

Pastor T.C. Arnold
13th Sunday after Trinity
Luke 10:23-37
September 2nd, 2012

“He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.” Oil and wine were the antibacterial first-aid kit type of treatment of the day. Oil and wine were not cheap. *“Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.”* The Samaritan didn’t look for some other means of transport. He took his own animal and he personally took care of the man lying half dead on the side of the road. *“And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘take care of him and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’”* A denarius was a day’s wage. He took out two of them. Look at it this way: If you work 312 days a year (which means you work 6 days a week – I’m not counting vacations) and make about 50,000 a year, then two denarii would about \$320. If you make \$100,000 you can double it and call it \$640 (not the actual value of a denarius – but rather what the value would be to us). Then he said to the innkeeper, *“...whatever more you spend, I will repay...”* Would you shell-out that much money, for a stranger found on the road?? What about to a man who despises what you are – hates the fact that you are not his religion or his race? Would you do it then?

If we start putting pencil to paper we see how much this Samaritan gave of himself for the sake of this man who, in the story, was ignored by his very own people – religious leaders no less. They wouldn’t even get close to him. They didn’t want to touch him – because if he was dead and they touched him, they would become ceremonially unclean and being clean meant too much to them. They hurried by to make sure they weren’t the next victim. But not the Samaritan. He wouldn’t pass him by. Jesus would teach an important lesson with this story – a lesson that needed to continue being taught for the sake of His people.

Do you remember what Jesus said to His disciples before the lawyer stood up and put Jesus to the test? He said, *“Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it.”* What are the disciples seeing and hearing that others cannot? Don’t forget that just before Jesus speaks these words to the disciples and then answers the question of the lawyer about inheriting eternal life, Jesus sent out seventy-two missionaries to the highways and byways to speak the truth to a dying world. You see, the others are hearing His Word and seeing His work, but they are not understanding of all that God has said and done for their sake.

What is hidden from the wise and understanding is that Jesus is the Son. In the ministry of Jesus, He reveals this. His disciples are “infants” when it comes to this understanding – but they have understanding on a particular level. One would not expect such understanding and knowledge of what is truth to be given to them. This secret hidden in Jesus and his “infant” followers is the kingdom of God itself. Just as Jesus hides His teaching in parables—the same kind of words we hear from the Gospel text today and have been hearing during this Trinity Season – so also the kingdom is hidden in Jesus.

And it still is hidden in Jesus. That’s where the kingdom is. You want to find heaven, you are going to have to look at Jesus. You want to find true peace and security, you are going to have to look at Jesus – the kingdom is hidden in Him. You want to find answers, you want the truth in a haphazard world, you want the kind of grace and life that means something, you are going have to look at Jesus.

Our world today wants to show you all the happiness you will ever need by showing you success. It even gives you models to follow so that you can achieve, “success.” The problem is the world doesn’t know what success actually looks like. The definition of success for the world

puts you above pay grade. Success to the world means you are the most outstanding student or employee. You are the best athlete on your team and you have the most toys under your roof or in your garage. That's not success, but that's how the world measures it. And unfortunately, we have fallen into that kind of trap as well. We measure ourselves by such things to others. Maybe we even feel a little better than others when we can see that we make more money, have more important letters behind our name, or, and this is the kicker, we have more friends – more people who like us.

Those worldly successes are fleeting. They do not last. If you want to find true success, you are going to have to find it in Jesus. That's where it is. So now, we go to the parable. And it would stand to reason that the success Jesus wants you to have is for you to be like the Samaritan. Help the man in need, even if he is nothing like you – and he hates you. Help bind up your neighbor's wounds. Care for him and support him. Yes the Lord would have you to be the servant, helping and caring for others. Be the Samaritan.

But I want you to know, the main point of the parable is something far more than you being the Samaritan. Jesus is the Samaritan. The kingdom is hidden in Christ Himself. He is the one who comes along for the sake of broken, half-dead (all dead) sinners who have fallen prey to the world and binds up our wounds, takes us to the place we need to be, and pays any price that is needed to care for us. And that is exactly what Jesus, the Good Samaritan, does. He paid a price beyond salary. The price for you was blood – His very own righteous blood. He binds our wounds as we hear from St. Peter, *“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.”*

Jesus teaches with this parable and the kingdom is hidden in Him. You are called to be the Good Samaritan – but more so – Jesus IS the Good Samaritan. If you want to find success, it's in the last place the world will look. For those hearing this parable from Jesus, like the lawyer asking the question, would never have found the success of being brought back to life from the hands of a Samaritan a possibility. Jesus shows the reality. The broken man on the side of the road is you. And the only success that man – that you – will truly find, is in the one who comes along to bind up your wounds. This healing, this gift of life from the last place the world would look, is your true success.

The lawyer says to Jesus, in so many words, “Jesus, I will act to love my neighbor as myself; tell me who he is.” Seems like a question that would attempt success. But Jesus says, “You cannot act, for you are dead, you need someone to love you, show you mercy, heal you, pay for you, give you lodging, revive you. I am the one you despise (like the Samaritan) because I associate with sinners, but in fact I am the one who fulfills the Law, who brings God's mercy. I am your neighbor and will give you the gift of mercy, healing and life. As I live in you, you will have life and will do mercy – not motivated by laws and definitions and success, but carried forth by my love” (Concordia Commentary, Luke, A. Just, CPH, St. Louis, 1997). Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.