

## **06-03-18 – Who is My Neighbor? Parable of the Good Samaritan**

### **Luke 10:25-37**

#### **Squirrels and Religion (sent from Tom Muller)...**

*The Presbyterian Church called a meeting to decide what to do about their squirrels. After much prayer, they concluded the squirrels were predestined to be there and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.*

*At the Baptist church the squirrels had taken an interest in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a water slide on the baptistery and let the squirrels drown themselves. The squirrels liked the slide and, unfortunately, knew instinctively how to swim so twice as many squirrels showed up the following week.*

*The Methodist church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures. So, they humanely trapped their squirrels and set them free near the Baptist Church. Two weeks later the squirrels were back when the Baptists took down the water slide.*

*But the Catholic Church came up with a very creative strategy. They baptized all the squirrels and consecrated them as members of the church. Now they only see them on Christmas and Easter.*

*Not much was heard from the Jewish synagogue; they took the first squirrel and circumcised him. They haven't seen a squirrel since.*

Who is my neighbor?

As we have mentioned before, parables are stories that are addressed to the particular audience present at the time. They are designed to appeal to that audience in a way that will draw them into the story as a participant, and then, when they least expect it, they are shown the lesson of that story. Jesus was a master story teller – with divine inspiration. He was able to select or make up a story that would zero in on the point in such a way that the audience was taken off-guard and usually humbled.

Today, we are going to look at the parable of the Good Samaritan. This is a famous and well-known parable of Jesus. We have to be careful to keep a balance when looking at this parable. Like we have said before, there is no secret meaning to these stories, but there is a poignant spiritual lesson.

So, Luke re-tells this story for all of us to read and understand...

**READ: Luke 10:25-29 (NLT)**

It's interesting that the lawyer asks Jesus a question, but Jesus asks the question right back to him. The lawyer was trying to test Jesus, it says, but Jesus, knowing his intent, turned the tables around on him. He was asking Jesus how to inherit eternal life, but Jesus asked him a question about the Law.

How does this expert interpret it? He says, we must love God with everything we have, and then love our neighbor as ourselves. It's almost an incidental automatic response from years of synagogue.

Even according to the Law, the people must: love their neighbor as themselves (Lev. 19:18).

But what does that mean? Who is my neighbor?

***Once, Jesus was asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this, 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord your God is the one and the only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."*** Matt. 22: 36-40 (NLT)

Here are a few other reinforcements of this command from Paul and James...

***Rom. 13:8 – "Owe nothing to anyone – except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law."*** (NLT)

***Gal. 5:14 – "For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."*** (NLT)

***Jas. 2:8 – "Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*** (NLT)

Jesus, Paul, and James reinforce the commandment that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. The Lawyer's question seems legitimate. Who is my neighbor? He came to test Jesus, but here, Jesus is testing him by his own question.

So Jesus basically says, "Hear this story..." – He answers him with a parable...

*"It's a fair rule of thumb that only that love of neighbor which can also draw people to Christ is truly a reflection of that love for God which is its source."* (Jeremy C. Jackson <sup>1</sup>)

The lawyer came to test Jesus – Not hostile, but inquiring. He addressed Jesus as Teacher... and asks Him a legitimate question about eternal life. What is required of him to attain eternal life? So Jesus flips the tables back on him... What do YOU think is required to have eternal life?

The lawyer answers correctly – Love God and love others (neighbors as yourself). He quotes from the O.T. Scriptures. Jesus – confirms that he has answered correctly... He answered religiously, but not from a heart of relationship. This is critical to the story. Many can answer correctly and not have a relationship with God. Knowing the right answers according to the Law does not guarantee you a place in the kingdom of God. The Pharisees and leaders of the Law knew a lot, but they didn't have a relationship with God. You can have all the right answers, but not know the One who organized it all.

So – while the lawyer has the right answer, Jesus puts the question back to a practical sense.

**READ: Luke – 10:30-37**

***<sup>30</sup> Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.***

***<sup>31</sup> "By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. <sup>32</sup> A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.***

***<sup>33</sup> "Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. <sup>34</sup> Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.'***

***<sup>36</sup> "Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked.***

***<sup>37</sup> The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy."***

***Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."***

A leader must have compassion. Nehemiah was such a man. Alan Redpath writes this about Nehemiah: 'You never lighten the load unless first you have felt the pressure in your own soul. You are never used of God to bring blessing until God has opened your eyes and made you see things as they are.' Nehemiah was called to build the wall, but first he wept over the ruins." (Alan Redpath <sup>1</sup>).

Can one achieve eternal life by keeping the Law? If we look at what it means to be a true Christian, we will see that we are required to go to those who need us physically. We need to

meet the needs of those in our community. Those who are our neighbors. Who is our neighbor? They may even be in our own family or our own backyard.

The Pharisees believed that if you keep the Law you can inherit life in the kingdom of God. So they followed the letter of the Law to the extreme. In this parable, Jesus will change the man's words from passive to aggressive – putting action to his attitude – an active sense.

Who is my neighbor?

In our story – the two religious characters act contrary to love.

Our text says, “by chance” – a priest came along. Nothing is by chance, but Jesus wanted to make the story flow easily. So a priest returning from Jerusalem came down that road. It was a dangerous road, and many crimes were perpetrated on this path. This scene may not have been so unique. But the priest still crossed over to the other side and avoided the scene of this beaten man.

A temple assistant came along and went up to the hurting man, but he also went over to the other side of the road and avoided the injured man.

Here's the punch line... A Samaritan came by and had pity on this injured stranger. He treated him with his own oils and dressings. He brought him to an Inn and paid to have him put up for a few days. He paid the expenses out of his own pocket.

The Samaritans were enemies of the Jews, including Jesus, but He tells this story to prove a point. If even an enemy would have pity on this injured stranger, shouldn't the Jews have mercy on him?

The priest and the Levite of our story play significant parts. They were just in Jerusalem serving in the temple, doing all the religious things that made them righteous. Yet, they missed the requirement of helping someone in need on their way home from all their religious service.

Our text says the despised Samaritan had compassion on this man. He took his own clothing strips and bandaged him; he took his own wine to help disinfect his wounds; his own oil to help dress his injuries; he put him on his own donkey to transport him; he paid out of his own pocket for his stay at the inn. He also promised to make good on any other expenses that may be incurred when he returned.

**READ: Luke 10:36-37**

**That's compassion – That is what a neighbor should do. What about you?**

This story was a reversal of the experts. Jesus flipped the tables around here. We may not get it in our modern environment, but this was monumental then. Who is my neighbor?

*“The phone rang in a high society Boston home. On the other end of the line was a son who had just returned from Viet Nam and was calling from California. His folks were the cocktail-circuit, party kind – drinking, wife-swapping, gambling, all the other things that go with it. The boy said to his mother, ‘I just called to tell you that I wanted to bring a buddy home with me.’ His mother said, ‘Sure, bring him along for a few days.’ ‘But, mother, there is something you need to know about this boy. One leg is gone, one arm’s gone, and one eye’s gone, and his face is quite disfigured. Is it all right if I bring him home?’*

*His mother said, ‘Bring him home for a few days.’ The son said, ‘You don’t understand me, mother. I want to bring him home to live with us.’ The mother began to make all kinds of excuses about embarrassment and what people would think ... and the phone clicked.*

*A few hours later the police called from California to Boston. The mother picked up the phone again. The police sergeant at the other end said, ‘We just found a boy with one arm, one leg, one eye, and a disfigured face, who just killed himself with a shot in the head. The identification papers on the body say he is your son.’ (Dale E. Galloway <sup>1</sup>)*

<sup>1</sup>– [Swindoll’s Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes](#) – Charles R. Swindoll – Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tn. – © 1998 by Charles R. Swindoll