

09-30-2018

Message: The Love of Those Who Inherit Eternal Life, Part 1

Text: Luke 10:25-42

Introduction

- A. Did you notice the question the opening verse of our text contains, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Do you think that sometimes it is good for us Christians to be reminded of what it means to be a Christian, to be confronted anew with the choice that was before us when we first gave our lives to Jesus Christ as Lord? Actually, God answers this question in His Word with an obvious “yes.” Notice what He teaches and leads us to say to Him in Psalm 119:106:

Psalm 119:106 **I have sworn** and **I will confirm it**, that I will keep Your righteous ordinances.

- B. If you are a true disciple of Jesus Christ, know that He, in His sovereign rule over all creation, has brought you and me here today to be reminded of and to renew our pledge to follow Jesus by faith with all our heart, soul, mind, body, and to be reminded to renew our loving Him by fervently loving from the heart the people for whom He died. So this portion of God’s Word is for us Christians at this very moment.
- C. If you are here today and know you are not a follower of Jesus, or are deceived into thinking you are a Christian when in reality you are not, it is also good and kind for Christ in His sovereign rule over creation, to appoint your being here today, so that you can hear His words of life, calling you to wholehearted faith and love toward Him, by which He, and only He, can rescue you from the self-destructive death spiral that is your present life.
- D. So what is Jesus’s answer to the lawyer’s question?

I. 10:25 The lawyer’s question testing Jesus.

- A. A lawyer, not a criminal or civil lawyer, but an expert in the Old Testament Law/Scriptures, asks Jesus a question whose answer every human being should seek from Jesus.

Luke 10:25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "**Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?**"

- B. We will see a rich young ruler in Luke 18 ask the same question for his own soul’s sake. But this the lawyer poses his question to Jesus, not seeking eternal life, but putting the Lord Jesus to the test. This is something he, knowing the law, would not do if he believed in Jesus as Lord.

Deuteronomy 6:16 "**You shall not put the LORD your God to the test**, as you tested *Him* at Massah.

II. 10:26 Jesus tests the lawyer.

- A. It is the prerogative of the Lord to put us to the test, and not visa versa.

Proverbs 17:3 The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, **but the LORD tests hearts.**

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"¹⁰ **"I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind,** even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds.

- B. So Jesus tests the lawyer by turning the question back on the lawyer. Notice that Jesus points us to the Scriptures as the final word/authority for life and godliness.

Luke 10:26 And He said to him, "**What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?**"

III. 10:26-28 Jesus affirms the answer that the lawyer quotes from the Scriptures.

- A. The lawyer answers his question by quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18.

Luke 10:26 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.**"

- B. Jesus's answer is puzzling, even troubling to some Christians, who are much more comfortable with Luke's recording of Paul and Silas's answer to the Philippian jailor in Acts 16:31, They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Of course, verse 32 tells us, (Acts 16:32) And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. I.e., this answer required further explanation, as do these verses in Luke 10.
1. Some suggest that while it is correct that if you could love God with all your being and your neighbor as yourself, you would inherit eternal life. But since no one can do this perfectly, this is a hypothetical yet unachievable goal, intended for us to try and discover failure, causing us to search for what will truly bring us eternal life, an answer that Jesus withholds in this instance.
 2. But the following context shows both the Samaritan (10:29-37) and Mary (10:38-42) doing the very things Jesus exhorts the lawyer to do. So Jesus intends the lawyer and us to understand the answer He confirms as true is not a hypothetical-unachievable answer, but the true answer.

3. The faith in Christ by which He forgives and justifies us produces a wholehearted love and obedience toward Him. So when the Scriptures speak of love for the Lord or obedience to the Lord as though our lives depend on it, we are to understand that such love and obedience are the fruit of Spirit-empowered faith in the Lord. **Faith-Love-Obedience**. FLO - from Faith will flo Love from which will flo obedience.

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but **faith working** through **love**.

IV. 10:29-37 Who is a “neighbor”?

- A. Though Jesus confirmed the lawyer’s answer was correct, His exhortation to the lawyer appears to have made him uncomfortable, putting him under conviction. Jesus didn’t say, “Since you answered correctly you will live.” Jesus suggested that the lawyer needed to act on what the Scriptures said to do to inherit eternal life. So the lawyer responded defensively, seeking to justify himself, resisting Jesus’s call to repentance and change.

Luke 10:28 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?**"

- B. Jesus responds with an illustration and a counter-question. First, the illustration.
 1. The 17 mile journey from Jerusalem (2,600 ft) to Jericho (825 ft below sea level) was notoriously dangerous. (Show map & slide of Jericho road)
 2. The illustration: Not the priest, not the Levite, but a Samaritan, of all people, was a “neighbor” to the half dead man on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Samaritans showed hostility toward Jesus on His way to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51-56), as did His disciples in return. Mishnah Shebiith 8:10 ... “Rabbi Eliezer used to say, ‘He that eats the bread of the Samaritans is like one who eats the flesh of swine.’” Many Jews considered Samaritans as outcasts from the people of God by virtue of their race.

Luke 10:30 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."³¹ "And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side."³² "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side."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."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.'

3. The Samaritan loved this (assumed) Israelite man as follows:

- a. he approaches him, unlike the priest who purposely passed by on the other side.
- b. he binds his wounds, perhaps tearing his own clothing to make bandages.
- c. he anoints the wounds with olive oil and wine (alcohol would disinfect), perhaps depriving himself of personal refreshment on the journey.
- d. he loads the wounded man on his own animal, which probably means he now has to walk.
- e. he takes him to an inn.
- f. he does not dump and run, but spends the night caring for the man.
- g. he provides for the wounded man's continued care, leaving 2 days' wages, which would cover a 24 day stay, and promised to return and pay any additional expenses incurred by the inn keeper.

4. Now the counter-question.

Luke 10:36 "**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."

- C. At first glance it might appear that Jesus in 10:36 is not answering either of the lawyer's questions. Why is it important to "become" a neighbor? The key is in understanding Jesus' definition of neighbor in Leviticus 19, which Jesus affirmed in 10:27.

V. "Neighbor" in the Leviticus 19:18 and the Old and New Testaments.

- A. In Leviticus 19:16-18 "Neighbor" = "your people," "brother" (fellow countryman), "sons of your people," i.e., members of the covenant community of God's people.

Leviticus 19:16 'You shall not go about as a slanderer among **your people**, and you are not to act against the life of your **neighbor** (rea), I am the LORD. 17 'You shall not hate your **fellow countryman** in your heart; you may surely reprove your **neighbor** ('amit), but shall not incur sin because of him. 18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against **the sons of your people**, but you shall love your **neighbor** (rea) as yourself; I am the LORD.

- B. This of course does not mean that we do not have to love those outside the covenant community, the people of God.

Leviticus 19:34 '**The stranger who resides with you** shall be to you as the native among you, and **you shall love him as yourself**, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.

Galatians 6:10 So then, **while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people**, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one

another, **and for all people**, just as we also do for you;

- C. But it is clear that neighbor has a restricted sense in Leviticus 19:18, and in the OT legal code in general, as well as elsewhere throughout the OT after the Exodus (Cf. “rea” in Exodus 11:2-3 referring to Egyptians).

Note that in Deut.15:1-3 the foreigner is not a brother/neighbor.

Deuteronomy 15:1 "At the end of every seven years you shall grant a remission of debts. 2 "This is the manner of remission: every creditor shall release what he has loaned to his **neighbor**; he shall not exact it of his **neighbor** and his **brother**, because the LORD'S remission has been proclaimed. 3 "From a **foreigner** you may exact it, but your hand shall release whatever of yours is with your **brother**.

Isaiah 41:6 Each one helps his **neighbor** and says to his **brother**, "Be strong!"

Jeremiah 31:34 "They will not teach again, each man his **neighbor** and each man his **brother**, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

- D. Carryover of meaning into the NT, despite the fact that “plasion” (neighbor) is in the Greek language itself a generally broader term.

Romans 13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love **one another**; for he who loves his **neighbor** has fulfilled *the* law.

1 Corinthians 6:1 Does any one of you, when he has a case against his **neighbor**, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? ... ⁵ I say *this* to your shame. *Is it so, that* there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his **brethren**,⁶ but **brother** goes to law with **brother**, and that before unbelievers?

Galatians 5:13 For you were called to freedom, **brethren**; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR **NEIGHBOR** AS YOURSELF." 15 But if you bite and devour **one another**, take care that you are not consumed by **one another**.

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS **NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of **one another**.

James 4:11 Do not speak against **one another**, **brethren**. He who speaks against a **brother** or judges his **brother**, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who

judge your **neighbor**?

VI. Application

A. The definition of “neighbor” is not limited by racial, ethnic, national boundaries or socio-economic class, but is limited to God’s household of faith. Again, as in the OT, the NT does not limit our love to only members of God’s family, God’s church. So if we are to do good to everyone, why does the definition of “neighbor” matter?

B. According to Jesus, it is a matter of eternal life or death.

Luke 10:28 And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; **DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.**"

1 John 3:14 We know that **we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.** He who does not love abides in death.

C. Recognizing Jesus’s use of “neighbor” as referring to a fellow believer/member of God’s household, helps us understand that in Luke 10:36-37, Jesus is answering both of the lawyer’s questions, 10:25 and 10:29, in a very poignant fashion that confronts the lawyer with the most important question, “Am I anyone’s neighbor?” “If not, will I become a ‘neighbor’ to God’s people (and thus, a member of God’s true people) by a faith that produces love for them and takes hold of eternal life?” No one loves God who does not love His people - those who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for **the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.**²¹ And this commandment we have from Him, that **the one who loves God should love his brother also.**

D. So it is good for those not loving God’s people while calling themselves Christians to be, like the lawyer, confronted with Jesus’s question. Are you loving your believing parents, spouse, siblings, church members? It is also good for true believers to renew our commitment to receive, and thus obey Jesus as Lord, and to remind ourselves of all His “one another” commands that teach us how to love our neighbor, one another.

John 15:17 love one another

Rom 12:10 be devoted to one another

Rom 12:10 give preference to one another

Rom 12:16 be of the same mind toward one another, do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly

Rom 15:8 accept one another

Rom 15:14 admonish one another

Rom 16:16 greet one another with a holy kiss

Gal 5:13 serve one another

Eph 4:25 speak honestly/truthfully to one another
 Eph 4:32 be kind to one another
 Eph 4:32 forgive one another
 Eph 5:19 speak psalms to one another
 Eph 5:21 be subject to one another
 Phil 2:3 regard one another as more important than yourselves
 Col 3:13 bear with one another
 Col 3:16 teach one another
 1 Thes 4:18 comfort one another
 1Thes 5:11 encourage one another
 1 Thes 5:11 build up one another
 1Thes 5:13 live in peace with one another
 1 Thes 5:15 seek what is good for one another
 Heb 10:24 stimulate one another to love and good deeds
 James 5:16 confess your sins to one another
 James 5:15 pray for one another
 1 Pet 4:9 be hospitable to one another
 1Pet 5:5 clothe yourselves with humility toward one another

E. The ability to wholeheartedly love God and love all of His people comes from God, and God holds us responsible to be obedient to His Word that commands us to do this.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for **love is from God**; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, **fervently love one another from the heart**,²³ for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.

F. No wonder Christ inspired Luke to immediately follow chapter 10 with the disciples making the request to Jesus in Lk 11:1, “Lord, teach us to pray.” Let’s pray now for grace to love Him and His people as He commands us.