

A Question of Loving Your Neighbor

Luke 10:25-37 (text v. 36)

In this message we will consider the very popular story of the Good Samaritan. I've preached on this passage several times in the past. But this time, I want to deal with it from the context of the lawyer's questions that lead up to the story and its concluding question in verse 36.

I. The initial **APPROACH** of the lawyer (vs. 25-29).

A. He asked an **INSINCERE** question (v. 25).

1. He wasn't really interested knowing how to have eternal life. He hoped to entrap Jesus, but Jesus trapped the lawyer!
2. Jesus answered with another question (v. 26). This question was designed to reveal the lawyer's failure to keep the law.

B. He gave an **INCRIMINATING** answer.

1. The lawyer answers by quoting the O.T. law (v. 27 cf. Dt. 6:4-5; Lev 19:18).
2. Jesus confirmed his answer (vs. 28).
3. Note, the lawyer did not ask, "How do I love God?"
4. The lawyer, realized he has incriminated himself. So he seeks to justify himself by asking Jesus another question—"*And who is my neighbour?*" (v. 29). This religious legal beagle, like any good lawyer, seeks to find a "loophole" to get himself out of the place he has put himself in.

II. The instructive **ACCOUNT** of the Samaritan (vs. 30-35).

- ➡ Jesus responded with the familiar story of the "good Samaritan." I don't believe this is a parable, but an account of an actual event.
- ➡ Some preachers try make this story an allegory with each part as a symbol of something:
 - The **victim** pictures the lost sinner, wounded by sin, and left half dead on the road of life.
 - The **priest and Levite** represent the failure of organized religion to help a person wounded by sin..

- The **Samaritan** is Jesus who saves the man, pays the bill, and promises to come again.
 - The **inn** stands for the local church where believers are cared for. The "*two pence*" are the two ordinances, baptism and communion.
- This may make for a good devotional message. But if you take this approach to all Scripture, you can make the Bible teach almost anything, and miss the real message God wants you to get.
- **Four parts to the story:**
1. A ROBBERY on the road side (vs. 30).
 2. A REJECTION by religionists (vs. 31-32).
 3. A RESCUE by the Samaritan (vs. 33-35). His coming... compassion... carrying... caring... and cash.
 4. A RESPONSIBILITY to show love and mercy to *everyone* (vs. 36-37).
- We must not lose sight of **the context of the story**—Loving your neighbor! That is why the lawyer asked, "*Who is my neighbor?*" That is, "Who I am supposed to love as myself?"

III. The indicative **ANSWER to the question** (vs. 36-37).

- When Jesus finished the story, He threw the lawyer's original question right back at him—"*Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?*"
- A. The **DEFINING** of the "neighbor"—The story of the good Samaritan defines the term "neighbor."
1. "*Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves*" The answer is obvious—The Samaritan is the neighbor. Therefore, the people the lawyer was commanded to love as himself were Samaritans!
 2. That was hard for a Jew. Jews had an intense prejudice against Samaritans.

- a) Samaritans were half-breeds (half Jew / half Gentile). They were despised by Jews. To a Jew there was no such thing as a “*GOOD* Samaritan.”
- b) To be called “a Samaritan” was one of the most degrading insults that a person could be called (John 8:48).
- c) The lawyer could not even bring himself to say the word “Samaritan” when answering Jesus (v. 37).

B. The **DISCLOSURE** of prejudice. Jesus’ question revealed the lawyer’s racial prejudice against his neighbors, the Samaritans.

- 1. Prejudice is one of the oldest sins of mankind dating back to Cain murdering his brother Abel. This crime will be in tomorrow’s headlines. In fact, racial tension is worse today since before the election of President Obama.
- 2. This racial rift went back a long time.
 - a) Samaria was the capital of the ten northern tribes of Israel. There was not one good king who reigned over the northern kingdom. They all followed after the sins of Jeroboam.
 - b) Judah and Israel were “at odds” with each other throughout most of their history.
 - c) Eventually Assyria took many Israelites into captivity (2 Kings 17:6, 23). Exiles from other nations began to settle into the region of Samaria. Samaria became a “melting pot” as exiles intermingled with the remnant of Israelites who remained in the land (2 Kings 17:24-29).
 - d) Later, Judea was taken captive by the Babylonians. After they returned 70 years later they found the Samaritans intermarried with the foreigners thus polluting the race.
 - e) The animosity became more bitter as years went by. By the time of Christ, the racial hostility between them was so bad, Jews avoided all contact with the Samaritans.

C. But not Jesus (John 4:3-9). Jesus loved the Samaritans as He loved the Jews. He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

#242—Jesus loves the little children. All the children of the world. Red and yellow; black and white. They are precious in His sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world.

➡ Jews considered Samaritans their enemy, but Jesus told the lawyer the Samaritans were their neighbor, and they needed to love them. LOVE YOUR ENEMIES.

➡ We are commanded to go into all the world and preach the gospel to EVERY CREATURE, not just those of our own race.

IV. The impelling **APPLICATION to obey** (v. 37b).

➡ What Jesus said to the lawyer, He says to each of us—“*Go and do likewise.*”

A. Compassion is the key! The word compassion insists on taking action—It MOVES US (Mt. 14:14). If compassion doesn't cause you move and do something, it is not compassion at all.

➡ Jude 22, “...*some have compassion, making a difference.*”

B. “*Go and do likewise.*” Do what? SHOW MERCY! To whom? EVERY-ONE, no matter what race they are. If you received God's mercy, you should extend God's mercy. What is the most merciful thing you can do for a lost soul? Befriend him and win him to Christ!

SUMMATION: As noted, the name “Samaritan” was greatly despised in Jesus day. But Jesus has redeemed the name “Samaritan” from reproach. Today “Samaritan” has become a name that is respected and honored. The name “Samaritan” has been incorporated into the names of charitable organizations like rescue missions, hospitals, relief centers (Samaritan's Purse), and counseling ministries. Jesus took a BAD word and made it a GOOD one!

As Jesus did with the name "Samaritan," so Christ is doing with the souls of man. He lifts a life of disgrace to one of dignity. He turns bad people into a good people— He turns sinners into saints when they receive Him as their Lord and Savior.

Will you be a “good Samaritan”?