

The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-36

1. This story begins in a theological controversy and ends in a description of “first aid” at a roadside.
2. It arises in a question of eternal life and works out to a payment for room and board at a hotel.

I. A DANGEROUS ROAD

- A. There is no doubt that this is a story from real life for it tells of the kind of thing that frequently happened on the Jerusalem to Jericho Road.
1. The road was notoriously dangerous for travelers. It was perfectly suited for bandits and robbers.
 2. Jerusalem was located 2,300 feet above sea level, and Jericho 1,300 feet below sea level.
 - a. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho then descends about 3,600 feet in a little more than 20 miles. It is only 15 miles by the way the crow flies, but the mountains add over 5 miles.
 - b. It was necessary for the road as it wound through the mountain country to make many sharp turns many dips and narrow passes.
 - c. These were excellent places for bandits to waylay travelers.
 3. The many limestone caves through this area provided hideouts from the Roman patrols.
 - a. The caves and mountains to the west of the Dead Sea were hid outs for literally hundreds of bedouins bandits and revolutionists.
 - b. And it was impossible for them to be rapped in this country they knew so well and that provided them with so many perfect hiding places.
 4. Even in the time of Jesus this road was called “The Red or Bloody Way” or simply “The Bloody Pass.”
 - a. The hearers of Jesus were familiar with such stories as Jesus hold.
 - b. There is in existence a letter dated AD 171 in which a complaint is made to the government by two pig dealers. They had fallen into the hands of bandits on this very road.
 - c. They tell of being surprised by them “who assaulted us with very many strips, wounded Pasion, robbed us of a pig and carried off Pasion’s coat.”
- B. Even as late as the 19th century travelers had to pay safety money to local Sheiks if they wished to be safe from the attack of the Bedouins.
- C.. And even in our time the road still has a grim history. Late 1930 H. V. Morton in his book, **In The Footsteps of the Master** writes of the road:
- a. “When I told a friend that I intended to run down to the Dead Sea for a day he said, ‘Well, be careful to get back before dark.’ “Why?” I asked. “You might meet Abu Jildah!” “Who is Abu Jildah?” “He is a (bandit) who has shot several policemen. There is a price of £ 250 on his dead, and he is in the habit of building a wall of stones across the Jericho road, stopping cars, robbing you, and if you resist, shooting you. He once held up 14 cars in a row on this road, robbed everyone, threatened to cut off a woman’s finger because her rings were tight, and was off and away to the hills by the time the police heard about it.”

II. THE CHARACTERS OF THE STORY

- A. All we know of the principal traveler is that “a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.”
1. We are not told his race or religion. But we assume him to be a Jew. Probably a Jewish peddler. Maybe just a traveler who had nothing more worth stealing than just his clothes.
- B. Second on the scene are the bandits or thieves.
1. They stripped the traveler of his money, his raiment, and his goods and wounded him and left him for dead it seems, but he was only severely wounded.
 2. The question Jesus is now dealing with is, “who is my neighbor?” And certainly we can see no neighborly love in this act of the robbers.
 3. The first philosophy that we see illustrated may be worded that –
MIGHT MAKES RIGHT – The Iron Rule
 - a. The robbers held the philosophy that they had the right to take what ever they could. They made their living by exploiting others. Do unto others before they do unto you.
 - b. Such do not know the meaning of brotherly-love. They love money more than they love men, and they are willing to kill a man in order to get his money.
1 Timothy 6:10 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. *ASV*
 - c. The principle represented by these men leaves destruction and death in its path, and should it gain the supreme control of the world, human life would no longer be safe, and peace, happiness, and contentment would no longer be possible.
 - d. It is sometimes referred to as the **IRON RULE**. Brute force is the means, and the love of money the motive. They are content to be receivers, and never sharing the blessings of God with others.
 - e. An Arab beggar sat at the gate of a rich man’s house regularly and depended entirely on the mercy of the rich man for his life. One day the man of wealth wished to send a message in a hurry but had no one to take it. Then he remembered the beggar and asked him to take it. The beggar drew himself up, and in reply said, “Sir, soliciting alms is my interest; I do not run errands.”
 - 1) Many lives are spend in soliciting alms of God, enjoying the showers of blessings, but never willing to spread a little happiness into the lives of others.
 - 2) We receive from God, but are we ready to run for him to tell others about his love and mercy and saving grace. Freely we have received– freely we should give.
 - 4.. The **IRON RULE** of conduct is the one that listens while money talks.
 - a. Someone said, “That money talks I will agree, It always says good-bye to me.”
 - b. Riches may have wings all right, but all I ever see is their tail feathers.
 - c. Yes, we live in the age of the **IRON RULE**, where a fool and his money are welcome everywhere.
 - d. A man whom others called poor, but who has enough fortune to support himself, went about the country in the simplest way, studying and enjoying the life and beauty of it.
He once talked with a great millionaire who was engaged in business, working at it daily, and getting richer each week. The poor man said to the millionaire, “I am a richer man than you are.”

“How do you figure that?” asked the millionaire.

“Why,” he replied, “I have as much money as I want, and you haven’t.”

C. Then comes along the Priest.

1. In Palestine there were so many priests by the New Testament time they were divided into 24 courses. Each course served in the Temple for two separate weeks in the year.
2. Inasmuch as Jericho was one of the priestly cities, this one may have been returning home from his service in the Temple.
 - a. Having spent his two weeks in the Temple service, if this is so, he should have been deeply stirred and spiritually minded.
 - b. His very birth and calling should have made him neighbor to the robbed and wounded man.
 - c. But he passes by on the other side.
3. He may have thought it a trick of the bandits. Sometimes they did these kind of things. so he takes no chances.
4. Certainly we do not see any neighborly love in his action.

D. Next we see the Levite.

1. He was a worker in the house of God.
2. And we notice a subtle difference in the attitude between the Levite and the Priests. The Levite, we are told, “came and looked on him.”
3. Perhaps the priest was afraid it was a trick, but this man takes a good look and could see that the man truly was wounded.
4. Perhaps the Levite thought he would like to help the man, but saw no sense in getting involved.
5. It is quite easy to see that this neither is neighbor-like love.
6. The philosophy of life illustrated on the road to Jericho by the Priest & Levite is a philosophy that is passive with regard to the needs of others.
 - a. You cannot give an adequate estimation of the character of a man until he is given an opportunity for service.
 - 1) The priest and Levite both were suppose to be of a tribe that did good. They were the ones we would expect to show kindness, yet when given the opportunity to do good, they turned their backs.
 - 2) Christians, those who intend to be Christ-like, are the people the world expects to be interested in others, their welfare and their soul. As their Master, Christ Jesus was interested.
 - 3) Illustration: Good Will

“The most precious thing anyone can have is the good-will of others. It is something as fragile as an orchid – and as beautiful. As precious as a gold nugget and has hard to find. As powerful as a great turbine and as hard to build – as wonderful as youth and as hard to keep.” Amos Parish.
 - b. But those of this passive class abide by the SILVER RULE. That of doing unto others as they do to you. (The Levite went over and looked on him.)
 - 1) Unlike the first, this class does not actively harm society, but neither does it help. Such people will not kill a man for his money, but neither will they spend theirs to rescue him.

- 2) John, the beloved Apostle may have thought of this story when he wrote:
1 John 3:17-18 17 But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.
NASB
 - 3) James well describe those with this philosophy in **James 2:16** "and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?" *NASB*
 - c. This philosophy is passive and feels no obligation to assist others. Jesus condemns it.
 - 1) It would have been like the priests as he walked on down the road to pray to God to bless that man. The priest wasn't going to bless him. He didn't realize that men are God's instruments to bless.
 - d. The philosophy of this class may be summed up in these words: What I have is mine and I will keep it.
- E. And then Jesus tells of his story of the Samaritan coming onto the scene.
1. The Samaritans were hated and despised by the Jews.
 - a. The listeners of Jesus would immediately assume that the villain had appeared on the scene. Perhaps they expected the Samaritan to finish killing the half-dead man.
 - b. [Who were the Samaritans?]
 2. He came and looked on the man. He had compassion.
 3. He treated the man, pouring oil into his wounds and binding them.
 4. He sets the man on his own beast. This Samaritan was probably a business man or a trader.
 5. He takes him to an inn, sees that the man is well cared for and leaves with the host a sum sufficient for immediate care and says if it takes more I will repay you.
 6. Now which was the neighbor? asks Jesus.
 - a. The answer is obvious. The Samaritan was neighbor to him. But the lawyer cannot bear to mention that it was the "Samaritan." But simply says, "the one who helped him."
 - b. And Jesus turns the proposition around, "Go and do like the Samaritan." BE a good neighbor.
 - c. Anyone who needs your help is your neighbor.
 7. The third philosophy is that of the good Samaritan.
 - a. To those of this philosophy, men, though strangers, mean more than money, and they are willing to invest not only their means, but time and influence also in an effort to save the unfortunate.
 - b. Those of this category are much like God, they can be "moved with compassion," verse _____.
 - 1) The Samaritan gave the wounded dying man oil for his wounds and cleaned them. he set him upon his beast while he walked. At the Inn he paid some in advance for the man's keep.
 - a) KINDNESS – illustration 88 At-Ki
 - 2) Those of the category do not see in the New Testament a list of distinct precepts, each of which is applicable to only one case, but rather a book of living principles with universal application. And having a heart full of love for God and man, he has no trouble in finding occasion to apply those principles.

- c. This principle may be worded: What I am and have belong to God, and I am willing to spend and to be spent according to the pleasure of God and the needs of others.
- 1) Someone wrote this little verse that describe this class:
 Poem: "Doing Good."
 Do all the good you can,
 By all the means you can,
 In all the ways you can,
 In all the places you can,
 At all the times you can,
 To all the people you can,
 As long as ever you can.
8. These three philosophies, the IRON RULE, the SILVER RULE, and the GOLDEN RULE, illustrate the value that men may place on human life, and attitude toward others.

III. THE LESSONS

A. Myself and My Neighbor

1. Of all of Jesus' parables this might be said to be the most practical. Certainly, I think, it is the best known.
2. It helped to answer two questions? (1) Who is my neighbor? (2) What is my duty to my neighbor.
3. To the Jew this was a startling discovery. He felt a very definite responsibility for his fellow Jew but he felt no responsibility at all for the Gentiles.
4. One of the parts of the Sabbath-keeping tradition, for instance, lay it down that if on the Sabbath, a wall should collapse on a passer-by, enough may be cleared to see whether the injured man is Jew or Gentile.
 - a. If he is a Jew, he may be rescued. If a Gentile he must be left to suffer until the next day.
5. But Jesus came to help clear up this attitude of the Jews.
 - a. Yet it is still a common attitude of people today, that they don't want to get involved in the misfortunes of others.
 - b. Some have the conception of the jews, that you can't help anyone unless he is a Christian. But Jesus said.... Matthew 5:46-47
 - c. But one of the great lessons Jesus teaches in this parable is to count no human being a stranger.
6. this is the difference between Christianity and Judaism, between Christianity and Islam, Christianity and Buddhism, or Hinduism, or Confucianism.
 - a. The story is told of a man who fell into a pit and could not get out.
 - b. Buddha passed by. "Poor fellow," he said. "You must have been very foolish to get into a mess like that." And he went on his way.
 - c. Confucius passed by and saw the poor man in the pit and said, "I'm no sorry to see you down there. Why don't you think of a way to get out."
 - d. Mohammed passed by. He said, "I am very sorry that I cannot get you out of the pit, but if you ever do get out I may be able to give you some good advice and rules which will keep you from falling in again."

- e. And then Jesus of Nazareth passed by and saw the poor man. He said nothing, but got down into the pit with the man and lifted him out.
- B. Let's notice the Samaritan and see how he fulfilled the law of Christ.
1. He had sympathy.
 - a. The priest and Levite saw a bruised and bleeding body.
 - b. He saw a bruised and bleeding man.
 2. This neighbor rendered a personal service.
 - a. He could have continued on and told some Jew about the predicament he had seen and send someone back for the man.
 - b. But **he** bound up the wounds.
 - c. **He** poured in oil and wine. He placed the unfortunate man upon his beast.
 3. And we notice he rendered a thorough service. He saw it through. He paid the inn keeper to keep him and said if it cost more he would repay that also.
 - a. He didn't just bandage up the man and leave him on the road, etc.
- C. Let's notice the big difference between this Samaritan and the two who passed the man by.
1. The first two needed a specific command, the Samaritan wanted to carry out a great principle.
 - a. The priest and Levite were legalist and prided themselves with keeping the law of Moses.
 - b. But notice how they failed in their understanding to abide by it.
 2. Had they found in the Law a commandment that read like this, "If thou shalt see a man lying half dead by the highway side, thou shalt not pass him by unheeded, but shalt surely help." I think they would have done kindness, or rendered some kind of assistance.
 - a. But the commandment read, (Leviticus 19:18) "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."
 - b. It didn't define who exactly your neighbor was. Nor what precisely you were obligated to do for him. So the priest and the Levite thought they found a loop-hole out.
 3. If this Samaritan was not the chosen of Abraham's seed who received the Law of God, he at least abided by its principles.
 - a. A man cannot be a thief or a liar without crossing a boundary line he has drawn. But he may walk as close to the line as he can.
- D. We also notice that the Samaritan did his work without any prejudices.
1. We see no racial prejudice.
 - a. He could have said, "He's a Jew. Let him die for all I care!"
 - b. No! Nationality is passed up. He was a man in need. He is my neighbor.
 2. We see no prejudice about social rank.
 - a. He could have thought, "He's been robbed, he's a poor man. He has no money, he will have no way to repay me if I pay his hotel bill."
 - b. That made no difference.
 - c. Listen to what Jesus said about showing mercy and good will. **Luke 14:12-13.** (Who you invite to your feasts.)
 - d. William Taylor tells of an incident in the life of his grandfather over 150 years ago while the family was still in Scotland. He heard the story many times from his father.
 - 1) It was in the rural district where even horse drawn wagons were rare. The

customary way of conveying grain to the mill was in a sack laid over a horse's back.

- 2) His elderly grandfather was making just such a journey over a rough bridle-path when the horse stumbled so that the sack fell off.
 - 3) The weight of years was upon his shoulders and he could not replace the load. As he was perplexed and wondered what to do he saw a man on horseback in the distance and had just made up his mind to ask him for assistance when he recognized him as a nobleman who lived in an adjoining castle.
 - 4) The old man's heart sank within him, for how could he ask **him** to help him?
 - 5) But he did not need to ask. for the man indeed was noble, and for a higher reason than which any social system could confer.
 - 6) When he came up, he dismounted of his own accord saying, "John, let me help you." so between them they put the load upon the horse again.
3. Neither do we see any religious prejudice.
- a. The Samaritan could have refused rendering kindness on the basis of religious prejudice, but he didn't.
 - b. He could have said, We Samaritans and Jews just don't have anything to do with one another when we don't have too.
 - c. But kindness can be shown across national borders, across the railroad tracks, and across religious differences.
- E. Next, this man's benevolence was not hindered by any consideration of personal inconvenience.
1. He might have said, "I must hurry to Jericho, the sun is going down and I'll be late."
 - a. Or, "I'll get into trouble, they may accuse me of robbing him."
 2. But it seems that this Samaritan had not thought of passing the poor man by.
 3. He went so far as giving the poor man his beast to ride upon, and he probably walked himself.
- F. In the 6th place, this man's kindness took the form for relieving this particular type of misery.
1. There is much said about doing good, but usually little done. Usually when all is said and done, there is more said than done.
 2. The priest and Levite may have prayed as they continued down the road for God to help that poor wounded man back there.
 - a. But they were not going to be the ones God used to help him.
 - b. Prayers are good, but we must make them effectual prayers.
 3. Illustration: Prayers that Work 88-Pra C-9 xxx
Illustration: When your prayer isn't worth a nickel!

CONCLUSION

1. We may go away now intending to do aid to the first stranger we see on the road side beaten and robbed.
 - a. But let our eyes be opened wider than that. The Samaritan had compassion – this is what set him apart from the Priest and Levite who looked on the man but didn't want to get involved.
 - b. The newspapers have been filled with accounts the past couple of years of incidents where

- people lost their lives because the passers-by didn't want to get involved.
- 1) A woman in Dayton, Ohio, whose car missed a bridge and went into the water. She couldn't swim and yelled for help, as a number of people saw her and could have rescued her but offered no help. Reason given: "They didn't want to get involved."
 - 2) A woman was attacked in a New York City alley between two apartment building. She cried for help and over 30 people heard her but none called the police. Thirty minutes later the one who attacked her returned and finished killing her, because she was continuing to cry out. When the police questioned the people why they didn't offer help, or at least call the police, "We didn't want to get involved."
 - 3) In another incident a bus driver was robbed by a passenger leaving the bus and stabbed. He slumped over the steering wheel. Twenty-four people filed off the bus without offering any assistance, as though nothing had happened.
2. The Good Samaritan was one who was willing to get involved with humanity, and Jesus commanded him for being a good neighbor. There is today a monument to this unknown man along the Jerusalem-Jericho road. But the best monument is the one found in the records of God.
 3. Illustration: By William Barclay - a true story on himself.
 4. Jesus became involved, he became incarnate— he came to seek and save the lost. WE MUST care for others.
 - a. First concern – for their soul, but we must get involved.