

THE GOOD SAMARITAN PORTRAYS CHRIST
I. The Key Question Sets up the Story
II. The Disturbing Response Puts Us on the Defensive
III. The Real Answer Is Found in Jesus
Luke 10:25-37

SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2019 | PENTECOST
EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
YEAR C *COMMUNION*

<i>Old Testament</i>	Deuteronomy 30:9–14
<i>Psalms</i>	Psalm 25
<i>New Testament</i>	Colossians 1:1–14
<i>Gospel</i>	Luke 10:25–37

GRANTS PASS

The Entrance Hymn or Introit – ELH 12 Come, Thou Almighty King
Chief Hymn – ELH 459 Lord of Glory Who Hast Bought Us
Distribution Hymn – ELH 313 I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table]
Closing Hymn – ELH 325 O Jesus, Blessed Lord, to Thee

MEDFORD

Psalm 25, p. 74
Opening Hymn - CW 193 Come, Now, Almighty King
Hymn of the Day – CW 486 Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us
Distribution Hymn - CW 310 I Come, O Savior, to Your Table
Closing Hymn - CW 316 O Jesus, Blessed Lord, to Thee

Revision of Pentecost 8, 2013 (St. Timothy Lombard)

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Luke 10:25–37 (CSB)

²⁵ Then an expert in the law stood up to test him, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ “What is written in the law?” he asked him. “How do you read it?”

²⁷ He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,” and “your neighbor as yourself.”

²⁸ “You’ve answered correctly,” he told him. “Do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ Jesus took up the question and said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him up, and fled, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down that road. When he saw

him, he passed by on the other side. ³² In the same way, a Levite, when he arrived at the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan on his journey came up to him, and when he saw the man, he had compassion. ³⁴ He went over to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him. When I come back I'll reimburse you for whatever extra you spend.'

³⁶ "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"

³⁷ "The one who showed mercy to him," he said.

Then Jesus told him, "Go and do the same."

Dear fellow redeemed: As Luke puts his account together, we follow Jesus on a Journey. It leads through Galilee and Samaria and Judea and arrives finally at Jerusalem, where the Christ, the lamb of God, made atonement for the sins of the world.

On this path Jesus teaches and performs miracles, and above all, He shows compassion.

On the one hand Jesus fulfills the Torah by living out all of the righteousness that God demands. On the other hand, he embodies the whole Torah and the whole old testament as He reveals in word and deed the unmerited compassion of God that called Abraham and his offspring, out of all the peoples of the world, and through them gave the promise of salvation to the world.

The astute hearer will recognize the Gospel in the Old Testament when I say that it is fundamentally about what God has done for humanity. Likewise, while this account of the lawyer and the Good Samaritan lays out the absolute requirement for perfect love toward God and neighbor, it still points us not to our own righteousness, but to God's gift of righteousness, because

THE GOOD SAMARITAN PORTRAYS CHRIST

I. The Key Question Sets up the Story

II. The Disturbing Response Puts Us on the Defensive

III. The Real Answer Is Found in Jesus

I. The Key Question Sets up the Story

It all starts, of course, with the question of the lawyer, "**Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?**" This shows the lawyer's understanding of the Torah, on the basis of which He is testing Jesus. There must be something to DO that will make us acceptable to God and win His approval so that He would welcome us into His presence for eternity.

Jesus answers with a question that the lawyer fields effectively. ²⁶ "**What is written in the law?**" he asked him. "**How do you read it?**"

²⁷ He answered, "**Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,**" and "**your neighbor as yourself.**" That's a good answer and it's similar to what Jesus Himself answered on another occasion. But then, as Mark and Matthew both record, Jesus turned to point to "the Christ." So also, here.

But first he uses the lawyer's answer to unsettle him. ²⁷ **He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and "your neighbor as yourself."**

²⁸ **"You've answered correctly," he told him. "Do this and you will live."**

Yep, that's all you have to do is love God and your neighbor perfectly in thought, word, and deed. If you figure out God's will and get everything right toward Him and your neighbor all the time, then you'll be fine.

II. The Disturbing Response Puts Us on the Defensive

That's a pretty disturbing response for the lawyer, ²⁹ **But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"**

If you think that your hope of heaven is wrapped up in parsing God's law, then this is the kind of question you will ask.

The lawyer wanted to justify himself according to the law, so the law had to be twisted and limited. It's the same today, and it's something we can all fall into:

Does God really care how I use His name?

Does "remember the Sabbath day" really mean every one?

Is it really wrong to be sexually affectionate with somebody of the same sex – or that we aren't married to?

It is the way the devil seduced Eve: "Did God really say ...?"

People ask me all the time if something they have done is right or wrong. "Why do you want to know?" I ask. Do you think that it's the key to winning God's approval? If so, we better be perfectly correct with the answer – but wait; it's something you've already done! Too late! And if it isn't, can you guarantee you will pull it off to God's satisfaction?

Yet, as Christians we can accept God's law in its absolute ferocity and purity, in the glaring light of its perfect holiness, and in the stark reality of its unachievable demands. We can do so because it is not our hope for heaven. Our concern for the law is a matter of faith: As Christians His word simply matters. It is the guide to a blessed life in service to God and neighbor, not a path to righteousness.

So back to the lawyer's question. Who is my neighbor? Make it somebody easy and convenient to love and, sure, I love my neighbor as myself. Jesus didn't let him off with that. Instead he told this story.

A man was mugged and left half dead. A priest happens by and seeing the injured man (or maybe he was dead) went by on the other side. A priest should be fairly high up the holiness ladder, right? He would be well instructed in the Law and the Prophets and the Other Writings. If a formal understanding of the Torah was a mark of loving our neighbor he was your man. So also with the Levite. He was chosen to serve in the temple according to the Torah. He ought to have the formula.

Maybe they needed to remain ceremonially clean. Maybe they didn't want to get involved – or bring some disrepute on their priestly or Levitical status. I mean they MIGHT have had good motives, right?

But it's obvious that the next person in Jesus' story is the example of real love and compassion: The Samaritan. Arguably at risk to himself he tends the man's wounds and disinfects them. At great personal inconvenience, expense and exertion he gives him a ride, gets him set up in an inn, pays the bill out into the future, and obligates himself to further care and concern.

If the lawyer thought he could justify himself by quibbling about the definition of “neighbor,” he was clearly wrong. Our neighbor is anyone with whom we have any connection who needs our love and compassion. Who of us hasn’t failed to love our neighbor? What can we “do” to gain eternal life when perfection eludes us?

But remember, over all of this hangs the man’s question, **“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”**

He answered his own question, “Love God and my neighbor.” So who was his neighbor?

³⁶ **“Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?”**

³⁷ **“The one who showed mercy to him,” he said.**

Then Jesus told him, “Go and do the same.”

You’ve probably noticed by now, that at the end Jesus didn’t ask, “Was the man who fell among robbers our neighbor??” Instead he asked, **“Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?”**

III. The Real Answer Is Found in Jesus

With that question, put that way, Jesus doesn’t take away the overall impact of what holiness demands, but at the same time He points to the one who showed mercy and compassion. Who is like that? Who could really “go and do likewise?” You know that only Jesus has done that. Look at Him and learn that He is your righteousness.

The Torah itself, in which this man was so learned was not a list of rules by which a person could achieve eternal life; it was a record of the grace of God who reached down into this world and revealed Himself as **“The LORD passed in front of him and proclaimed: The LORD—the LORD is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth, maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But he will not leave the guilty unpunished, bringing the fathers’ iniquity on the children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation.”** (Exodus 34:6–7, CSB)

So in this account of the Good Samaritan Jesus portrays Himself as the one who, merciful and gracious, abounding in steadfast love, reaches out to us and soothes the wounds in our lives because of sin – our sin and the sins of others.

Who is our neighbor? You can answer fearlessly, even though it will show up your sins of lovelessness, because it is not on that basis that you are acceptable to God. And you can love your neighbor without fear that it isn’t “good enough for God,” confident that you have been created and placed where you are in the world to do those good things which honor him and are a blessing to others. All you do out of love for God and the good of your neighbor will indeed be cherished by God himself, and has His approval, because the righteousness of Christ fills up all that is lacking.

So may we love one another, that people may see our love and learn of our Savior Who is truly the Good Samaritan. He is good to us pitiable wretches who need His salvation so much.

AMEN