

Sunday Lesson – Feb 21, 2021

GOSPEL: Luke 10: 25-42

Good Samaritan

Background

"The Parable of the Good Samaritan is precipitated by and in answer to a question posed to Jesus by a lawyer. In this case the lawyer would have been an expert in the Mosaic Law and not a court lawyer of today. The lawyer's question was, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ([Luke 10:25](#)). This question provided Jesus with an opportunity to define what His disciples' relationship should be to their neighbors. The wording of the question does give us some insight into where the scribe's heart was spiritually. He was making the assumption that man must do something to obtain eternal life. Although this could have been an opportunity for Jesus to discuss salvation issues, He chose a different course and focuses on our relationships and what it means to love." (*Excerpts from [gotquestions.org/parable-Good-Samaritan.html](#)*)

Insight

"The word "neighbor" in the Greek means "someone who is near," and in the Hebrew it means "someone that you have an association with." This interprets the word in a limited sense, referring to a fellow Jew and would have excluded Samaritans, Romans, and other foreigners. Jesus then gives the parable of the Good Samaritan to correct the false understanding that the scribe had of who his neighbor is, and what his duty is to his neighbor." (*Excerpts from [gotquestions.org/parable-Good-Samaritan.html](#)*)

Gospel Reading

"Just then a religion scholar stood up with a question to test Jesus. "Teacher, what do I need to do to get eternal life?" He answered, "What's written in God's Law? How do you interpret



it?" He said, "That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence—and that you love your neighbor as well as you do yourself." "Good answer!" said Jesus. "Do it and you'll live." Looking for a loophole, he asked, "And just how would you define 'neighbor'?" Jesus answered by telling a story. "There was once a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead. Luckily, a priest was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him he angled across to the other side. Then a Levite religious man showed up; he also avoided the injured man. "A Samaritan traveling the road came on him. When he saw the man's condition, his heart went out to him. He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds. Then he lifted him onto his donkey, led him to an inn, and made him comfortable. In the morning he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take good care of him. If it costs any more, put it on my bill—I'll pay you on my way back.' "What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbor to the man attacked by robbers?" "The one who treated him kindly," the religion scholar responded. Jesus said, "Go and do the same. As they continued their travel, Jesus entered a village. A woman by the name of Martha welcomed him and made him feel quite at home. She had a sister, Mary, who sat before the Master, hanging on every word he said. But Martha was pulled away by all she had to do in the kitchen. Later, she stepped in, interrupting them. "Master, don't you care that my sister has abandoned the kitchen to me? Tell her to lend me a hand." The Master said, "Martha, dear Martha, you're fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing. One thing only is essential, and Mary has chosen it—it's the main course, and won't be taken from her." *The Message*

What It Could Mean?

“Jesus responds with a parable narrative about human beings and how they respond to traumatized, violated, unsheltered, and/or marginalized others. This parable is about men—a priest, Levite, and Samaritan—who must make significant decisions at the intersection of ethnicity/race, gender, human victimization, and desperation. This is the first mention of a Samaritan since Jesus began his journey to Jerusalem (9:51).

The parable begins with a man who is robbed, assaulted, and left for dead when traveling on a road from Jerusalem down to Jericho. We do not know the man’s social class, ethnicity, or religion. He could have been a God Fearer like the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) or the author we call Luke, a Samaritan like the man who stops to help him, or a Jew like the men who pass him by. We know nothing about the moral character of the victimized man.

Unlike the priest and Levite, a Samaritan man approaches the man to see him and his wounds (verse 24). Seeing him and his wounding, he responds like a neighbor who loves himself and loves other human beings. He treats him like he would like to be treated.

Sometimes we are the Samaritan; other times, the priest and Levite. We must more consistently practice neighbor-love motivated by God-love and self-love. Self-love is neither egocentric nor individualistic. Self-love is not obsessed with self-preservation; it takes risks for violated, vulnerable humans living in the borderless neighborhood we inhabit.

Jesus’ response to the lawyer’s question redirects his concern from eternal life to this life. Our concern should be saving lives in our lifetimes. What we do now impacts where we find ourselves in the afterlife. The story of Lazarus and the rich man makes this point (Luke 16:19-31). When the Samaritan carried, clothed, housed, fed, and financially supported his neighbor, he

turned abstract self-righteous piety into neighbor-love. Neighbor-love is clothed in tangible acts of reparation and restitution (whether we are innocent fellow travelers or perpetrators). The most vulnerable among us live in precarious situations and are subjected to and surrounded by violence.

Luke’s God lifts up and liberates the marginalized and anoints gospel abolitionists to do likewise (see Luke 1:48, 57; 4:18-19). Neighbor-love is transgressive of the borders we erect to avoid risky relationships with others or to create sanitized neighborhoods populated with folks like us.” (*Excerpts from workingpreacher.org by Mitzi J. Smith*)

Readings for Further Study

- [Matthew 22: 34-36 & Mark 12: 28-34](#) *Matthew & Mark versions*
- [1 John 4:7/Leviticus 19:18/1 Corinthians 16:14/Deuteronomy 6:5](#) *Love neighbor as yourself*

Thought for the Day

“On the parable of the Good Samaritan: “I imagine that the first question the priest and Levite asked was: ‘If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?’ But by the very nature of his concern, the good Samaritan reversed the question: ‘If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?’” ~ *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

A Prayer

Compassionate God, how easily you love those who look unlovable to us! How readily you welcome undesirables into your home! How slow we are to follow your example. Turn our hearts toward all who are considered outcast, shunned, and unclean so that we may love our neighbor without pity or apathy, for the sake of the one who became flesh to cleanse the world of sin and death forever, Jesus Christ our redeemer. **Amen**