. Let's give it a minute here. What does the word community mean to you? So let's take a moment. Let's turn to someone next to us, or someone around us.

And I want you to ask that question. What is the word community means to you? Let's give it a minute. Alright, community.

We have some answers here. What does community mean? Feel free to shout it out. It's okay. Working together as a group. Really good.

Serving. Serving. That's really good. Belonging. Belonging. Okay. Having that sense of belonging. Very good. What else? Family life. Family life?

[ 5 : 33 ] Very good. Friendship. Friendship. Okay. Okay. Family like. That's what you said. The neighbors as well. So, you see all of these words that we're using.

Right? It's describing community. And when we're talking about this title for this sermon series, I want us to think about how we are working together as a congregation, as the body of Christ, right?

Friends and families coming together to build up community, to build, to cultivate friendships, to cultivate relationships, to serve the Lord with gladness, right?

To be on mission for Christ. I've heard that word before, to be on mission. Well, our mission should be for Christ, my friends. So thinking about that in mine as we're going from here.

To build community here in the church and to reach out the community in the city of Ontario. I want us to think of the word little hearts, right?

[ 6 : 40 ] When you think of little hearts, I want you to think about children, right? Young families. And I want us to imagine for a moment what it would look like for us as a church to reach out to the community and to share in our testimony, to share in the word of God, the truth of the gospel, but also to serve as well.

So little hearts, meaning children. And then that second part, loving hands, which is a way that we as the church, we can be a beacon of hope, showing the light of Christ that shines forth in the community.

And so today, there are going to be two scripture readings that will help build this foundation for the sermon series and also for this sermon today.

Our scripture readings are going to be from Mark chapter 10, verse 13 through 16, and Hebrews chapter 13, verse two.

So I'd like us to turn our Bibles to, do we have the Mark one up there by chance? Okay, let's do the Mark. We'll start with the Mark one. My bad if I put it out of order.

[ 7 : 54 ] Alright so it's going to be Mark chapter 10, verse 13 through 16. It's going to be page 1006 in your ESV, Pew Bible, or whatever translation you prefer.

So Mark chapter 10. Mark chapter 10, verse 13. Are we there?

And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them. And the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, what did he say?

Let the children come to me. Do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.

And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them. And what is happening in this gospel account, the gospel of Mark, it is where Christ is talking about how important children are to the kingdom of God and how we need to receive the kingdom of God with the mind of a child like a child.

[ 9 : 23 ] Of course, we need to understand that we're all important in the eyes of God, but this verse is talking specifically about children.

When it comes to children, they need to hear the message of Jesus. Children are more vulnerable. They are innocent. And sadly, in that time period, children were not viewed upon very highly.

They were seen as not as important. And sadly, that happens sometimes even today, where children are seen as important. What a sad truth that can be even nowadays.

This goes to show the call from the Lord that it's a call not to hinder children. And contextually, Christ is speaking against this low view of children, that children matter.

I would hate thinking of the idea of we're just going to, oh, your child, get out of here. You're not worth my time. What are you doing out here? Children should be seen and heard.

[ 10 : 33 ] And in the modern day context, like I'm saying, it is a call for us to not only focus on teaching children, but focusing on how they can learn who Jesus Christ is to come to know the Lord and it should be noted as a parent and for us parents here, how often do we learn from children, how to learn patience or to learn understanding from those children.

So it's very interesting that there's the call to let the children come to know the Lord, right? Let the little children come to me as Christ is saying, but there's also that component of how we are to be like children, that we are to have this sense of awe and the sense of wonder, this sense of reliance and trust on our Lord and our God.

It's just a wonderful verse and it's just a wonderful reminder for us to consider the importance of children, but also to have that childlike attitude, that childlike mindset to the Lord.

Let's turn to our second scripture. It's going to be from Hebrews chapter 13 verse 2. It's going to be on page 1187.

No, it's not.

[ 12 : 07 ] It's going to be page, my bad.

97, I think I just had a little typo there. All right, so it's going to be verse 2.

It's 1197. So starting with verse 1, it says, let brotherly love continue, right?

Then it says, do not neglect to show what? Hospitality to strangers. For thereby some of you have entertained who?

Angels, unaware, right? That's an interesting verse. I've always appreciated that. You don't know who's going to come through the door. You don't know if when you're showing hospitality, it could just be a normal person who's coming by.

[ 13 : 15 ] It could be your neighbor, right? It could be someone from your church, but it could be an angel. I've always found that to be a very good verse. Contextually in this verse, there is encouragement to show hospitality to strangers.

This verse specifically is part of a broader instruction and encouragement for living out the Christian faith. And I find it interesting that the verse that leads up to chapter 13, there is mention about how when we receive the kingdom of God, it cannot be shaken.

And we should be encouraged to offer God our worship, right? That we should worship the Lord, be reverent to Him, and be in awe of Him.

For our God is a consuming fire. So it's kind of saying what that looks like is by exhibiting, by showing hospitality, to continue to show hospitality, so even to strangers.

And it's almost, you know, it's very interesting about this is you'll see in your notes that the Hebrews chapter 13 verse two passage is making reference to Genesis 18.

[ 14 : 24 ] And we are not going to go too much into it, but it's what happened when Abraham saw three men and invited them in. And Abraham and Sarah, they were showing hospitality.

And they didn't know who they were entertaining. They were entertaining angels. And I found that so interesting where there's mention in the New Testament, you don't know who you're inviting in, just like how Abraham and Sarah didn't know at the time who they had invited in, that they were entertaining angels, so to speak.

Now both of these passages are their encouragement for us today as we should focus on the sense of building community.

Remember I mentioned, let's put up the building community slide. We're talking about little hearts and loving hands, right? Let the children come to me.

Let's focus on what it means to be focused on children, teaching them, sharing the gospel with them, inviting their families to come to our church and building that sense of Christian community.

[ 15 : 31 ] And loving hands is the sense of hospitality. Are you hospitable? Are you, have you invited someone in? That could be someone, an invitation to your home.

That could be an invitation to the church, and it's certainly a question to think about. Jesus teaches us in Scripture how important it is for us to allow children to come to Him.

And Jesus also teaches that we need to have that openness and that trust in Him and the humility to go to the Father like a child. Think about that.

We think about the verse from Hebrews. It goes to show that we need to exhibit hospitality even to strangers. And this can be done in the context of an invitation to someone, right?

Hospitality to other people, inviting them into your home, like I said, or inviting them to church. You know, every year there is a question that comes up for our church, for Ontario Community Church.

[ 16 : 36 ] It's a question that we as the body of Christ we can think of for the new year. And I had to take a lot of time and prayer and reflection and thinking about where does God want us as a church to be?

I wasn't sure, quite honestly, when I was first really reflecting and opening God's Word, I wasn't sure where God wanted us to go. And I was really just fighting it, trying to figure out what is the question that can be asked for this year.

And after much prayer, reflection, and consideration, I believe that our Lord, that our God wants us to intentionally focus on building community here in Ontario Community Church and here in the city.

Let us reach lives for Christ and do good in His name. Let's make sure that decisions can be made for Jesus Christ. And for us who believe, let us do good in the name of Christ.

And so the question that comes up for this year I'd like us to consider, let's put that on the slide. It's the question of how can we share the love of Christ with our neighbors?

[ 17 : 53 ] It's a good question. How can we share the love of Christ with our neighbors? And this year I want us to focus on how we as a church can share the love of Christ with others through invitation and through presence, being present with your friends and your families through inviting them.

Now there are two things that we will be working on as a church in an effort to build community within our own church context, but also to be present in the community.

My friends, I'd like to let you guys know of two things that I am working on with Nora, with Amber and with people within the community.

The first thing that us as a church that we're working on is something, right now it's titled Ontario Kids, it might change over time.

But it's this creation of having community classes for children before the Sunday service. It's a way as an outreach for inviting kids and their families to come and learn a life skill, learn how to paint or to dance or to sing or to fish or whatever it is, to learn these different skills and to have it in a safe environment, in a Christian context.

[ 19 : 16 ] And through that we invite the parents for coffee and to get to know them. And through that we invite the family to come join us for worship time, from hearing a message from the word of God and to be part of this community, to be a part of the body of Christ.

We invite children to come, we invite them to have fun, we invite them to learn and to grow and we encourage the families to join us in this effort.

Like I'm saying, it's thinking outside of the box and thinking of how we can reach our community and by having these classes it would be a wonderful way for children to have fun and to be exposed to good Christian community and through that the invitation to come and to come to know the Lord, come to know who Jesus Christ is.

And our goal would be to have about eight weeks where at the conclusion of this we could have this wonderful Easter service where we not only invite our friends, our family and our neighbors but these children who have been taking these classes.

I want to share a story with you of a church that did a very similar thing. You know, in a time when I was serving in Southern California I was in this small church and I had heard from the associate pastor this story here.

[ 20 : 47 ] So this church had a small children's ministry, it was only nine people and they wanted to reach younger families for Christ. They wanted to reach out and have an invitation for children.

They wanted to have more kids in the church and they had a heart for younger people because children are our future. And so what they did, they only had nine people in children's ministry, nine children total.

That's a pretty, alright group. But it only consisted of staff, the staff's kids, right? So over time with strategy and with prayer and with intentionality and innovation with God's divine guidance they created a solution to engage and to educate children through the community and through the invitation of bringing children in and teaching these young children these life skills.

In one week of launching they increased their attendance for their children's ministry from nine to one hundred and nine within the first week.

Praise God for that. Now I don't know what such an outcome would be if it was a hundred children that would be remarkable and certainly whatever God brings.

[ 22 : 08 ] I want us to intentionally focus on this to come to the Lord and let's pray for younger families, let's pray for children to come to know the Lord, to be educated, to learn these skills in a Christian context.

A hundred and nine though. Can you wrap your mind around that for a second? It's kind of remarkable. And when I heard that story that I got that from an email from again the associate pastor of a church that I was at and I just thought that was the most amazing story.

It was a pivotal moment for this church though. This had to be done with prayer, coming to the Lord and asking the Lord, Lord lead us and guide us and where you want us to go and how can we reach young families, how can we reach children specifically and they went all in being about the kids.

Learning about this story is remarkable and inspirational and I know like I said their situation is pretty cool. It would be different than ours.

Maybe more, maybe less. But let's put it into God's hands. It does not change the fact though that we make our offerings and our intentions, we offer that to the Lord.

[ 23 : 22 ] That is what we need to do. We allow for God to work in and through us through doing his work. And this idea of having community classes for children is something that we can do.

It's not going to be the same. It will be its own thing, something that we can do. And so that's one thing that we're working on. The second thing that we're working on, I'll just give you a little bit of a preview.

I'm running out of time here, is the idea of love Ontario. This idea where we work with, we have community projects that we as the church are exhibiting the love of Christ by serving the community, by partnering with existing organizations and coming alongside them to enhance it and to make a greater impact in this city.

I'll go further on to this at another time but that's just kind of the idea. Right now I wanted us to focus mostly on the idea of having, how can we focus on our children?

They are the next generation. So let's think of how we together can come together and we can invite these children to learn to join in these classes but most importantly come to know the Lord and come and join us on a Sunday.

[ 24 : 45 ] And so with that in mind, we are the church. We are the community and we can have a greater impact and a profound influence on our city, the city of Ontario through service and through the invitation of our neighbor.

I want you to think for a moment, the idea of, Amber, can you grab a chair for me please? I want you to think for a moment the idea of an empty chair.

I like to use an empty queue but I want to use this as a visual representation. You see a chair and you think of someone who sits in it.

Ask yourself the question, who can I invite? Imagine someone who could sit here. What do they look like? How do they dress? And do they know the Lord?

And quite honestly when I think of an empty chair, I think of someone who doesn't know the Lord. I think of someone who needs to know who Jesus Christ is. I think of someone who needs healing and restoration.

[ 25 : 47 ] I think of someone who needs transformation in their mind, in their heart and in their spirit. So when we're thinking about focusing on children intentionally and focusing on serving our community, let us focus on the empty chair.

It's the question of who can we reach out to? How can we reach out to? And I want you to think about this as we go from this sermon series and of this year.

How can we reach others for Christ? How can we share in the love of Jesus Christ with other people? I want us to think about that as we close.

And you know over the next few weeks I ask you for prayer and for God's direction in this new season that we can prayer, that we can do good in the name of Jesus Christ.

And before I close, I'd actually like to invite Amber on up real quick. I have been talking about how having community classes for children, but what better person to talk about it than the children's director?

[ 26 : 52 ] So let's give her a round of applause. Yeah? Let's go. Good morning Ontario. Thank you for having me. And I just kind of want to give a very brief week and talk about it over the next week or the coming weeks together privately or in a group or however you guys want to ask questions about it too.

But really the vision behind having community classes for our kids, so often I hear mothers, even some fathers in play groups and things, they say, where is my village?

And they'll say that I hear it a lot. A lot of them are not in churches. A lot of them have created some villages with play groups and things like that.

But over and over, even if they are in those play groups, I still hear where's my village. And so over just thinking about that, within the last six months, I've been thinking about well the village has always been the church.

The village has been the people that you commune with, the people that you share in the love of Christ with, the people who are in your city, Fruitland, Ontario, this is our village.

[ 28 : 12 ] And so when we are looking at helping young families build that village, we have years of experience. We have our walks with the Lord.

We have the talents that He's given us. Some of us are farmers. Some of us are cooks. Some of us are painters. Some of us have skills that I couldn't even tell you today what they are.

But in getting to know each and every one of us, I know you know someone sitting next to you and you know what they're good at. You know what they would like to share with the community.

So we're looking at starting in February an eight week class. Now if you can't commit in February to teaching an eight week class, there are going to be other opportunities throughout the year.

We want to do this at least three to four times in the year where we heavily focus on families and children and teaching them something that will be of value for them in life.

[ 29 : 18 ] A lot of kids, they don't have these opportunities. Some of them might have the opportunity here or there to take a cooking class or to see something on TV but hands on experience and experience with the people in this church who have such tremendous hearts.

That's what is of value. That is where the village comes from. So we're looking at recruiting some of you and maybe you know some people, some leaders in the community, Ontario, Fertland, reasonable distance.

We don't want it to be driving far away to come on Sunday. But maybe you know somebody who might be really good at speaking. Maybe they know a skill but they don't know how to teach it quite yet.

We could teach you how to teach that. So we would just really, we want you to be thinking about that. Come and talk to me after the service.

Come and talk to me in the coming weeks. We would like to have one to two teachers in February. That's our goal. One to two classes that we are going to offer.

[ 30 : 26 ] Who knows in the future maybe we'll have five or six classes every eight weeks. But right now our goal is one to two classes and something you know sign language to kids, music, those kinds of things.

Kids enjoy that. Now it will be ages five to twelve. So another piece of this vision is creating a little downstairs playground for our younger kids because when parents bring their older kids they're most likely going to bring their little ones and we want to have something for them as well.

And so we're looking at transforming that room downstairs into like a playground, a little playground room for younger kids to enjoy while their older siblings are learning and growing in community with us.

So if you have questions please reach out to me. You can give me a phone call during the week or we can meet up. We can figure it out. Don't worry about the kids. We'll figure it out too.

But I just really want to invite you guys to think, to pray and to really see who could be sitting in that empty chair and how can we see those empty chairs fill up.

[ 31 : 41 ] Thank you. It's definitely exciting with just all of the things that we're planning on ways that we can be active in the community and also ways that we can be present for our children, the next generation.

And so as Amber has said, let's think about people who can join us, who can help us in building this community together. I know we've gone over our time but I just want us to think about this and for the next four weeks we're going to be going into more about what it means to love our city, what it means for us to focus on the children.

But let us build community together in the name of Jesus Christ. So with that let's go ahead and close in prayer. Let's pray together.

Father, we thank you for your love and for your provision. We thank you for bringing us together as the community, as the Christian community, as the body of Christ, a community of believers.

We ask that you lead and you guide each and every one of us individually but also each and every one of us as collectively as the church. Be with us.

[ 32 : 57 ] We know there's much work to be ahead but we want to offer ourselves to you. And help us to be your hands and feet in this world showing your love through what we say and what we do.

We ask that you're with us as we go forth, as we sing this closing song, as we leave from this place, be with us. Bless our efforts, lead and guide us and even if we go on the wrong track rebuke us and lead us back to the right track when that happens.

May our efforts may glorify you. Let it be done according to your will and may it bring hope to children, to families.

Lord we're thinking of the empty chair. May we be ready. May our efforts honor and glorify you and let your will be done. May you inspire and motivate each and every one of us to be on fire for you, to love like you, to speak truth like you, and to serve you.

Help us to be a light for this church and a light for the community that we may share in your love with our neighbor and with the empty chair. It is in Jesus' name that we pray and we all say together amen.

[ 34 : 18 ] Thank you for tuning in to the Ontario Community Church sermon podcast. For more about our church and how you can get involved or support our mission, please visit [ontariocommunitychurch.org](http://ontariocommunitychurch.org).

May God's blessings be with you.