

PK's Perspectives ... The Good Samaritan

While in seminary, a Greek class was given an assignment to study the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. The aspiring "theogs" (*theologians*) were to do an in-depth analysis of the biblical text, observing and commenting on all the major terms and syntactical factors worth mentioning. Each student was to write his or her own translation after having done the work on their commentary.

As is true in most language classes, a few of the students cared more about the practical implications of the assignment than its intellectual stimulation. The morning the work was to be turned in, these three students teamed up and carried out a plan to prove their point. One volunteered to play the part of an alleged victim. They tore his shirt and trousers, rubbed mud, ketchup, and other realistic-looking ingredients across his "wounds," marked up his eyes and face so he hardly resembled himself, then placed him along the path that led from the dormitory to the Greek classroom. While the other two hid and watched, he groaned and writhed, simulating great pain.

Not one student stopped. They walked around him or stepped over him. A few spoke to him before continuing on. But no one stooped over to help. What do you want to bet their academic work was flawless...and insightful...and handed in on time?

This incident should remind us of a scripture that penetrates the surface of our intellectual concerns. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has not pity on him, how can the love God be in him?" (1 John 3:16-17)

At a different seminary, students were nearing the end of a semester long class in which they had been examining the motives and methods of Jesus' earthly ministry. Many of the students were sweating the impending final exam, frantically reviewing class notes and re-reading the assigned texts. On final exam day, the Christianity professor handed out the test and all were surprised to see it was comprised of only one question: "What is the name of the janitor that cleans this building?" Only two students passed. Some who failed left the room muttering about the unfairness of the exam. Others left humbled, having learned a life lesson in spite of failing the test.

It is one of the foremost hindrances of the Church that in the Body of Christ there are so many distant followers of Jesus and so few real disciples; so many who have an intellectual grasp of truth and so few who practice truth. In one of his books, Rick Warren wrote, "We only believe the parts of the Bible that we DO." Let's encourage one another to "be doers of the Word and not hearers only" (James 1:22) as we passionately pursue Christ-likeness. Grace & peace, love you. PK