

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

INTRODUCTION:

This morning I want us to discuss the “Parable of the Good Samaritan” which is probably a parable that many of us are already familiar with. Many organizations, like Franklin Graham’s Samaritan’s Purse, takes its name from this famous parable.

Like last week while studying the Parable of the Two Builders or Foundations, we see a major thread of not just knowing the truth of God’s Word but actually engaging it and living it out. We are to be reflectors in our lives what the truth of Scripture says in its pages. Referring back for a second to James, the half-brother of the Lord...

James 1:22-25

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵ But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

There is this constant reminder throughout Scripture not just to be knowers of the Word but live it out before the world like Jesus did. Our parable of interest today reminds us of this very theme in which a lawyer, an expert in the law of God who would in our terms be considered the theologian, comes to Jesus and questions Him about who his neighbors are in which he has responsibility to love as he loves himself. The idea of loving God without loving others in action is completely absurd to Biblical thinking. We cannot truly love God if we are not in action loving others. Then the parable Jesus gives is an example of living out the very reference of the law, which the lawyer quoted, in regards to how we are to love our neighbors as we love ourselves and in this we love God.

Richard Whately

A man is called selfish not for pursuing his own good, but for neglecting his neighbor’s.

Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” ²⁷ And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁸ And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”

²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” ³⁷ He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

• The Incident

Simon J. Kistemaker

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is only 27 kilometers, 17 miles, long and along that stretch it drops 1,200 meters (3,300 feet). The area is virtually uninhabited, without vegetation, and marked by limestone cliffs and gullies on both sides of the road. The road in Bible times had been given the name “the path (ascent) of blood,” most probably because it was considered unsafe. The route was heavily traveled by pilgrims and caravans, From time to time bandits hiding behind the limestone rocks robbed these people.

• The Response

Matthew 9:11-13

“Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

But when He heard this, He said, “Those who are well don’t need a doctor, but the sick do. Go and learn what this means: **I desire mercy and not sacrifice**. For I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Hosea 6:6

For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

Simon J Kistemaker

The priest and presumably the Levite were on their way home from temple service in Jerusalem. By law, they were not allowed to touch a corpse. Should they transgress the injunction, they would inconvenience themselves socially (by being unclean), financially (by paying burial costs), and professionally (by being barred from priestly and Levitical services).

Of course, the robbed and wounded man was not quite dead. But would a priest or a Levite get off his donkey, take a stick, poke at the victim to see whether he is alive, and then finally administer first aid? Hardly. In the story, the man was alive and thus the members of the clergy could not very well excuse themselves. Whether they were afraid of being ambushed, were hard-hearted, believed they might interfere in God’s judgment that had struck a wayward sinner, or were too conceited as religious leaders to stoop down and help a hapless victim, we will never know. The fact is that both priest and Levite showed no mercy.

N.T. Wright

Often this **parable** is simply taken in a general moral sense: if you see someone in the ditch, go and help them. Sometimes, where people remember that in Jesus’ day the Samaritans and the Jews hated each other like poison, this is expanded into a further moral lesson about the wickedness of racial and religious prejudice. But if we are to have any chance of understanding what Jesus himself meant—and what was at stake

in the wider conversation with the lawyer—we need to go deeper.

Fortunately this isn't difficult. The hatred between Jews and Samaritans had gone on for hundreds of years—and is still reflected, tragically, in the smouldering tension between Israel and Palestine today. Both sides claimed to be the true inheritors of the promises to Abraham and Moses; both sides, in consequence, regarded themselves as the rightful possessors of the land. Few Israelis today will travel from Galilee to Jerusalem by the direct route, because it will take them through the West Bank and risk violence. In exactly the same way, most first-century pilgrims making the same journey would prefer, as Jesus himself did, to travel down the Jordan valley to Jericho and then turn west up the hill to Jerusalem. It was much safer.

But still not completely safe. The desert road from Jericho to Jerusalem had many turns and twists, and brigands could lurk out of sight in the nearby hills and valleys, ready to strike. A lonely traveller was an easy target. And, when he was left half-dead, those who went by couldn't tell whether he was dead or alive ... so, since as **Temple** officials it was important for the two in the story not to contract impurity by touching a corpse, it was better that they remain aloof, preserving their purity at the cost of their obedience to God's law of love.

Richard Rohr

Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself" not "as much as you love yourself." We are to love our neighbor in the same way we love ourselves. "We love because God has first loved us" (1 John 4:19). When we accept the unconditional love and undeserved mercy that God offers us—knowing that we are not worthy of it—then we can allow God to love others through us in the same way. It's God in you loving you, warts and all, and God in you loving others as they are. This is why the love you have available to give away is limitless. As Jesus told the Samaritan woman, "The water that I shall give you will turn into a spring inside of you, welling up into limitless life" (John 4:14).

• The Lesson

- **Lesson 1-** Sometimes those you would expect to do God's will, they don't or won't.

- **Lesson 2** – If the Levite and the Priest had just come from Temple services then the meaning of the Temple, God’s will in Heaven displayed on Earth, quickly departed from their agenda after leaving service when it came time to respond to a blatant need in front of them.
- **Lesson 3** – Sometimes those who you wouldn’t expect to do God’s will are the actual one’s doing it.
- **Lesson 4** – Sometimes we get caught up in our title or role and forget the actual reality of doing God’s will. We sometimes might be guilty that our position is enough when in reality our position means nothing if God’s love is not lived out through us.

Matthew 5:13-16

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

- **Lesson 5** – The question was who is our neighbor? Our neighbor are those who don’t always look like us, or act like us or have any similarities to us at all, but always those in need.

N.T. Wright

The lawyer’s question and Jesus’ answer don’t quite match up, and that’s part of the point. He wants to know who counts as ‘neighbor’. For him, God is the God of Israel, and neighbors are Jewish neighbors. For Jesus (and for Luke, who highlights this theme), Israel’s God is the God of grace for the whole world, and a neighbor is anybody in need.

The interesting thing is that Jesus teaches us to not only love our neighbor but love our enemy as well. In this story, the enemy was the true neighbor (because Samaritans and Jews hated each other) to the broken man. He shows the approach and attitude each Jewish man should have by showing

the attitude and approach of how their enemy treated one of their own. Which is a lesson to all of us because it applies not just to Jews but to both Jews and Gentiles, which means ALL!

- **Lesson 6** – To love cost! The Samaritan invested in the welfare of the abandoned and beaten from the road. He invested financially and also invested in this man through his time given.
- **Lesson 7** – After the lawyer gave him the two greatest commands as his answer, Jesus said, “Do this and you will live.” Then tells the story of the Good Samaritan. God wants us to not survive this life, but to truly live the life he has given us. To truly live the life God has given us, we must die to ourselves and only live for Christ. That is where the adventure is and where life truly becomes life to our soul when we are one with the will of God as we engage it each day. We engage eternal life living in the present which proceeds into forever.

John 17:3

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

John 10:10

The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy but I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly.

CONCLUSION:

Henri J.M. Nouwen, Bread for the Journey: A Daybook of Wisdom and Faith

We become neighbors when we are willing to cross the road for one another. (...) There is a lot of road crossing to do. We are all very busy in our own circles. We have our own people to go to and our own affairs to take care of. But if we could cross the road once in a while and pay attention to what is happening on the other side, we might indeed become neighbors.