

## **Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ**

### **Who is My Neighbor**

Last time...Jesus sent 35 advance teams (70, 2x2) for the next phase of His ministry –  
the Judean countryside and Perea,  
giving them the same training, message, and mission as the 12 He sent 2x2 into the  
Galilee...  
the same training, message, and mission given to us

This time...Jesus is put on trial by a lawyer with a question of “Who is my neighbor?”  
Jesus “flips the script” and shatters all the lawyer “knows”

We will be in Luke 10  
[ read v25-37 ]

v25 a certain lawyer...tempted Him...do to inherit eternal life:  
A “lawyer” is

- an expert in the Law (of Moses)
- a scribe
- a self-righteous religious know-it-all

Scribes often studied the Law (of Moses) in an “ivory tower” and they went to  
great lengths to avoid contact with the, in their not-so-humble opinion,  
vulgar common people

They were elitists in their thinking and living

Jesus was quite the opposite

Thus, this lawyer asked this question to “test” or “try” Jesus...  
to put Jesus on trial, as it were

Master/Teacher...probably spoken with veiled condescension

What shall I do...his works, his strength, his worthiness/righteousness  
(self-righteousness...Is 64:6)

to inherit...do heirs earn their inheritance or is their inheritance  
bequeathed to them? (his question has an “inherent” contradiction)

eternal life...he is NOT questioning the reality of life after death

What is his motive, his objective, in asking (trying Jesus) this question?

- An honest desire to know...asking this “unlearned” son of a carpenter, wanting to reconcile his own lifestyle with that of Jesus?
- To use the Law...looking for a loophole...to justify his lifestyle?

The answer:

- “tempted”
- v29a

On the one hand, having “walked with Jesus” for about 3 years now,  
do we not have an idea about the answer to this question?

John 6:28-29

On the other hand, a lawyer asking an “unlearned man” a question about the Law  
smells kinda fishy, doesn’t it?

Sounds like a trap

So how does Jesus respond?

v26 What is written in the Law:

Jesus is going to answer a legal question with a legal answer...  
using the typical Jewish method of teaching – by asking a question

And His question throws the lawyer’s question right back into his own lap  
“What is written in the Law?

How do you read/know/understand/interpret the Law?”

Jesus flipped the script; who is now in danger of the lawyer’s trap?!

v27 love the Lord...all...and thy neighbor:

The lawyer, in answering Jesus’ question, is answering his own question.  
And he is speaking with assurance, not with doubts or uncertainty,  
betraying the sincerity of his question initially

As he understands/interprets the Law, to inherit eternal life he must

1. Deut 6:5....Love (agapao) the Lord your God with
  - ALL your heart, soul, strength, and mind...  
entirely and completely (repetition is for emphasis)
  - every fiber of your being
  - without reservation or hesitation
2. Lev 19:18...(Love...unspoken but implied) your neighbor as yourself

The scribes recited Deut 6:5 every morning and every night

v28 answered right:

The “unlearned son of the carpenter” with astonishing doctrine and who has been teaching as one having authority, not as the scribes... gives the lawyer a “Passing” grade

Soon, Jesus will be tested again by another scribe with  
“Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” (Matt 22:36)  
He will respond with Matt 22:37-40

Jesus then comes back to the lawyer’s initial question (v25):  
This do...not just say every day, but do every day  
and you shall live...have eternal life

To have eternal life: Love (*agapao*...selfless, sacrificial, self-last)

1. God
2. your neighbor

The next word...

v29 But:

The lawyer was NOT asking an honest question in order to reconcile his life with Jesus’ life

He is really searching the boundaries of the Law, looking for a loophole in the Law, to

- justify
- make righteous
- be declared innocent
- defend

his way of living

Thus, a secondary question...and perhaps his real question:  
Who is my neighbor?

In keeping with the social practice of the scribes and in asking the question, he is declaring that his definition of “neighbor” is very restrictive...he

- had very few neighbors –
  - all Jews (only some, those of the “right ilk”)
  - no Gentiles
- and wants to keep it that way

Jesus’ answer to his real question...the heart of the matter... shatters the lawyer’s world and lifestyle

What follows is known as the Parable of the Good Samaritan

Jesus did teach in parables, but is this teaching a parable?

“A neighbor is like unto...”

Or is Jesus using a real life incident in His (teaching) answer?

Is the Samaritan ever called “good” by Jesus?

Who is the only One Jesus ever called “good”?

Should this teaching be spiritualized (“this = that” allegories)  
or should it be taken literally?

.v30 A certain man:

What kind of a man – Jew or Gentile?

Scripture does not say point blank, but the implication is that he is a Jew

- going from Jerusalem, the center of the Jewish world
- the comparison of the priest and Levite with the Samaritan would lose great impact if he were a Gentile (all of Jesus’ teachings are impactful)

This (Jewish) man is going down from Jerusalem to Jericho...

east and descending from 2600’ to -825’ elevation (3425’) in 18 miles

This road was very dangerous, going thru a very desolate place overrun many times with bad guys

While on the road to Jericho, this man was

- jumped by thieves
- robbed, stripped...clothes were very valuable, perhaps he was wearing his “Sunday best” (Temple)
- beaten unmercifully
- and left half dead

v31 a certain priest:

Afterwards, along comes a certain priest – son of Aaron, “holy man”

When the priest got a glimpse of the naked, bloodied, unconscious man exposed to the elements (i.e. the intense sun), he

- crossed to the other side of the road
- did not want to take another look, much less investigate or get involved to help the man
- “went out of his way” to avoid a man in need

Some “holy man”, huh?

v32 Likewise a Levite:

After the priest, a Levite comes along...a son of Levi given to help the priests serve in the Temple.

When he comes upon the scene of the crime, the Levite does as the priest did.  
Another “cold-blooded” “holy man” dips out

btw...what were the priest and the Levite doing in Jerusalem?

Worshipping and serving the Lord Who delights in mercy

These “holy men” should be the most compassionate of all the Jews...  
and are not

Next word...

v33-35 But a certain Samaritan:

A hated and “unholy” “mongrel”/half-breed...

the Jews had an intense racial prejudice against Samaritans...

comes along after the priest and Levite...

as he journeyed (no mention of Jerusalem with its holy connotation)

The Samaritan saw the man...naked, bloody, unconscious, exposed to the sun...  
and was moved with compassion – love in action

He interrupted his journey to help the man who needed help

- put himself at risk for the benefit of another (a complete stranger)
- bandaged up the injured man’s wounds
- medicated the wounds...olive oil and wine served to prevent infection
- (covered or clothed...his)
- transported...carefully and gently...to an inn
- cared for
- incurred the expense (2 days wages) of continuing care until the man got on his feet again

And he promised to “make whole” in host upon his return, should the man’s care exceed 2 days wages (“Whatever it takes.”)

v36 Which now of these three:

Addressing the heart of the matter (v29b), Jesus asks the lawyer who was the neighbor to the man who fell among thieves

v37 He that showed mercy on him:  
Once again (v28), the lawyer answers correctly

The correct answer is obvious...and

- definition (“neighbor”) exploding
- racial profile busting
- lifestyle shattering
- self-righteousness destroying
- holiness enlightening
- Jewish-view-of-the-Messiah crushing
  - save Israel from the Gentiles...save Israel only
  - a work of deliverance like Moses’...“hyper-Moses”

Then Jesus answered the lawyer’s initial question,  
“Go, and do (v25, v27)...as the Samaritan did.”

Jesus flipped the script and trapped the lawyer in his own trap

Jesus left the lawyer unable to

- find the boundary of, or a loophole in, the Law to justify himself
- reconcile his lifestyle to Jesus’...apart from “Repent! And follow Me”
  - Was the heart of God in the priest?
  - Was the heart of God in the Levite?
  - Was the heart of God in the Samaritan?

Jesus joined “Love the Lord your God” with “Love your neighbor”  
by defining “neighbor” as God does in His Word: all men, every person,  
whosoever

Another lesson in mercy

Matt 5:7 **Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.**

Hosea 6:6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge  
of God more than burnt offerings

Micah 6:8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what **is good**; and what doth  
the LORD require of thee, but to **do justly**, and to **love  
mercy**, and to **walk humbly with thy God**?

Doing justly and loving mercy...

walking humble with God...

is not just Table 1 (God) but also Table 2 (others)

## Application

Jesus' teaching on "What must I do to inherit eternal life":

- is NOT
  - a daily recital of a Bible verse
  - doing a good deed
- is
  - living every day a life devoted to God...
    - loving God in a personal, relational way
    - loving God by loving ALL others
  - love in action on the behalf of whosoever needs it,
    - without failure
    - no excuses
    - whatever it takes
- a standard of mercy/compassion we cannot keep, leading us to cry out to Him and Him alone who can keep this standard
  - His standard
  - He Who delights in mercy
  - He Who IS merciful (His nature)
  - Eternal life cannot be earned, it must be a gift of God

The question is NOT:

Am I a good neighbor? (trying to justify myself with horizontal comparisons)  
Matt 19:16-17

The question is:

Am I a neighbor? (vertical comparison)

Matt 16:24	\	How often does the essence of Jesus' teachings
John 3:30	\	boil down to these things?!
Matt 5:16	/	

We too are stripped of our self-righteousness by this teaching

A neighbor (God's definition) cares enough to

- be interrupted
- get involved
- help, even if it is costly to do so
- doing the right thing for someone else's benefit, no matter how inconvenient
- unselfish, sacrificial service to God via the same to another

The heart of our Father in Heaven: a 1<sup>st</sup> Responder

The hearts of God's children: 1<sup>st</sup> Responders

Rom 13:10	Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love <i>is</i> the fulfilling of the law
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Gal 5:14	For all the law is fulfilled in one word, <i>even</i> in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself
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Prov 27:10b	better <i>is</i> a neighbour <i>that is</i> near than a brother far off
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