

Message #49

Luke 10:25-37

Back in the 60's, in a small town there was an elementary teacher who got arrested. There was something different about him. You couldn't put your finger on what it was, but when you listened to him teach, he seemed to be odd. One day the FBI came and arrested this man and it turns out that he was suspected of being a Communist. Now in these days, if you hold Communistic viewpoints, you can run for President; but back then you couldn't. I don't know what happened to him, but he was different.

There are people who are at church who are like that. They come, they look like everyone else, but when you listen to them, there is something not quite right. You get the sense that their views are different.

Jesus faced the same kind of thing when He was here. There was a "lawyer" who came to Jesus to "test" Him (10:25). This man was very religious and he was an expert in Jewish law. His goal was to trip up Christ on some O.T. law issue. He was not really interested in learning the truth; he was interested in finding some weakness in the theology of Jesus Christ.

So He went to Christ and asked Him what he must "do" to "inherit" eternal life? That word "inherit" (klhronomhsw) is one that means to obtain for yourself a property inheritance (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 248-249). So this lawyer believes he not only deserves eternal life, he wants to know what he has to do to have a great inheritance in the eternal life existence.

Notice how the lawyer identifies Jesus, as a "Teacher." Luke does not use an article "the" before the noun teacher, so the lawyer thinks Jesus is just another teacher. This guy had been involved in religious things for years and he certainly thought if anyone deserved eternal life, he did.

So what Jesus does is to inform Him of this point:

YOU WILL NEVER INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE BY KEEPING THE LAW BECAUSE YOU DON'T KEEP IT, AND THE PROOF IS YOU DON'T HAVE A HEART THAT HAS ANY GRACE INTEREST IN BROKEN DOWN, HURTING SINFUL PEOPLE.

Jesus is telling this man you have a real heart problem and I'll prove it. Now Christ presents two evidences to look at in regard to one who has eternal life:

EVIDENCE #1 – One who has eternal life has a heart that knows and applies God's written word. **10:26-29**

The first evidence that Christ offers for proof that one is or isn't in a right relationship with God is the Bible. What Christ specifically does is to use the O.T. law to show whether or not the guy really grasps truth.

If we think this through logically, he is asking what he would have to do that would make him so perfect that he would not even need to offer any blood sacrifice. If you can do something to inherit eternal life, then why would there be a need for those blood sacrifices? This guy doesn't even think about this at all.

When the lawyer asks Christ what He has to do to inherit eternal life, Jesus basically asks the lawyer two questions about the Bible:

(Question #1) – What is actually written in the Bible in the O.T. law? **10:26a**

(Question #2) – How do you accurately interpret what is written in the Bible? **10:26b**

Jesus believed the word of God was very personal to this guy and He wanted him to tell him what is in the Bible and how does he interpret it.

What we clearly do see here is that knowing the written word of God demands knowing the true interpretation of what is written. Two key principals of interpretation (hermeneutics) are found: **1) Observation – what does the text say; 2) Interpretation – what does the text mean.**

Now the lawyer was very skilled in understanding the Bible. He knew things about the O.T. law. **What he didn't know about the O.T. law is that he could not keep it and that the O.T. law showed him to be a sinner in need of a relationship with the One with whom he was talking.**

When Jesus asks him what the law says, the lawyer combines two O.T. law passages – Leviticus 19:18 and Deuteronomy 6:5 in giving his answer. He basically says my understanding of the O.T. law presents two prerequisites:

Prerequisite #1 – One must love God with a perfect love. **10:27a**

In order to inherit everlasting life, a person must love God with “all” of his heart; with “all” of his soul; with “all” of his strength; and with “all” of his mind. The emphasis of this word “all” (olh) is the idea of loving the Lord God completely, entirely, and perfectly (Smith, p.316).

So the lawyer says if one is to have an inheritance of eternal life, one must love God perfectly in every way. He must love Him perfectly with everything he is and everything he possesses.

Of course there is a slight problem here. These guys did not love Jesus Christ, who is the Lord God. In fact, they hated Him. Secondly, there is not a person on this earth who has loved God at this level. That is what Paul said. He said the law shows that all have sinned and are short of the glory of God.

But that was the guy's answer.

Prerequisite #2 – One must love your neighbor with a perfect love. **10:27b**

The second part of the answer was that you must love your neighbor as yourself. If you want to inherit everlasting life, you would need to love and care for others in the same way you love and care for yourself and your own family.

This lawyer gave a solid answer of prerequisites which he assumes he meets. This guy knew things from the Bible, but he had a major heart problem. He assumes that he loves God and his neighbor perfectly and is good to go.

In **verse 28** Jesus said you have answered correctly. Do that and you will have no problem with having everlasting life. Just make certain you have always loved God perfectly at all times and that you have loved your neighbor perfectly at all times and you will have no problem.

Of course there is a problem here. There is a big problem here. Only one Person has ever done that and the one Person is the One to whom the lawyer is speaking.

If this lawyer were interested in being right with God and not testing Jesus Christ, he would have said since the O.T. law shows me my sin and guilt, how would it be possible to have everlasting life?

The Apostle Paul said that the man who tries to justify himself by claiming he has kept the law will discover his mouth will be shut (Rom. 3:19-20).

Now it is obvious from **verse 29** that the lawyer was convicted about something, because he asked, “who is my neighbor?” He wanted to justify himself, but he sensed something was missing, so he asked this follow-up question. Fact is, you cannot justify yourself; God must justify.

Jesus knew he would respond the way he did, so Jesus decided to give an awesome illustration designed to show this man his heart did not meet the criteria.

EVIDENCE #2 – One who has eternal life is not Pharisical toward others, but is compassionate toward others. **10:30-37**

Christ demonstrates this lawyer is far short of meriting eternal life by using an illustration that would have hit this “self-justifying” lawyer right in his heart.

In **verse 30**, Christ tells the story of a certain man. We may assume that the man was Jewish because he was traveling down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He had probably been to the Temple or one of the religious festivals and was traveling home.

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is a north east road. The going down is in elevation, not direction. Jerusalem is about 2300 feet above sea level, and Jericho is 825 feet below sea level. Jericho is about 16-17 miles N.E. of Jerusalem.

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The road is a dangerous road with many twists and turns. In fact, the road snakes through some mountainous terrain that is ideal for bandits. Jerome, in his writing on this text, says that the road was called in the 5th century after this was written – “The red or bloody way.”

In 1930, H.V. Morton, an acquaintance of William Barclay, said that he was told to be sure to get home before dark when traveling that road, even by car. The police told him there was a man named Abu Jildah, who would stop cars and rob the travellers and tourists and escape into the hills before the police could arrive.

Well, according to **verse 30**, Jesus says there was a certain man who was traveling, and four terrible things happened to him:

- 1) Robbers surrounded him. **10:30a** – language indicates he came across them and they were around him (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 356).
- 2) Robbers stripped him. **10:30b** – took all his clothing that he wore.
- 3) Robbers beat him. **10:30c** – not content with robbing, they wanted to hurt him.
- 4) Robbers left him half dead. **10:30d** – his condition could go either way – live or die.

Here was this man who found himself surrounded by a gang of thugs who jumped him and stole everything from him and beat him and left him for dead.

Jesus said three different individuals came by this Jewish man who is lying on the side of a road and is nearly dead:

Individual #1 – The priest. **10:31**

The first person to come by who sees this guy is a Jewish priest. He was in Aaron’s family lineage. William Van Doren, who has written a commentary on Luke, says what “fine irony” this is. This priest comes from some religious festival in Jerusalem and refuses to put any of his religion into practice.

He saw this man lying on the street and passed to the other side. He literally walked to the other side of the street.

Individual #2 – The Levite. **10:32**

This guy was a religious and Biblical scholar from Levi’s family. He was one who was interested in teaching and instruction. He also had been in Jerusalem and he too had come from some incredible religious experience.

He saw the hurting Jew lying in the street and he, too, passed by on the other side.

Neither one of these theological thinkers or ecclesiastical geniuses would lower themselves to help this hurting and helpless man. Neither one would practice what they preach. They did not want to get involved.

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I am certain they had their excuses for not stopping to help:

(Excuse #1) – God is sovereign, so this guy probably got what he deserved. This is probably some judgment of God.

(Excuse #2) – This man is probably a wretched sinner and we don't want to get contaminated via association.

(Excuse #3) – There are robbers in the area and we better not stop, or we may get hurt and robbed. We need to look out for number one.

(Excuse #4) – This man is almost dead anyway, so what really can we do?

These were religious men who could be religious and heartless at the same time. They know the truth but didn't even care about someone who was dying. Religious people can be very heartless people. We must guard ourselves from this, too.

Individual #3 – The Samaritan. **10:33-35**

The Jews hated the Samaritans. They were publicly ridiculed in the synagogues and the Jews considered them to be demon-possessed (John 8:48). To the Jew, the Samaritan was unclean and worthless.

Merrill Unger cites Josephus in saying, "The Samaritan was publicly cursed in their synagogues, could not be adduced as a witness in the Jewish courts, could not be admitted to any sort of proselytism, and was thus, so far as the Jew could affect his position, excluded from eternal life." (*The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, p. 1118)

When the Samaritan came by this half-dead/half-alive Jew, he "felt compassion". The word means that his heart was affected and he was moved with feelings of kindness and benevolence (*Ibid*, p. 414).

His compassion moved him to take six actions:

(Action #1) – He came to him. **10:34a**

He did not cross the street and he did not walk away.

(Action #2) – He bandaged him. **10:34b**

He poured oil on his wounds, which soothed, and he poured wine on his wounds, which was an alcoholic antiseptic. He would have ripped some of his own cloth to make a bandage for him.

(Action #3) – He transported him. **10:34c**

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He got off his own mule and put the hurting Jew on the beast. He walked, while the hurting Jew rode.

(Action #4) – He housed him. **10:34d**

He took him to an inn. He did not want this Jew lying in a street; he wanted him in a clean bed.

(Action #5) – He cared for him. **10:34e**

While at the inn, he took personal care of him. His efforts and energies were focused on helping the helpless. He obviously did what he could throughout the night to help this man.

(Action #6) – He paid for him. **10:35**

He paid the inn keeper money to take care of him and promised that when he returned he would pay any additional expense. He gave the man two day's wages and then said he would make up the difference on his next visit. **This Samaritan is footing the entire bill for this helpless man.**

This Samaritan was not only a good Samaritan, he was a gracious and godly Samaritan.

Righteousness is not found in religion, it is found in the heart. This Samaritan had a heart right with God.

Now after Christ gave this illustration in **verse 36**, he asked the Samaritan which one of the three was a neighbor to the man who was robbed?

Verse 37 says that the lawyer gave the right and obvious answer. Notice he does not say the name Samaritan, because his Jewish pride won't let him. So Jesus said to him well then you go and do the same.

Keep in mind in **verse 29** the lawyer asked the question, who is my neighbor? **Turns out, your neighbor is anyone that is in your personal world at any given moment of time who is in desperate need of your help and needs you to demonstrate grace. Your neighbor has nothing to do with geographical location, nationality, or race.**

Now at this point the lawyer should have said, where do I get a heart like that? Where do you get the righteousness necessary and the heart change that is necessary to inherit eternal life?

The answer is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Samaritan of eternal life. He came to us when we were helpless and hopeless in sin. He paid the full price to save us and He picked us up and

patches us up and cleans us up. He has taken care of us and someday He will come back and get us.