

# **Tattoos On The Heart Book Summary, by Gregory Boyle**

by Allen Cheng

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## **Video Summaries of Tattoos On The Heart**

We've scoured the Internet for the very best videos on Tattoos On The Heart, from high-quality videos summaries to interviews or commentary by Gregory Boyle.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRNX5rmeWkw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqB4yUf8vIU>

## **1-Page Summary of Tattoos On The Heart**

### **Overall Summary**

In the 1980s, Father Gregory Boyle began to preach at a Catholic church in Los Angeles. He witnessed how much gang violence there was and felt that he could make a difference by using his religious training. He reformed the rules of the church and made it more welcoming to people who were not members of gangs. He also started a school program for those students who had been expelled from their regular schools because they belonged to gangs. Finally, with help from philanthropist Ray Stark, he founded Homeboy Industries, which provides employment opportunities as well as tattoo removal services for ex-gang members looking for change in their lives.

The book is about the different people who Boyle has met and interacted with over the years. Boyle goes into detail about each person's background, his or her involvement in gangs, and what he learned from them.

One of the hardest parts of Boyle's job is to bury the dead. He has buried over a hundred people since he began working at Dolores Mission Church, including many children. At funerals, he witnesses a strong sense of shame and self-hatred among attendees. Many people who live in the area hate themselves and don't believe they're worthy of love or anything better than being part of a gang. However, there are some young people who develop a sense of self-respect and manage to get away from gangs and lead normal

lives with families and careers for themselves.

Boyle is surprised at how quickly gang members respond to kindness and decency. They've never had a proper family life, so they join gangs for support. Boyle draws inspiration from Jesus Christ's example of being kind to those who are shunned by society.

Another important theme of Boyle's time in Los Angeles is the importance of family and love. Many people in LA focus on material success, but they should also think about their obligations to other human beings. Boyle believes that everybody should feel kinship with others, even if those others are very different from them. He has thought a lot about this concept recently because he was diagnosed with leukemia in the early 2000s. When he treats gang members at Homeboy Industries with respect and love, they become proud, responsible, and kind as well.

Boyle ends his book by encouraging the reader to listen to those who are different from them.

## **Introduction**

Father Gregory Boyle became the youngest pastor in the history of his parish, Dolores Mission Church. It's located in Los Angeles and is a very poor neighborhood with many gangs.

Over the years at Dolores, Boyle witnesses many deaths of young people. In 1988, he buries a victim of gang violence named Danny. Since then, he's buried 167 more victims.

Boyle notices that many middle schoolers who get involved with gang violence are kicked out of school. But this makes the problem worse, since these youths spend their time around public housing projects, where they can continue to commit crimes. So Boyle decides to open a school for children involved in gang violence, Dolores Mission Alternative School. Working at the school is a nightmare because there are fights every day and many teachers quit because it's so hard to work there. However, Boyle knows how important his work is: by welcoming gang members into a place that was once reserved for "good people," he challenges the idea of what church should be like and welcomes everyone into God's house regardless of their pasts or current actions.

Over time, more and more gang members attended Boyle's church. He also had them in his school. Boyle reasoned that if they were spending time in the church, they wouldn't be committing crimes. Some parishioners disagreed with him but he insisted that the church has a Christian duty to welcome everyone.

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