

## Scripture Reading:

**Luke 10:25** “25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" 27 So he answered and said, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.' "

28 And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." 29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' 36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" 37 And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."”

# ***"Being a Good Samaritan"***

**This morning we come to one of the most famous lessons from Jesus, found only in the Gospel of Luke: Our task is pretty simple, but very challenging this morning**

- **We will try to understand a little bit more about this lawyer**
- **We will strive to learn the lesson of showing compassion that Jesus is teaching ALL of us!**

**It is important to remember the context of this ‘certain’ lawyer coming with his question as Luke continues his orderly account: Jesus was showing His followers the BIG picture and has just shared some amazing perspective on His work and His Kingdom. This rightly challenges what this student of the Law would have believed regarding the Old Testament Scriptures. When Luke says that he asks his question to test or tempt Jesus, it is in the sense of questioning Jesus, not trying to entrap Him as we will often see others doing.**

**He was challenging Jesus to clarify what He meant, and I would think of this man more like Nicodemus who came with his questions for Jesus at night rather than the rich young ruler who was totally caught up in his earthly treasure, not willing to do what Jesus commanded. It is instructive to see the patience of Jesus as He corrects this lawyer, and it is a lesson we should all remember!**

**Last week, the 70 returned amazed that even the demons obeyed them and then Jesus PUBLICALLY reminded them of what was most important, even rejoicing Himself: “20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” 21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 22 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."**

- **Jesus reminds His followers, that God’s salvation is always gracious & He rejoices in that fact**

**The lawyer should have known this as a student of the Old Testament, the same Scriptures Simeon had!**

- **Where Adam was graciously placed in the garden and given dominion over the whole earth**
- **Where Abraham was graciously called out and made the Father of many nations**
- **Where God provides the sacrifice to save his son Isaac**

- Even where God says, “I am Jehovah your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” before He gives the people His Law

Hearing Jesus, this lawyer is now has a question that has troubled many down through church history: How do you reconcile Law and Grace? OR how does God’s Law relate to the Gospel?

**There are just three answers:**

The first we should call ‘cheap grace’ where one says we are saved by grace and so we are not under the law, which now only applies to the Old Testament: The fancy word for this is antinomianism & it is widespread in American churches

The second is legalism where we must earn our salvation by doing good works, keeping the Law: This is likely where this lawyer was coming from and he is not alone with many churches teaching such things down through history as well:

- If Adam had been good God would have rewarded him
- If the people had kept the Law God would have blessed them
- If Luther had climbed enough rough steps on his knees God would have been pleased with him

Church history is littered with failed plans to work our way to heaven by earning God’s favor!

**The Biblical alternative to BOTH cheap grace & legalism is the Gospel!**

Jesus and His Word have NO tension or conflict between Grace & Law...

This lawyer was troubled when Jesus said we should rejoice that our names were written in heaven:

- Would this type of thinking not do away with keeping God’s Law?

This is exactly the question that Paul addresses in Romans chapter three right after he presents God’s gracious plan of salvation:

**“31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.”**

- What Paul explains here in Romans is what Jesus is going to teach this lawyer:
- The proper, Biblical relationship of Grace and Law:

God demands perfect obedience in both the Old & New Testaments: “Be Holy as I am Holy” or “If you love me keep my commandments.” None of us in our fallen state can live up to such standards and thus we stand guilty before a just God:

- BUT we know Jesus has paid the price for our sins, He has...  
*[remember that BIG word...?] propitiated God’s wrath*

**Paul says that under the Gospel the Law has been established because we can be called to obey it in the power of the Holy Spirit AND receive the forgiveness of sins when we fall short which we demonstrate in covenant renewal worship each week.**

**So the lawyer comes challenging Jesus, testing Him if you will, to see what He thinks about the Law of God when he asks, “what shall I DO to inherit eternal life?”!**

**Implied is the lawyer’s concern that surely there must be SOMETHING that I must do for my name to be written in heaven!**

- **Jesus does NOT, as we often would say, ‘well you just have things ALL wrong!’**
- **Jesus uses this as a teaching opportunity presenting one of the most important principles given in all of the Scriptures: How to apply the 2<sup>nd</sup> great Commandment to love one’s neighbor!**

**Jesus turns the tables and asks the lawyer to answer his own question from what he knows best: The Law!**

- **“What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?”**

**This lawyer rightly answers, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ & ‘your neighbor as yourself.’ Jesus then, as Paul does in Romans 3 assures this lawyer that His Gospel is NOT in conflict with God’s Law:**

- **“You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.”**

**Now that lawyer, and anyone else who takes God’s revelation seriously, SHOULD understand that Jesus has not set aside God’s Law when He explains God’s gracious gift of salvation by saying our names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life!**

**However, this lawyer and many today are not quite there: They think that at least part of our salvation must rest on what we do or we as humans would not be significant:**

- **Man’s choice, man’s free-will just must be involved!**
- **So Luke tells us that the lawyer ‘wanting to justify’ himself, asks a follow-up question...**

**It is very important that we see the struggle he is having or we can miss the central point that Jesus will make with the lesson of the Samaritan: This lawyer knew the law and was striving to obey God: But he knew that he must keep it perfectly! He was sure on the first [loving God], but was doubting himself on the second [loving his neighbor] So I think he honestly asks Jesus: “Who is my neighbor?”**

**A good example of the Law being a schoolmaster that leads to Christ...**

- **In answer to this question, Jesus tells a story: Just as God often does when trying to make important points!**

Before we dig into the account itself, we need to stress that Jesus is straight forward in presenting a very simple, but very challenging lesson.

- Here is one place where seeking deeper meanings can cause us to miss the very point Jesus is making!
- Down through the ages, many have taught that there is an amazing allegory in this account...

The Samaritan is really Jesus who comes to the aid of the man in need, having been attacked by Satan. The priest and Levite are the Law and Prophets of the Old Testament which can't help save the man. The man in need is then taken to the Inn which represents the church and the Inn Keeper represents its ministers who cares for the man. There are two MAJOR problems with this approach:

First, it does not properly present God's gracious salvation

- Man is not injured and near death, we are all born DEAD in our trespasses & sin and we daily increase our guilt.
- In the account Jesus gives, the point is NOT that the Priest and Levite were unable to help, but that they refused to help
- Jesus does not drop us off and leave us under the care of the church and go His own way
  - Jesus said Lo I am with you!
  - Jesus meets us here at this Table each and every week!

The second problem is that such an allegory causes us to miss the very point of this account: We must love our neighbor by showing real compassion!

This lawyer will have to identify the Samaritan as the one who loved his neighbor and Jesus will command him to "Go and do likewise!" Jesus expects US to properly understand what is being taught and then to apply it to our lives!

Jesus tells us that a man, very likely a Jew, was attacked by robbers on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho: He is beaten, stripped of everything included his clothes and left for dead.

Next we see a priest and a Levite come by and refuse to give him aid:

- Already we can make all sorts of applications for today, thinking about pastors or deacons who don't really care for God's flock
- However, we don't want to miss how pointed this was for the lawyer who would have looked up to these offices as those who were obeying God and surely on their way to heaven.

**Jesus is very graphic in how he presents them: The priest passes by without so much as a glance on the other side of the road: Perhaps the priest had an important appointment to keep or he might have been headed home having finished his time in the Temple knowing that he had done all that God had expected of him!**

**We are told that the Levite took time to look, but still passed on by:**

**Now I could list a whole bunch of reasons for passing by someone in need today, and sadly we have all likely used them:**

- **We will be late for church!**
- **Someone else who is better equipped to help will surely stop...**
- **You only get in trouble if you get involved...**
- **If you are a doctor you might get sued**
- **If you are alone it might be a trap...**  
**And so on & on the excuses go!**

**The BIGGEST excuse that haunts us all is our concern that it will cost us time and money if we get involved...**

- **And yet getting involved is exactly what we will see the Samaritan do here...  
With a STRANGER**

**So now we come to the center of the teaching... A simple lesson which we can, and should, spend the rest of our lives learning!**

**Jesus tells the lawyer, “and when he saw him, he had compassion.”**

- **So what does it mean to show compassion?**

**We hear a lot about showing compassion today, and sadly very little of it is Biblical! On the political front the Democrats will tell you that they are the party with the heart and the Republicans have now responded by saying they are the compassionate conservatives! Of course we should always beware of politicians being compassionate, doing it with OTHER people’s money which is all the tax revenue is: They will even run up massive deficits being generous with THAT money, but it is a different story when it comes to THEIR money... Just recently there was a year where despite ALL his millions; Al Gore gave \$358 to charities?**

**Then we have modern philanthropy which totals in the billions of dollars given to thousands of foundations... BUT after you strip away the high “cost of fundraising,” the administrative costs and the various agendas that provide no real help, it is mostly modest groups like the Salvation Army or the Union Gospel Mission here in town that are giving any real help.**

**And sadly, the Church in America is not doing much better these days... Often they rush to send folks off to get help from a government program rather than teach the necessity and blessing of giving God's tithe which is required in part so churches can help the poor and needy!**

**So, we have much to learn today and Jesus will teach us if we are willing to listen to his lesson on what it means to show compassion... To love ones neighbor.**

**Actually the lesson is very simple:**

- **Provide the help that is needed to the person that God puts right in your path!**

**That is what happened here with this Samaritan. He stopped and gave the injured man the help he needed**

- **He did NOT worry about whatever was next on his schedule**
- **He did NOT focus on the danger he would face in treating this man or hanging around a dangerous place!**
- **IF it was today we would have to add that he did not worry about being sued for providing help**

**This man showed compassion... REAL compassion as opposed to an empty 'hope you recover quickly and I will be praying for you!'**

- **He put himself in danger by providing care right on the spot**
- **He gave the man his place on his animal and brought him to an Inn where he could recover**
- **He stayed with him through the night and gave the Inn Keeper two days wages so he could remain at the Inn [some think up to two months] AND said he would cover any additional expenses!**

**Would we leave an open credit card account at a hotel for a total stranger who was in need? [obviously this Samaritan was known by the Inn Keeper so it was not a reckless act, but sacrificial none the less]**

- **After giving a dramatic illustration of what it means to show compassion, Jesus then asks this lawyer His final question: Who was 'neighbor' to him who fell among the thieves?**

**We see the Jewish – Samaritan tension when the lawyer cannot bring himself to simply say the Samaritan, but rather he says "he who showed mercy on him."**

- **Jesus then gives the simple command: "Go and do likewise."**

**This simple command applies to that certain lawyer, to His followers who were listening and to ALL the Saints! NOT to earn our salvation, but rather to establish the Law as Paul instructs the Romans or as he puts it even more clearly in Ephesians chapter two: “8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.**

*[BUT they should be quoted with what follows]*

**10 “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”**

- **If you don’t believe we are saved ONLY by God’s grace, you will end up being a legalist of some sort trying to earn favor with God, something those who are dead in their trespasses and sins simply cannot do!**
- **If you preach the grace of verses eight & nine without verse ten, then people will often conclude that it does not matter how we live after we are saved!**
- **Jesus is not kidding or making some hypothetical statement for our theology when he says, “Go and do likewise.”**

**At Mount Sinai God thunders that He is the God who graciously brought His people out of bondage and then tells them how to live by giving them His Laws.**

- **Just as Paul says that because of God’s grace WE are created in Christ Jesus unto good works**
- **In neither case does God expect us to perform so He can then save us or bless us**
- **In both cases God has graciously delivered His people and then explains how they are to love Him and their neighbors!**
- **Jesus taught this lawyer and all of us, that keeping God’s Law requires one to have a new heart!**

**Our names must be written in heaven and THEN we can love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength and our neighbor as ourselves**

- **And thus, we also are commanded to go and do likewise:**

**So just what does that mean for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?**

**The simple answer is that we must become the people of God who know how to show real compassion!**

- **Does this mean we should sell everything and move to one of the poorest nations? Maybe, but only if God is calling you to do that**
- **Does it mean we spend each day looking for a beaten traveler to help? That would soon exhaust us physically and financially**

**What we need to do is just learn the simple lesson that Jesus has taught:**

- **Provide the help that is needed to the person that God puts in your path!**

**There is no better example of the “good works” that we were created in Christ Jesus to walk in!**

**As I said earlier a very simple and yet VERY challenging lesson...**

**One we can only do in the power of the Holy Spirit!**

**Communion Meditation:**

**Loving our neighbor certainly does not exclude the members of Christ’s Body...**

**I Corinthians 11:29 " 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world."**