

The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:17-37

¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" ¹⁸ And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

²¹ In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²² All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

²³ Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! ²⁴ 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."

²⁵ And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" ²⁷ 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." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ 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. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ 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.' ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

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This parable is known as the Good Samaritan. However, it may be an actual event because Jesus says “a certain man, a certain priest, a certain Samaritan,” KJV, et al

Wednesday night I suggested that a rule of interpretation of parables is to find the main point and try not to assign a meaning to every detail.

The lesson of the “Good Samaritan” is what it means to be **good!**

Let’s set the stage for this encounter between the “lawyer,” an expert in the Mosaic Law, and Jesus.

Jesus had sent out the seventy {seventy-two} missionaries [Luke 10:1] with specific instructions about how to conduct themselves and what to expect.

In verse 17, the missionaries have returned and they are so excited: “Lord, even the demons are subject to us, in Your name.”

That may be good in its place, but what is important?

Verse 20, “Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you....,”
“But rather...” “rejoice because you are saved!”

A word of caution to some preachers who prance around on a stage and boast about their power over illness, disease, and debt? What about this priority?

Satan tempted Jesus by asking Him to leap off the temple; Jesus said we were not to tempt God. Paul, while gathering firewood, was bitten by a snake and was expected to die, but God saved him. But Paul wasn’t tempting God.

The devil doesn’t care how religious you are, in fact religious and lost people are in the most dangerous position spiritually. The devil doesn’t care what you talk about and do as long as the Gospel is perverted and kept in the background or better yet, out of sight.

Jesus, in the Spirit, praised God the Father that salvation is completely in the will of the Son of God {10:21-22}. How about those misguided preachers who beg men and women to perform some act, to make a decision, or beg people to “let God save you,” when men do not have the ability to respond unless God the Son reveals Himself to them!

Preach Christ, and as Spurgeon once said, “The sermon is the invitation.”

Then Jesus told His disciples privately that they were blessed to see and hear things that had not been revealed to prophets and kings.

BEHOLD! What was there to “behold?” Well, just as Jesus had privately instructed and encouraged His disciples about how blessed they were to understand who He is, an expert in the Jewish Law stood up to test Jesus. The lawyer is a perfect example of spiritual blindness.

Indulge me to tell you about something that happened that, to me, illustrates spiritual blindness. Over 40 years ago, when we lived in Franklin, TN, I rode my bicycle 15 miles every morning. One morning as I rode along a country road I passed by a dog that had gotten a hind leg tangled up in a barbed-wire fence. He was hurting, hopeless, helpless, hostile, and he was hungry, he stank, he was ugly, and he was in bondage. No one in a car would have seen him; no one walked that far on that lonely road, only Jim on his bicycle. When I approached the dog, he snarled and snapped and blamed me for his predicament. I was the enemy of his kind. But I used a long stick to keep clear of his teeth and opened up the strands of barbed wire and set him free. He contributed nothing, in fact he resisted with all of his might. His struggles only made his situation worse. But when I determined to save him, he didn’t have to “let me” save him. All he could do was be grateful that I had shown him mercy. Can you see it?

That dog was like me when the Lord found me. Just like that dog I resisted the only one who would save me, but praise God, once He set His affections on me, I was set free!

Let’s get back to the lawyer. He wanted to “test” Jesus and did not expect to be tested himself. The question he asked was:
“Teacher, what shall **I do** to inherit **eternal life**?”

The Gospel is not “**DO**,” the **GOSPEL** is “**DONE!**”

What is “**eternal life**?”

The only Bible definition of eternal life that I know of is John 17:3.
“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

Eternal Life? It is not a question of how long you will live. The Puritan preacher, Brownlow North said, “You will live as long as God lives and you will live somewhere. Either with Jesus in glory or separated from Him in Hell!”
So it is not the duration of your life, but the quality of eternal life that matters.

So the law expert asks his test question and Jesus countered him by asking:
“How do you read the Law, how do you interpret it?” [26]

The lawyer’s answer combines two great Scriptures:
Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18.

Note: Jesus gave this answer Himself as recorded in Matthew 22:34-40 & Mark 12:28-31.

Here in Luke, it is October A.D. 29. The event recorded in Matthew & Mark is six months later during the week of Jesus’ trial and crucifixion. Here the lawyer gives the answer and Jesus told him he had it right, just do it and he would live. In Matthew & Mark Jesus gives this answer but the question is different. Here the lawyer is asking about eternal life; in Matthew & Mark the question is which is the great commandment.

In this encounter, there is no sense of personal guilt in the lawyer;

“But he, wanting to justify himself,” [29] shows that he did not consider himself to have broken these commandments.

So he asks, “And who is my neighbor?”

To the Pharisee, his neighbor was another Pharisee. To the priest, his neighbor was another priest. To the Jew, his neighbor was another Jew.

How does Jesus answer the lawyer’s question: “And who is my neighbor?”

Jesus answers with a story about a Jew {if the “certain man” was not a Jew, Jesus would have identified him as such} that was attacked by robbers who surrounded him, beat him nearly to death, took everything he possessed and left him for dead.

Religion in the person of a priest happens to pass by. When the priest saw the man he crossed over to the other side so he wouldn't even have to get close to the poor man. Next, a priest's helper, a Levite, even walked up and looked him over, and concluded, "This is not my neighbor." And he too, crossed over to the other side of the road.

But a certain Samaritan... Do you know about the Jews and the Samaritans? Jews hated Samaritans and Samaritans hated Jews. But Jesus is demonstrating the spirit of the Law.

How do I inherit eternal life?

Answer. Do what the Samaritan did [33-35], and from the same motive.

Now Jesus asks the lawyer [36]: "Who of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the robbers?"

The lawyer gave the correct answer, "He who showed mercy on him."
Jesus said, "Go and do likewise."

Does Jesus answer the lawyer's original question about how to inherit eternal life?
Yes!

But the answer is not in some legalistic law-keeping. Not just by being a good-neighbor. Eternal life is reflected in the spontaneous compassion shown to anyone in need.

The question is not: "Who is my neighbor?"
If he is not my neighbor then I can excuse myself from getting involved.

The correct question is "Whose neighbor am I?"

We need to be shown mercy first; and then as a result, we will be merciful.

The story of the Good Samaritan is a picture of the Gospel. When the "Good Samaritan" found me, I was as helpless as the dog caught in the fence; as the man who was robbed and beaten and left for dead. Jesus healed my wounds of sin and carried me to a place of safety. And what more do we have to do to keep our salvation? Nothing!

The Good Samaritan told the innkeeper, “When I come again, I’ll take care of it!”

If the Lord has saved you, you will have as much to brag about as that dog did when he got turned loose.

What does it mean to be “good”? True goodness flows from knowing Jesus and being clothed in His righteousness.

Do you know of anything better than to stand before God clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ?

Can you trust Jesus? Not, “will” you trust Jesus, but have you been given the ability, a revelation from the Son of God?

Has it pleased Jesus to reveal Himself to you?

Have you been convinced that you are a sinner and deserve to go to hell?

Do you have any hope besides Jesus? Not Jesus and baptism; not Jesus and church membership; not Jesus and anything you add to it! Only Jesus!

Have you been so blessed?

If you have never made a public confession of your faith in Jesus Christ now would be a very good time to do it. If you need a church home where the Gospel is preached and the Bible is studied this would be a good time to come forward and join with us.

Jim Gunn

March 7, 1971: Reformed Baptist Church, Franklin, TN

March 10, 1971: Third National Bank, Nashville, TN

May 30, 1971: First Baptist Church, Marion KY

October 13, 1974: Reformed Baptist Church, Franklin, TN

February 2, 1977: Vineland Park Baptist Church, Hueytown, AL

July 15, 1981: Vineland Park Baptist Church, Hueytown, AL

October 25, 1998: Vineland Park Baptist Church, Hueytown, AL

November 4, 2009: Vineland Park Baptist Church, Hueytown, AL

June 23, 2013: Vineland Park Baptist Church, Hueytown, AL