

"WHAT DOES REAL COMPASSION LOOK LIKE"

Luke 10:25-37

October 19, 2008 Sunday pm

INTRODUCTION

- A. "There is a story about St Peter admitting people at the gates of heaven. St Peter asks one man who appears, 'Tell me one act of kindness you have committed during your life. The man said, 'Once saw a rough looking gang of motorcyclist harassing an old lady. I walked right up and punched the gang leader in the nose!' St Peter said, 'When did that happen?' The guy said, 'About 30 seconds ago.'"
- B. Today we are going to look at what has come to be known as the "The Parable of the Good Samaritan." We find this very familiar story in Luke chapter ten, beginning in verse twenty-five, and it is told in response to a question asked of Jesus by a Jewish lawyer.
- C. Jesus defines neighbor with a story but notice that Jesus did not call this story a parable, so it could be based on the report of an actual occurrence. The journey from Jericho to Jerusalem was well known for its danger. It was very steep and treacherous because of the many places for robbers to hide. In fact it was so bad that the name of the road was "the way of blood." So this is a very believable story to those who were listening. Jesus in this story tells us three things about compassion.

I. First, Compassion Is Demonstrated On the Basis of Need Not Worth.

- A. **Verse 30** introduces us to the need seen in the parable.
 - 1. Our compassion is to be driven, not by the "worth" of the recipient but by the need. Jesus just says, "A certain man..."
 - 2. The fact that this man is stripped of his clothing makes it impossible for a passersby to determine if he is a Jew or a Gentile. A person's cultural identity was revealed by how they dressed.
- B. As the unknown victim lay beside the road a series of three individuals came along the way—**v. 31-33**.
 - 1. The first two passersby probably just didn't want to get involved—**v.31-32**. They didn't want any trouble. They weren't monsters. They were regular folks: nice, ordinary people who loved their kids and tried their best to get by in the world. They saw the need, and yet did nothing about it. Both men of these men, saw the man but ignored it.
 - 2. The third passerby saw the need not the nationality and did something to help—**33**.
 - 3. Do we see the needs of others? Do we do anything about it?

II. Second, Compassion Is Measured by the Obstacles that Must be Overcome to Exercise it!

- A. Now the story takes an unexpected twist—**v. 34-35**.
To the Jews that heard this story the idea of a "good Samaritan" would have been an oxymoron, two words that cancel each other out like, "Jumbo shrimp" or "pretty ugly."
- B. Notice three obstacles that the Samaritan overcame in showing compassion.
 - 1. First, He Overcame the Obstacle of Prejudice.
 - a. It would have been shocking for Jesus to have told the people that this man was helped by just an ordinary man
 - b. But it is not even a Jew helping a Jew, but rather a Samaritan helping a Jew who had been ignored by his fellow Jews.
There is no a logical reason for the Samaritan to rearrange his plans or to spend his money to help an "enemy" in need.
 - 2. Second, He Overcame the Obstacle of the Possibility of Being Misunderstood.
In each one of his acts he demonstrated compassion as he responded in a practical, timely and unselfish way. He put him on his own donkey which meant that the Samaritan walked. But it should be remembered that his act of placing this man on his donkey and leading him down the road to an inn was open to misinterpretation. A

Samaritan transporting a Jewish victim of a mugging would be the equivalent of an Indian riding into the frontier Fort with a scalped soldier draped across his horse; he probably would never get the opportunity to tell what had happened!

3. Third, He Overcame the Obstacle of Personal Inconvenience.

It is important to recognize that he took the time to take care of him. We may not be able to help everywhere, or help everyone, but we can help somewhere and try to do a meaningful work of service.

III. Third, Our Compassion Demonstrates Our Relationship With God!

- A. At the conclusion of His story he asks the lawyer one additional question in **verse 36**
- B. The lawyer almost chokes on his words here. He cannot even bring himself to say the word "Samaritan" and so he responds in **verse 37** with, "He who showed mercy on him"
- C. The second question that the lawyer had asked was, "Who is my neighbor?" the question had been turned on him and is now, "What kind of neighbor am I?"
- D. In 1 John 3:16-18 we learn that giving compassion to others isn't a condition for salvation but rather proof of it.

CONCLUSION

- A. Our relationship with God is inseparable from our relationships to other people.
- B. We cannot have a real relationship with God and not show compassion and love to others.
- C. This is not to say, however, that acts of compassion is a condition of salvation. It is, though, a proof of it.