

July 10, 2016  
Sermon for The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
Luke 10:25–37

*J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus*

Luke 10:25–37 (ESV)

<sup>25</sup> And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>26</sup> He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” <sup>27</sup> And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” <sup>29</sup> But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” <sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> 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.’ <sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” <sup>37</sup> He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

A lawyer stood up and asked Jesus, *“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”* (v 25).

Nothing against lawyers, but sometimes when they ask questions, they’re looking for the answers they want, the answers that serve to prove their case and protect their client; whether right or wrong. And so it is with the lawyer who stands up before Jesus in our Gospel today.

There’s nothing wrong with discussing the Law. The Law is good. It paints a beautiful picture of how loving our lives are meant to be.

For that matter, we heard a lot of good Law from Leviticus today.

Most people would like what it says. You don’t strip your fields bare, you leave some for the poor, *“You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. You shall not swear by my name falsely, ... “You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. ... You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, ... “You shall do no injustice in court. ... in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, ...“You shall not hate your brother in your heart, ... <sup>18</sup> You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* And all of these things are wrapped up with the statement: *“I am the Lord.”* (Lev 19:9–18). Bam! That’s how it is; that’s how it will be.

Now we would have a hard time not agreeing that it’s a good thing to take care of poor people. We would also agree that the Samaritan man in Jesus’ story is a good example for us to follow in being people who care for others in need. (vv 33–35).

Holding back wages, cursing deaf people, putting obstacles in front of blind people, lying in court are universally considered bad. No problem with God’s law there. We agree that this is not a good way to be.

We don't want to be like the robbers in Jesus' story either. That is clearly bad!

This Law is on the lawyer's mind. He knows it well. It's on all our minds too.

It is written on our hearts. Even if no one had ever told us God's Law, it is written on our hearts, as Paul said in his letter to the Romans: *"For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, ..."* (Rom 2:14–15).

We know this is how we *should* be. Fair is fair, after all.

But the lawyer uses the Law unlawfully. So do we. We ask the *wrong question*.

The problem is in the basis behind his question. *"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"*

What shall **I do** to inherit eternal life?

Jesus, I know I've got a problem, you tell me how to fix it and I'll get right on it.

The only way to inherit *anything* is to be born to someone who has it and wait for that person to die. When we mix up our doing with God's giving, we have a big problem.

The problem is in the purpose: *"But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'"* (v 29). He didn't want to be justified, he wanted to do it himself!

So, in comes the Law. The Law describes the life of love, according to the will of God.

But we can't do it ourselves, we simply don't have the ability because we are sinful by nature.

When we take the Law and use it as guidebook to discover how we can skip loving some people or show how some unloving actions, words, and thoughts were not really our fault and so, in our minds anyway, should not count against us in front of God, then we then have a problem with the purpose.

Jesus straightens out the lawyer's question.

Jesus, by his questioning moves him, and us, away from how we can prove ourselves right and instead toward seeing ourselves as wrong.

Did the lawyer get it? We aren't told in the Bible...more importantly, do you get it?

Jesus shows us that we have not been a neighbor to those in need.

Our compassion has been lacking in so many ways. We help our neighbor when it suits us. We volunteer if it's something we are interested in. We come to Bible class or church, we do Bible study or even just read God's Word, when it fits our schedule, oh, but if something else comes up, we don't put that aside...we can always go to church next Sunday...we can always read our Bibles later.

We have so many excuses...but in reality, if we really look at it...we have **no** excuses.

Finally, though, Jesus turns us to asking the right question: "*Who was a neighbor to this man?*"

The man is us. We are knocked down, beat up, ripped off—by life, by sin, by our own desires, by the opinions of others.

Nobody is perfectly a neighbor to us . . . except Jesus. Who is really a neighbor to all people? Who has done what is needed to inherit eternal life? Who died and made it possible for us to inherit eternal life by freely taking on the punishment of all mankind? We could add many other "who" questions, but the fact is, Jesus is the *right answer* to all the questions.

Jesus is the Good Samaritan (vv 33–35) who drops everything to help someone without questioning their political views, nor even their religious views.

He comes to us, to each man, woman, child, beaten up by sin, by the devil, half dead, and awaiting death. He touches us with His word; Jesus heals us with the oil of Baptism.

And Jesus provides us with shelter in His Holy Church and food in His Holy Supper until He returns on the last day.

Jesus proves to be the Neighbor to us all and He does not pass anyone by.

The proof of His compassion for you is in His life of loving service for you and in His sacrificial death for you. On the cross, He paid all it cost to nurse you back to life.

Christ is Risen! Jesus is risen from the dead and still having compassion on you.

Jesus is also our new Lawyer. He is our Advocate with the Father (1 Jn 2:1).

When Jesus stands up to speak, it is not to test anyone, but to defend us, the guilty ones, with His blessed innocence.

Jesus does not ask us what we've done to gain life. He tells us what He has done to give us all eternal life. All who do not deny the Holy Spirit are saved by the faith that He given in Christ as their Savior.

When all is asked and answered, when all is said and done, Jesus has said everything we need to hear and done everything we need done to inherit eternal life, don't try to justify yourself, because Jesus has already welcomed you and made you His neighbor in the God's kingdom.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

### **Sermon Outline**

#### **Don't Try to Justify Yourself** (Luke 10:25-37)

- I. We and the lawyer ask the wrong question.
- II. Jesus straightens out the lawyer's question.
- III. Jesus is the right answer to all the questions.