



# One Page Sermon

## By Rev. Robb McCoy

### September 8, 2024

## Kindness

Recap of sermon from September 8, 2024

Scripture: Luke 6:31-36

The 1967 film *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* was a groundbreaking look at the tensions behind interracial relationships. Starring Sidney Poitier as the answer to the titular question, the film hinged on the tension of a white woman falling in love with, and thus bringing home to dinner, a black man. The movie was released in the heart of the civil rights movement, when racial tensions were perhaps at their highest. Over the 60 years since the release of *Guess Who*, societal attitudes about interracial marriage have changed.

A 2024 lecture at the University of California Irvine Center for Neuropolitics shared many interesting statistics and insights from surveys and brain scans. Darren Schreiber, PhD and lecturer at Exeter University, shared that opposition to interracial marriage has dropped considerably. In 1990, a survey revealed that 65% of white people disapproved of interracial marriage. In 2018, that number is less than 15%.

While negative attitudes about interracial marriage have shrunk significantly, relationships across party lines has become increasingly problematic. Political polarization has increased dramatically in the last few decades. It has happened in Congress—but it is happening in people's home as well. One might argue that a remake of *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* would feature a relationship that is inter-party.

According to Schreiber, one reason is because people are more and more *identifying* with a political party, not just *affiliating* with them. It was once assumed that party affiliation was done out of a self-interested calculation. One person would figure out on their own which candidate—or party—would bring their life the most value. More and more, researchers are realizing that political decisions are not made on an objective calculation, but on emotional ties more akin to fandom in sports.

People now identify with their party as a part of who they are, not just who they vote for. When this happens, the “us and them” mentality grows so sharp that it often transcends issues, policies, or candidates. This makes it very difficult for people to see various viewpoints, because the opposition viewpoint feels like they are opposing ME, not just my ideas about taxation or foreign policy.



Winning becomes more important than anything, and politics becomes about defending one's way of life instead of working for a common good through compromise and debate. In other words, politics have become more about tribalism.

Where does this leave us? How do we overcome this kind of polarization? Jesus offers us an answer. There are many who say that churches should “stay out of politics.” And while I agree that the church should not be too closely aligned with partisan politics, to “stay out of politics” is to deny a fundamental part of the Gospel. Being a Christian is not just about what you believe. It is about what you do – especially to other people. How you treat others is a fundamental part of faith, and politics is little more than how we decide to treat one another on a group level.

Jesus' political interest is this: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Can love of neighbor be a political platform? In today's partisan polarization, it doesn't seem like a reasonable choice. That should tell us something about our political climate.

This is why we are conducting a Campaign for Kindness. This is not about partisan politics, it is about presenting a way to be political that is not harmful. If our allegiance is to Christ, and not to party, then kindness should be our first step. Love of neighbor is not about being a Democrat or Republican.

Kindness matters, and in the of growing distrust and fear, it might be our only hope. Get a sign. Share on social media. Join in the campaign to present a way that is not red or blue—but purple.

**Next Week: Compassion**  
**Isaiah 11:6-9**