**THE GOOD SAMARITAN**

**Text: Luke 10:25-37 Date 10-3-21 Sunday AM Nathan Ricks**

Today we often call someone that is charitable or helps someone out a good Samaritan. We use it as a compliment, but historically in Jewish culture being called a Samaritan was a terrible insult. For example, in John 8:48 the Jews accused Jesus of being a demon-possessed Samaritan! They had such a hatred of Samaritans that if they were on a journey they considered it reasonable to go the extra distance to avoid traveling through Samaria. So how did being called a Samaritan go from being an attack on your character to praise?

Our text today will be Luke chapter 10 starting in verse 25 and going through verse 37. Turn with me in your copy of God’s word.

**25** And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” **26** And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?” **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 wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Here we have Jesus in a familiar situation. Let’s look at verse 25:

**25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”**

A lawyer, who might also be called a scribe, would be an expert in the law. He asks a great question of Jesus, one that would be recorded in various forms around 19 times in the gospels. But this guy is not asking a sincere question, the Bible tells us his goal is to trip Jesus up. He is trying like many Jewish authorities to get Jesus to say something that will incriminate himself. Here is how Jesus responds:

**26 And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?”**

Jesus knows the lawyer knows the law, it’s literally his occupation, and this phrase would be commonly used among his peers as they discussed it. It means “Hey, what do you think this means? What’s your interpretation?”

**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.”**

This is pretty much a summary of the 10 Commandments. The first 4 tell us how to love God (no other Gods, no idols, not take the name of Lord in vain, remember the Sabbath) and the last 6 tell us how to love people (honor thy father and mother, not kill, not commit adultery, not steal, not bear false witness, not covet)

In **Matthew 22** we see Jesus explaining this when another lawyer asks him which is the greatest commandment. He gives this same answer, wrapping it up with verse 40, “Upon these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets.”

**28 And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.”**

So Jesus has answered, the case is closed, right? But not quite, the lawyer needs some clarification. And it’s not always a bad thing to ask for clarification if we are fuzzy on the details, but sometimes it can shine a light on what’s important to us. So the lawyer continues in verse 29:

**29 But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”**

See, the lawyer is looking for a specific qualification on exactly who he is required to love. Surely the law does not require him to love Georgia Bulldogs fans (point to Jamin). Are we talking about the people that live next door to us? Maybe even the people that live in our community, or possibly even every one of our fellow countrymen?

The lawyer doesn’t want anyone to waste their time and energy loving someone unnecessarily so he is ready to get the specifics cleared up.

**30 Jesus replied and said, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.**

Jesus is telling a parable here that the lawyer and the people listening can relate to. You see the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was called the Pass of Adummim, which was Hebrew for “blood.” It was a rocky, winding, downhill path 17-18 miles long.  It was known for being a dangerous place to travel, so it’s not hard for these people to imagine that someone might be robbed, beaten, and left for dead there.

**31 And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.**

But wait, the priest would certainly have known the Law! Shouldn’t he have stopped to help this man? Perhaps he was concerned about being defiled by a potentially dead body? Whatever the reason, he put as much distance between himself and the man in need as he possibly could and went on his way.

**32 Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.**

Now a Levite would also surely known that the Law said to love your neighbor. Maybe he was worried that the robbers would get him next if he stuck around to help? Or maybe he was on a time crunch, or maybe he figured it was too late to make any difference. Jesus doesn’t tell us WHY specifically these guys just kept going, just that they did.

**33 But a Samaritan who was on a journey came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion,**

**34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on *them*; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.**

Here enters what the Jews would have viewed as a villain in this story. A Samaritan?!? Of the three characters in this parable, the Samaritan would be the last the Jews would consider their neighbor. In fact, they would almost surely have felt that a Samaritan was NOT their neighbor. But Jesus tells them that this traveler was different. Instead of seeing the beaten man as an inconvenience to be avoided, he puts his own plans aside to care for the urgent needs of this hurting and broken human being. Unless he was carrying a first aid kit, he likely tore his own clothes to dress the bleeding wounds. He soothed them with oil and cleansed them with wine. He walked alongside, giving his ride up to the man who could not walk and he provided a place to heal and rest.

**35 On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return, I will repay you.’**

So this Samaritan really goes the extra mile. Not only does he give his time, personally staying the whole night, but now he freely and generously offers his resources to see that the injured man is taken care of.

Two denarii were around the equivalent of 2 days’ wages. Some time ago an archaeological find was discovered that is believed to be a sign for an inn, probably just like the one described in this story. The price advertised on the sign indicates the going rate for a room was 1/32nd of a denarii. So the Samaritan’s 2 denarii would have covered the man’s room expenses for around 2 months! So now with his point made, Jesus asks in verse 36:

**36 Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ *hands*?”**

**37 And he said, “The one who showed mercy toward him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.”**

Jesus’ answer to the lawyer’s question of defining a neighbor, basically asking “who must I love?” is EVERYONE.

**Matthew 5:43-44** "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' 44 "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

The lawyer, and even the priest and Levite in the story all knew the law but failed to love others in the same way they loved themselves.

Jesus says if you want to know what to do, here it is- knowing well that no human can love that perfectly. Do you and I love others like that? Everyone? All the time?

**James 2:8-10** says “If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law, and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all”.  There is only one person that ever walked the earth that can love that perfectly and that was Jesus Christ.

**Romans 3:23** says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. He took the punishment for our sins on the cross, and when we accept Him as our Savior, turn from our sins, and submit our lives to Him we can experience that perfect love.