



Part 23: Who's Your Neighbor



The Good Samaritan



Background Notes -

PURPOSE: To present Jesus' teachings en route to Jerusalem, which would later culminate in his death and resurrection.

AUTHOR: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John the Evangelists.

DATE: Possibly towards the Passover of the year 29 or 30.

STYLE: Luke saves this part of the story (the journey to Jerusalem) as the framework for much of Jesus' teachings not found in the other Gospels. He also presents the Lord's Prayer here, though Matthew places it in the context of the Sermon on the Mount. Christ's teachings here are told in light of his impending death and resurrection. The style reflects this impending suffering, exhorting the true disciples to accept suffering as an essential aspect of following Jesus, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah.



Opening Quotes -

“No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.” Lk 9:62

“All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” Lk 10:22

“Which of these, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” Lk 10:36

“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion.” Lk 10:41

“If you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” Lk 11:13

“I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; eat, drink and be merry...Fool!” Lk 12:19

“Fear not for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give alms; provide yourself with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail.” Lk 12:33

“Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Lk 14:11

“If salt has lost its flavor, it is neither fit for the land nor the dunghill. Men throw it away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” Lk 14:34

the BIG PICTURE		LAW, History, Writings, Prophets		key covenants in our Father's plan	
12 Periods	Plot	Other books related to period		stories in each period	
BC	THE BEGINNINGS	GN 1-11	Ps 8, 104	Creation, Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel, Noah's ark, Tower of Babel	
1850	THE PATRIARCHS	GN 12-50		Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph, Melchizedek	
1250	EXODUS FROM EGYPT	EX		Moses, the burning bush, the plagues, passover, exodus	
1200	JOURNEY TO CANAAN	NM, Jos	LV, DT	Sinai desert, 10 commandments, Levites, Law, Joshua	
1100	THE JUDGE CYCLE	Jg	Ruth	12 tribes, Gideon, Samson, Ruth, Samuel	
1030	KINGS & PROPHETS	1 & 2 S	1 Ch, Ps, Prov	Saul, David, Solomon, Jerusalem, the Temple	
1000	THE DIVIDED KINGDOM	1 Kg	2 Ch, Prov,	Israel (N), Judah (S), Elijah & Elisha, Isaiah, Assyrian exile	
721 587	BABYLONIAN EXILE	2 Kg	2 Ch, Tob, Hos, Am, Hab, Is, Jer, Lam, Jl, Mic, Zp, Jon, Nah, Ob, Ez, Dan, Bar	Babylonians, "major" prophets, Isaiah (to Israel), Jeremiah (to Jerusalem), Ezekiel (to the Exiles)	
538	THE RESTORATION	Ezr, Neh	Est, Judith, Hag, Zech, Mal, Job, Ecc, Songs	Cyrus, 2nd temple, 2nd Law, "minor" prophets, new writings	
163 63	THE REPURIFICATION	1 Mac	Dn, 2Mac, Sirach, Wisdom	Greeks, Maccabean revolt, Hasmonean Dynasty, Romans, Jewish sects (Pharisees, Saducees, Zealots, Essenes)	
AD	JESUS CHRIST	LK	MT, MK, JN	Incarnation, Good News, New Law, Cross & Resurrection	
33 70	APOSTOLIC CHURCH	Acts	Rm, 1&2Co, Ga, Ep, Phil, Col, 1&2Th, 1&2 Tm, Ti, Phm, Hb, Ja, 1P, 2P, 1,2&3J, Jd, Rv	Pentecost, council, journeys, epistles, Body/Bride of Christ	



The Story of Part 23: Who's Your Neighbor



Although Samaritans were the first to acknowledge the Messiah, some of them turned their backs on him when he set his sights again on Jerusalem, the place where his mission would come to a painful conclusion.

Taking 70 disciples, he sent them out in twos into the neighboring towns. He told them he was sending them like lambs into a pack of wolves. They were to take no provisions, and they were not to socialize along the way. They were, literally, on a mission from God! They were given the power to heal the sick and were to announce that the Kingdom of God was at hand. If anyone should reject them, the disciples were to shake the dust off their feet, leaving the people's fate to that of Sodom and Gomorrah. "He who hears you hears me," he told them.

On their return, the apostles reported with amazement their ability to cure the sick and drive out demons. Jesus told them that they should rejoice not at their newfound power, but that their names were written in heaven!

Turning then to the crowds, weary of the Pharisees who made following God's laws cumbersome to the point of despair, Jesus invited his listeners, ourselves included, with his proposal: "Come to me, you who are burdened. I will give you rest. My yoke is easy and my burden sweet." He then boiled down all of the Mosaic laws into 2 simple commands directly quoted from Scripture – "Love God with all your heart and soul and mind" and "Love your neighbor as yourself" – and a third, personal one – "Love one another as I have loved you" – and he left his Church to guide the faithful in how to apply his new, simplified law. While the 10 Commandments and 5 precepts of the Church are all that is strictly taught today as a minimal way of obeying the love of God and neighbor, the Pharisees added to over 600 laws of Moses their own traditions and interpretations of those laws in such a way that it became unbearably impossible to follow for the sincere Jew.

But all of the Laws, in fact, stem from the love of God and neighbor. "But who is our neighbor?" they asked. Jesus answered with the second most famous of his parables – the Good Samaritan. (Next time we will discuss his most famous parable which answers the question, "Who is our God?"). What makes the parable of the Good Samaritan significant is that it was a Samaritan who took care of the man who was mugged on the road, while a priest and a Levite walked on by. The Samaritan not only took the man to an inn where he could rest, but he would pay without the mugged man finding out. The moral of the story? Even a stranger can be your neighbor in the command "Love your neighbor."

Jesus then had dinner at the house of a woman named Martha. While busying herself with preparing the meal, she complained because her sister Mary was just sitting there listening to Jesus. But Jesus told her that her sister had chosen a good thing and that she would not be deprived of it. Jesus was clarifying the misconception

that you have to busy yourself to please God, when sometimes what is needed is to simply spend some time contemplating him.

The next time Jesus did his Sabbath-breaking was at a Pharisee's house, omitting again the ritual washing to make a point. This time he flat-out accused the Pharisees and their kind of being the ones who killed the prophets of old! They would secretly plot to kill him as well, and began trying to trap him with his own words. Jesus warned the crowds of Jews against these hypocrites who thought they ruled the Scriptures.

"I will follow you!" several would say. But in light of the fact that his destiny was to suffer, he spoke strongly on just what discipleship entailed. With no room for half-hearted responses, he expounded on the need for watchfulness, likening the time of judgment to a thief coming in the night, or a master suddenly home from the marriage feast.

Peter asked Jesus if these parables were meant for them or for everybody. Jesus simply responded that much will be asked of those to whom much is given, implying that they were for all, but that some had a particular calling to which they would be held accountable. Jesus was asking for enthusiasm and heroism of his apostles for their own sakes and for the sake of setting good examples. "Would that the fire I came to cast upon the earth had already been kindled!"

He then reiterated that he was destined to be the source of conflict even within families, warning them that they would suffer the same fate as people who had been killed by religious persecutions. He then told the parable of a fig tree that was given a second chance to bear fruit as a way to remind them that repentance was always possible to avoid perishing.

He stressed the time for repentance again by Sabbath-breaking, this time curing a hunchbacked woman. "Wouldn't you untie your donkey if it was trapped? How much more should I have released this woman from her trap on the Sabbath?" The Pharisees were hard pressed to respond this time.

"The way to life is narrow," he warned. When they asked him how many would enter heaven, he only said, "Strive to enter," for those who would be lost would enter a place of weeping and grinding of teeth.

Upsetting the status quo, Jesus said it was the maimed, the blind, and the lame, the outcasts, that would enter the great banquet in heaven, after so many who were originally invited would make excuses for not taking up the invitation. In other words, the religious leaders missed the heart of the religion. And when he told them that people must even "hate" mother or father, brother or sister, or even *oneself* for his sake, he meant that no one, not even you yourself, can come before God. Without a cross, there can be no disciple. 📖



Defending the Faith: Hypocritical Priests***

"Did you hear Father so-and-so had an affair? Or what about the other one who was a pedophile? This is all because of that unnatural vow of celibacy. If they would only marry, we wouldn't have such scandals."

Though this section is called "Defending the Faith", the abuse of children is indefensible. Jesus had the harshest words for anyone who leads his little ones away from the faith: "It would be better for such a one to have a millstone tied around his neck and be thrown into a lake" (Mt 18:6). But the suggestion that these inhuman crimes are more likely to occur in the Catholic priesthood than in other professions – that's a different story.

If you read the local newspaper or watch the local news, you'll likely find the stomach-turning details of a particular molestation case. But if you read reports in USA Today and other periodicals, you'll find that similar rates of pedophilia are found across all professions. Why then, does it appear that the priesthood is full of child molesters? For three reasons.

1. Although the majority of cases concern ephebophilia (the molestation of adolescent boys), everyone calls it pedophilia, which is actually the molestation of small children. The Family Research Council based in Washington (DC) reported in *Homosexuality and Child Sexual Abuse* in 2002 what police, psychiatrists, and the Boy Scouts have known for decades: there is a link between homosexuality and child molestation. While homosexual men make up less than three per cent of the adult male population, they commit a disproportionate number (one third or more) of child sexual molestations. What does all of this have to do with the scandals in the Church? As far as the seriousness of the sins, nothing in my opinion. I mention it only to explain part of the reason why the generalization is made that priests are "child molesters".

The second reason for the misperception is the one that concerns me more. For every scandalous priest we hear about on TV, there are countless others who are earnest servants of God that you will never hear about. And this is wrong.

for the offenders: But to blame the office of the priesthood would be like blaming the office of the

presidency of the United States for a presidential scandal, or the profession of *any* scandalizer for their scandal – PE coaches, guidance counselors, Protestant ministers, CEOs, or just fathers of a family!

If the statistics would indicate a higher probability of pedophilia in the priesthood when compared to other vocations, we might have a case against the practice of celibacy. But studies have only shown that pedophilia is not more likely to occur in the priesthood than in other professions (religious or not). One would hope that there would be *less* likelihood, but this would also go against the evidence.

Why, then, does it seem that so many priests are child molesters?

As for the vow of celibacy, there is no biblical precedence for considering it unnatural. God ordered Jeremiah to be celibate, and Paul, the main writer of the New Testament, described his own celibacy as a calling higher than marriage (1 Cor 7:8, 7:32). Even Jesus spoke of it as a unique call (Mt 19:12). This does not imply that sex is evil. God told us at the outset of creation to be fruitful and multiply. In fact, anyone who considers sex evil (like the Gnostics did) cannot do so without violating the principles of the Church. And the idea that marriage would prevent priests from scandal is laughable, as if there were no sex-related sins (and in far greater proportion) outside the priesthood! Over half of married couples break their promise to God. Over 90% of priests keep it.

If they had TV in first Century Judea, you would probably have a hard time finding a story on Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, the other James, Thadeus, or Simon. But you would probably find Judas on every channel.



Expressing the Faith: Wide-Eyed

Nichole Nordeman reminds us that it is precisely when we criticize others that we reveal our greatest sin – pride.

*When I met him on a sidewalk
He was preaching to a mailbox down on 16th Avenue
And he told me he was Jesus sent from Jupiter to free us
With a bottle of tequila and one shoe
He raged about repentance
He finished every sentence
With the promise that the end was close at hand
I didn't even try to understand*

*He left me wide-eyed in disbelief and disillusion
I was tongue-tied, drawn by my conclusions
So I turned and walked away
and laughed at what he had to say
Then casually dismissed him as a fraud.
I forgot he was created in the image of my God.*

*When I met her in a bookstore
She was browsing on the first floor*

*through a yoga magazine
And she told me in her past life
She was some plantation slave's wife
She had to figure out what that might mean.
She believes the healing powers of her crystals
Can bring balance and new purpose to her life.
Sounds nice.*

(chorus)

Not so long ago a man from Galilee

*Fed thousands with his bread and his theology
And the truth he spoke quickly became the joke
Of educated, self-inflated Pharisees like me*

*And they were wide-eyed in disbelief and disillusion
They were tongue-tied, drawn by their conclusions
Would I have turned and walked away
And laughed at what he had to say
And casually dismissed him as a fraud,
Unaware that I was staring at the image of my God?*

↩ **Next time: "Who's Your Daddy?"** ↪