

KINGDOM DISCIPLESHIP 101: LOVING GOD AND NEIGHBOR

LUKE 10:25-42

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In our last sermon, we saw a foretaste of the mission of the Church as the Kingdom extends to the ends of the earth (10:1-24). In today's sermon, Jesus focuses his disciples' attention on loving God and neighbor.

Jesus teaches the disciples about our relationship to God and neighbor, and how we truly show the love of God to others through compassion and mercy. As Christians we rightly talk a lot about the love of God, a love for God, and the love that we have for each other. We should be reminded that the summary of the Law of God is to love God and our neighbor as ourselves. This means that our love for our neighbor concretely and practically lived out shows the love we have for God.

As Christians we want to display the mercy and compassion of God to others, but how do we *do it*? We dare not put our hope in our works for God, what we "do" in order to live, yet we dare to live out our lives loving God and neighbor as Christ commands and enables us by his grace. Our passage contains a lot of "dos". In verse 25 the lawyer asks Jesus "What must I do?" and Jesus basically says "Do this" in verses 25 and 28. In verse 37 a Samaritan is one who "did mercy" and Jesus says for all to "do likewise". The "dos" of this passage can only be done by the grace found in Christ alone!

We must constantly as Christians learn how far short we fall in keeping God's law of serving God and neighbor, and we must drink deeply of God's grace found in Christ alone. We must continue to learn that our right standing before God is based on what Christ did and merited for those who believe. Our hope is not in ourselves, not in our works, not in our trying to get around the actual and absolute perfection before God that the Law demands, but to find our hope in Christ alone.

In today's passage we learn from Jesus what it means to love God and serve neighbor as ourselves as we avoid justifying ourselves before God based on what we think we have done for God, or a misreading of God's Law.

We shall learn what the grace, mercy and compassion of God looks like as it is administered in this world of sin and misery in Christ, and our passage closes with a short narrative commentary on two women disciples (Martha and Mary) who are both seeking to love and serve God and neighbor, one is doing it rightly, and one is doing it wrongly.

I. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE, OR JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS? (25-28)

DOES THE LAWYER UNDERSTAND THE GOSPEL OF GOD THAT SINFUL MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE IN GOD'S PROMISES, OR DOES HE SEEK TO GAIN JUSTIFICATION BY HIS OWN WORKS?

a. How to Inherit Eternal Life? (25)

A lawyer (or scribe, Gk: νομικός) puts Jesus to the test, or tempts him with a question (the Greek word is ἐκπειράζω and can be translated as *test or tempt*, cf. Matt. 4:7; Luke 4:12; 1 Cor. 10:9; LXX: Deut. 6:16). Dr. Luke has told us in Luke 7:30 that the Lawyers and Pharisees have rejected the purposes of God because they have denied the authority and validity of John the Baptist's baptism of repentance.

Lawyers during Jesus' time studied the Torah or first five books of the Bible, also known as the writings of Moses. He was also a student of the rest of the Old Covenant writings and therefore had a reputation of being a knowledgeable teacher in Israel.

The lawyer specifically asks Jesus (before the crowds) *what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*

The first problem here is that the man asks what *he* should do and reveals that he has no understanding of divine grace; the second problem here is that the man should know what the Law of God through the Mosaic testimony says (He is a lawyer!).

Eternal life (Gk. ζῶην αἰώνιον) was the eschatological blessing for those who would inherit the promises to Abraham (cf. Rom. 4:13). In light of the previous woes pronounced by Jesus on many in the Galilean towns who had rejected him (see previous sermon, Luke 10:12-16), the lawyer is perhaps asking Jesus how the life promised by God in the Old Covenant is obtained specifically through Jesus himself.

The Old Testament taught that believers would inherit eternal life (although it was not as clearly revealed as in the New):

^{ESV} **Daniel 12:1** "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. ² **And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.**

b. Jesus' Answer: "To the Law and the Prophets" (26-27)- *What is written in the Law?*

Jesus responds to the lawyers question about how to gain eternal life with a question about what is written in the Law of God, and how the lawyer "reads" or "interprets" it (v.26).

Jesus shows himself again as one not opposed to, or seeking to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but rather to fulfill them (Matt. 5:17-20). Jesus asks the Lawyer to quote back to him the scriptural answer found in the Old Testament.

Jesus seeks an answer according to the testimony of the Law. As Psalm 78:5-8 says:

^{ESV} **Psalm 78:1** A MASKIL OF ASAPH. Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! ² I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, ³ things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. ⁴ We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. ⁵ **He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, ⁶ that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, ⁷ so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;** ⁸ and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

In the Old Covenant, the testimony of the Law was revealed this way:

^{ESV} **Deuteronomy 6:5** You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

^{ESV} **Leviticus 19:18** You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

The Lawyer responds with the summary of the Law as his answer to Jesus:

"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."

Jesus tells him that he has answered correctly and that if he does this, he will live, or inherit eternal life (v.28). The lawyer has a problem of sin however, and although he can read rightly and even correctly quote the Law and purposes of God for salvation, he is not in any condition to inherit eternal life through this understanding *because this hope of eternal life is found in Christ alone!*

The lawyer lacks humility and brokenness before God's law. The lawyer ought to love God and neighbor as himself, but he cannot, and he does not

– yet he does not realize this yet. And worse, at this point, he is rejecting Jesus who is the only one who can keep the Law of the LORD.

At this point in his life, the lawyer is one of those “wise and learned” Jesus had just described as he praised God for his mysterious sovereignty (10:21-24). God in his sovereignty had hidden “these things” from him.

Application: Many people are like this lawyer before the face of God. They know what the Law says and are quite convinced that they have “done their best”. These people can compare their righteous works with others, and can feel pretty darn good about their success before God, but they have yet consider their wicked unworthiness before God’s perfect law that requires perfection from everyone.

Many today who want the Ten Commandments hung in the local county courthouse may want to see a moral society, but they are not able to imagine a society of condemned sinners without hope apart from the grace of God found only in Jesus Christ! The Law gives no hope at all to the sinner who constantly falls short of the glory of God revealed in it! (cf. Rom. 3:23ff).

c. Summary of the Law of God is LOVE

The summary of the Law of God has always been love of God and neighbor. Israel was given the Law so that she might know what loving God and neighbor looks like, and be a witness to the unbelieving world. To love God with our *whole being* (thus “soul, strength, mind”) and our neighbor as ourselves is the summary of all of the Law of God.

Because of sin, ***Israel did not “do this and live”***. As we quoted from Psalm 78, each generation in Israel had learned the Law of Moses (the summary being love of God and neighbor), they passed this down to the next generation (this Lawyer can quote the Law of Moses and he is many generations removed from Moses’ day), ***but Israel could not keep it-*** that is, they could not love as God commanded them.

The Law was to make Israel realize that because of their sinful condition, they could not live for God’s glory through love. They constantly became a sinful, stiff-necked, and disobedient people throughout redemptive-history. The Law was to reveal how unloving to God and neighbor they were so that they might put their trust in God and his ***grace alone***.

In the Old Covenant God provided sacrifices; God commanded the people in light of God’s law to look to the blood of the sacrifices and see the death that is required of those who cannot and do not love God and neighbor as themselves.

The sacrificial blood of the substitutionary animals was to “cover” or “atone” for their sins as types that pointed forward to the finished work of Messiah-Christ who would one day come in the fullness of the times. In the Book of Leviticus we see God’s Law and God’s grace revealed in the sacrificial offerings that God required of the people. In Leviticus 18, we read:

^{ESV} **Leviticus 18:1-5:** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, I am the LORD your God. ³ You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes. ⁴ ***You shall follow my rules and keep my statutes and walk in them. I am the LORD your God.*** ⁵ ***You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.***

Redemption (grace indicative) → Commandments (imperative)

Jesus is actually quoting from Leviticus 18:5 (concerning “do this”), which is Law of Moses revealed in the context of God’s substitutionary grace found in the sacrifices; the Book of Leviticus is on how to be saved by blood essentially, which implies clearly God’s grace.

The Law was given so that men would be broken before it, and utterly depend upon God’s grace, mercy, compassion, and that they would hope only in him.

Israel was told “Do this and live” not because they could, but so that they would realize that they could not! Israel was commanded to love God and neighbor not because they could, but so that they would realize that they could not. We love God and neighbor just because he first loved us- -it is all from his grace and strength that we are enabled in Christ to do.

d. “Do this and you will live” (28) /The Important Principle Here is:

“Ought never implies can!”

i. Purpose of the Law (Galatians 3)- Theological Excursus or Digression for Larger Context

As Christians, we must learn the important saying that “ought never implies can”- -that is, ***although we ought to keep the Law of God, we are without the ability to do so because of our sinfulness.***

Jesus says: ‘Do this’ even though Israel could not, and the lawyer could not, and we cannot. The lawyer was seeking a set of rules so

that he might gain eternal life and Jesus gives him the set of rules he so desperately desires:

“Do this; that is love God with all your being, and your neighbor as yourself” and you will inherit eternal life.”

The Apostle Paul gives us a greater New Covenant understanding of the Law in a lengthy portion of Galatians. In Galatians 3, the Apostle Paul exegetes the Law in light of Christ (something the Lawyer could not do because of unbelief; the Lawyer should have read the Law and Prophets in light of Christ, cf. John 5:39; Luke 24:24ff).

Paul's basic theology of the law in his Galatians 3 argument is:

- 1) Abraham was justified by faith in God's promises (grace), not the Law (Gal. 3:6-9).
- 2) Those who are true sons of Abraham, whether they be Jew or Gentile are those who have faith in God's promises found in Christ, not in the Law Gal. 3:9, 26-29).
- 3) The Law of God brings a curse to those who try to “do this and live” (Gal. 3:10).
- 4) The Old Covenant prophets taught that man cannot live by the Law, but the justified are those who live by faith (Gal. 3:11). Paul's implication is that this is not merely a New Testament teaching or revelation, but a truth from the very beginning of Israel's existence as a people.
- 5) No one can “do this and live” because of sin everyone is under a curse before God because of the Law. The Law reveals sin before God and before the Law all we can expect is God's judgment, not justification (Gal. 3:13-14).
- 6) Christ kept the Law perfectly; he was one of us, and he was God in the flesh, and he loved God with all his heart, soul, mind, strength, and neighbor as himself perfectly.

Jesus Christ was the only Israelite who obeyed God through Moses and “Did this and lived”. Jesus earned eternal life for those who believe.

- 7) All those who believe, who realize through repentance that they ***“cannot do this and live”*** find hope in Christ who, although kept the law perfectly, became cursed before God so that we might inherit the eternal blessing of life from God.
- 8) The promises to Abraham might be realized not through earning merits before God’s law (this is damning), but through faith in Jesus Christ, the only True Law-Keeper and Faithful Israelite (Gal. 3:14).
- 9) ***Why was the Law given if Israel was to be saved by grace alone through faith?*** The Law was a guardian, or tutor, or schoolmaster to reveal our sinfulness, humble mankind, and prepare Israel and the world for the coming of Messiah ***who is standing right in front of the lawyer in the flesh- -perfectly loving God and his neighbor as himself!!***

Know then that it is ***those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.***⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Study Galatians 3 again for a larger understanding of redemptive-history:

¹⁰ *For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."*¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."¹² But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."

¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"-¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

¹⁵ To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.¹⁷ This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.¹⁸ For if the

inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

¹⁹ Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. ²⁰ Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. ²¹ Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. ²² But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ *But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,* ²⁶ *for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.* ²⁷ *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* ²⁸ *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* ²⁹ *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*

^{ESV} Romans 3:19-23: Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. ²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it- ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

ii. “Israel’s experience of “Do this...”

Israel constantly failed to “do this” and they were to be a people prepared by John the Baptist to repent and prepare for Jesus through baptism (cf. Luke 7:30 again).

Unfortunately, many in Israel rejected God’s hope for salvation and eternal life held out in Christ. Many like the lawyer in this passage believed too much in justification by faith plus works, rather than in the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone.

So the Lawyer, although he knew the Law of Moses, and read it every week in the synagogue and had memorized it and probably had taught it to his own children, nevertheless was not humbled by it, and so did not find Abraham’s inheritance of eternal life that the children of Abraham find only by faith alone in Christ alone.

In fact, in verse 29 of Luke 10, we learn that the Lawyer was crafty and wanted to “justify himself” before Christ by specifically asking: ***“And who is my neighbor?”***

Although Jesus gives to the lawyer a list of rules to perform: LOVE, the lawyer still is not broken before him in humility and repentance. He desires to justify himself- -that is, he desire to make himself righteous before God and man through his own works.

The question the lawyer asks concerning identifying his neighbor is NOT so that he can go and show proper love to someone perhaps he has not shown love to, rather he is trying to seek to find out from Jesus *who he does not have to love* –that is, he is asking: “*Jesus, who am I not obligated to love?*” which reveals an unregenerate heart before the LORD.

II. GOSPEL COMPASSION: “WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?” (29-35)- JESUS’ PARABOLIC EXEGESIS OF THE LAW OF GOD (HOW DO WE SHOW LOVE?)

THE LAWYER ESSENTIALLY ASKS: “HOW MUCH DO I HAVE TO LOVE TO GAIN ETERNAL LIFE?”

JESUS SAYS: “YOU WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH? YOU CAN’T HANDLE THE TRUTH OF WHO YOUR NEIGHBOR IS!”

- a. Some of Israel’s worst enemies, the Samaritans, are Jesus’ example of gospel compassion and showing the love of neighbor that is required by God.

In Israel during Jesus’ time, no teacher in Israel would have disagreed that God had not called Israel to love their neighbor. In fact, in one of the Rabbinical writings, it says clearly:

“Keep, therefore, my children, the law of God, and get singleness, and walk in guilelessness, not playing the busybody with the business of your neighbor. But love the Lord and your neighbor, have compassion on the poor and the weak” (T. Iss. 5:1-2).

What one in Israel would have misunderstood because of misinterpretation was “who is my neighbor?” A neighbor was defined in current interpretations in Israel to mean only those in the covenant; only those who were Jews (and perhaps resident aliens, cf. Lev. 19). However, no Jew would be expected to love a ***Roman or a Samaritan?***

Jesus’ purpose in telling this parable is to get at “how far should our love and compassion extend” in being like God?

Jesus says this traditional Jewish interpretation of the law (of loving only fellow Israelites) is not the meaning and purpose of God's Law. Our neighbor is larger than this restriction! In asking who specifically is his neighbor, the lawyer is attempting to be confirmed in his soft interpretation of God's Law, although Jesus will seek to make him uncomfortable and condemned in light of the Law's hard demands.

Think of the worst enemies of God's Church today, and then think of how you would respond if Jesus took you aside and taught you that loving your neighbor meant loving these people! Then on top of that, he used these enemies of God's people to show what God's compassion and loving our neighbor looks like.

b. History of Israel vs. Samaria

- i. **There was a long history of Jewish-Samaritan antagonism.** In fact, Samaritans were particularly hostile to Jews who traveled through their lands in order to go to the temple in Jerusalem to worship (Geldenhuis, 292). This is what we learned that "the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem" (Luke 9:53). In Luke 9, we have the formal rejection of Samaria, as we will later see the formal rejection of Jerusalem in the death of Jesus.
- ii. During the time of the rebuilding of the second temple after the Jews' returned from exile, the Samaritans were not allowed to help in the building under Ezra and Nehemiah (Ez. 4:3; Neh. 2:20) and so the Samaritans hatefully tried to hinder the work being done.
- iii. The Samaritans decided to build a rival temple and a different priesthood to worship on Mt. Gerazim (see John 4:19-24). The hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans was particularly heated and bitter during Jesus time (cf. Luke 10:33ff).
- iv. Professor Darrell Bock writes: "By choosing the Samaritan as a model [of love and compassion], Jesus shows that neighbors may be found anywhere, among any racial group, even in those groups despised by the Jewish leadership" (*Luke*, pg. 1029).
- v. The rabbis of Jesus' day said: "Let no man eat the bread of the Cuthites (Samaritans), for he who eats their bread is as he who eats swine's flesh."

c. Details of the Samaritan's compassion

i. A *certain* man was robbed and almost beat to death (30)- “chipped teeth, blackened eyes, hair matted down with blood” (Hughes, pg. 390).

1. We should assume that the “certain man” was a Jew.
2. The road from Jerusalem was fraught with danger, particularly robbers, bandits, or highwaymen who hid in caves awaiting their prey (Josephus describes this region’s barren character and that Arab robbers were frequent four centuries after Jesus).
3. The man is outnumbered by the robbers and they rob him, strip him of his clothing, beat him until he is almost dead, then leave him to die on the side of the road.
4. Who will help this man who has been “left for dead”?
“Chipped teeth, blackened eyes, hair matted down with blood”

THEN THERE IS A PATTERN IN VERSES 31-32: “THEY CAME → THEY SAW → THEY PASSED BY...”

ii. Here comes a priest! He can help... (“By chance” he came along) (31a).

1. No response by the priest and he passes on the other side, perhaps he was too busy!
2. Perhaps he feared becoming unclean by coming near what he perceived as a corpse; perhaps he had other pressing “religious” matters to tend to; perhaps after service in the Temple he is going home to be with his family- -we are not told, but he does not help the man in need (Lev. 21:1 ff).
He does not help his neighbor.

iii. Here comes a Levite! He can help... (32)

1. No response by the Levite, he also passes by on the other side.
2. What was his reason for not showing care and giving help?

3. These two examples of Priest and Levite serves in Jesus' parable to indict Israel's leadership and lack of love for God demonstrated in a lack of service to one's neighbor. As the Lawyer listened to the story, he would know that after these two examples, Jesus was including all of Israel's leaders (implying that if a lawyer had also passed by in his narrative, he would not have helped either!).

But who will help this dying man? In the lawyer's mind, the next person in Jesus' parable would have been a layman (non-ordained like the Priest and Levite) –but never a Samaritan!

iv. Samaritan showed *gospel compassion* (33)

1. Bound up wounds (34a) - Perhaps with pieces of the Samaritan's own clothing.
2. Poured oil and wine (34b) - The Samaritan soothes (oil) and disinfects (wine) the wounds.
3. Carried him on his own animal, took him to "hospital" (34c) - This probably means that the Samaritan walked the rest of the way because his animal was carrying the injured man. He took him all the way to the hospital (or inn).
4. Gave his money and told them "I will repay" (In other words, he said: "I will take care of his every need.").

What we see here is that the Samaritan was on the path to reach a specific destination. ***He was providentially, yet perhaps inconveniently to him side-tracked in order to serve his neighbor.*** The help the Samaritan gave to the man was ***not convenient; he served the man and saved his life through a great deal*** of inconvenience to himself!

The Samaritan delays his trip at least a night to stay with the man until the next day (35); he does not "dump and run" but rather stays to care and look after him. The Samaritan did everything he could at the expense to himself. The Samaritan gave enough money to the innkeeper (two denarii, or two day's wages) so that the man would be taken care of until he returned. Bock says that this amount of money would have insured the continued care, room and board of the man for about twenty-four days in that time (*Luke*, pg. 1033).

The Samaritan shows the compassion of God for the weak and helpless! The Samaritan in helping risks his own time and money, even his life to assist a man who is in danger.

Professor Joel B. Green writes: “The care the Samaritan offers is not a model of moral obligation but of exaggerated action grounded in compassion that risks much more than could ever be required or expected” (*Luke*, pg. 432).

The point: even this kind of exaggerated and extensive love for neighbor shown by the Samaritan is not sufficient to merit eternal life. Even if this puts the lawyer to shame, the point is not to get the lawyer to act more like the Samaritan, but to humble himself before Christ in an understanding of God’s grace!

Jesus concludes the story and asks the Lawyer: “***Which of these three [Israelite Priest and Levite, or Samaritan], do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?***”
—v. 36

The Lawyer answers rightly: “***The one who showed him mercy.***”

- d. Your neighbor is everyone God places in your path.

III. THE MERCY OF GOD: JESUS RESPONDS- “YOU GO AND DO LIKEWISE” (36-37)

- a. Example of Our Neighbor- “Who is it?” How do *we ask* how far our love should extend (surely not to everyone!).

Who is your neighbor? Anyone God places in your path that has a physical or spiritual need—even your worse enemy! How do you show your love for God? When you see a need, go in Christ’s Name and take care of the need regardless of who the person is- -even if it be your worst enemy! Even if it cost you a great deal of inconvenience or money!

How do you “prove” (v.36) to love your neighbor? Through concrete acts of love, kindness and compassion that might cost you a little time or money.

We are not to find our neighbors merely in ***those who are like us, or those who have the same skin color, or those who belong to the same political party, or those who belong to our particular denomination, or those who treat us nicely and have done nice things for us in the past.***

We may be called upon to serve our neighbor who is a stranger, or one who we are not like, or one who is difficult to get along with, or one who has treated us unfairly. If God calls us to the task by placing someone in need in our path, then we are to tend to that person as Christ has tended to us in love and service.

- b. **Mercy, mercy, mercy-** “You go and do likewise.”- “Be merciful as your Heavenly Father is merciful!”
- c. **Importance of Indicative and Imperative-** Remember that the indicative is what Jesus has done for us in law-keeping (loving God and neighbor has himself *for us*); the imperative is what God calls us to do in light of this indicative grace in Jesus Christ!

Only in Jesus can one “do this and live” (and that imperfectly). We must remember that we find hope in Christ alone as the Law-Keeper and the One who has loved God with all his being and his neighbor as himself. The purpose of the Parable of the Samaritan for us is to show God’s compassion and mercy that is found in Jesus Christ, not to make us try harder to be more Samaritan-like, but for us to realize how much we’re not like him, and find hope in God’s grace found in Jesus alone!

We should never focus on the imperative (of doing these things to live, or going and doing likewise) without first seeing the grace of God held out to us in Jesus Christ (of focusing on what Jesus had done and how he lived for us).

IV. MARTHA, MARY, LOVE AND SERVICE (38-42)

Here we have a profound illustration of two disciples, one who is focused on the indicative grace found in Christ, and the other focused merely on the imperative (or what she should be doing in service).

This incident of Martha and Mary is found only in Dr. Luke’s gospel and I think this is important with regard to why it is here in the context of the lawyer’s question about eternal life and his misunderstanding of the Law of God, and his misunderstanding about the service that is required of him to his neighbor.

Both Martha and Mary are seeking to love God and neighbor as the Law teaches to us (and as Christ affirms), but one is finding her substance and full satisfaction in Christ, and one is finding her lack of substance and satisfaction in service.

Mary is reveling in God's grace found in Christ and is listening to Jesus about who he is and what he has done for her. She is feeding at his Word and placing her hope not in herself but in Christ alone.

As we learned from the lawyer, we can all attempt to justify ourselves before the Law of God rather than to be broken by it. We can also attempt to "do the Law" for all the wrong reasons without the grace of Christ as we see in this short story.

Martha in contrast is distracted with too much serving. She is obeying the imperative that is right for her to do, but without the indicative reality of the grace of Christ. She is becoming distracted (probably leading to judgmentalness as her tone to Jesus indicates) because she expects Mary to help her with all of her work (s). In fact, Martha refers to "me" or herself two times in these five verses: "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left *me* to do all the work by myself?" (v. 40); "Tell her then to help *me*." (v. 40b).

The focus of Martha is on Martha –not on Christ!

The Lord gently rebukes Martha and says she is busy with too much- -and anxious to keep the imperative. Martha is serving, and so she is rightly loving God and neighbor as herself, ***BUT she is doing so without much grace.***

A little grace is a dangerous thing; drink deep, or taste not the fountains of Christ's mercy and compassion!

Jesus tells here that one thing is necessary or important and Mary has chosen that: to focus on Christ and learn from him.

Now this brief illustrative passage does not mean we ***do not*** focus on the imperative, or seek to "go and do likewise" or show mercy to our neighbor (as Martha is doing), as Jesus says to all disciples in Luke 10:37 says.

What it means is that we must be constantly seeking Christ our Lord personally as our Lord and learning from he and his grace, so that we might serve correctly and keep God's commandments not in an anxious or judgmental kind of service, but a loving disposition borne out of Christ's grace alone.

In other words, we show our love for God by doing; that is, by doing like the Samaritan in showing compassion, or doing in serving God and neighbor, but we must always do in the light of Christ's grace!

I CANNOT EMPHASIZE THIS BALANCE ENOUGH!!! We must never deny the imperative in Scripture (lest we end up denying God's law as

antinomians), but we must never deny the indicative (lest we end up denying the gospel of grace found only in Christ!). **REMEMBER THIS:**

We always DO (imperative) ‘cause of what Christ has DONE (indicative).

We must always do or serve because we are grateful for God’s grace to us in Jesus! If we do not sit at Jesus’ feet and listen to him, we will never be able to do or serve with right motivations and eagerness to please God –*we will be too focused on self.*

a. The Church’s service to Christ (Distraction/self-centeredness) (40)

A good way of knowing that you are serving Christ by focusing merely on the imperative-commandments and not drinking deeply of Christ and his grace is when you look around you, and like Martha you try to justify yourself before God, thinking judgmentally that you are the only one doing this, or that through serving, and you get angry with both God and your neighbor.

We can learn very specific wisdom here. The next time that you have an opportunity to serve God and neighbor, and you realize that you are getting judgmental or bitter, anxious or angry, then realize that you have focused NOT on the love and grace of God in Christ but on yourself. You have for that moment of service forsaken the indicative grace in Christ in order to justify yourself through your service of works (imperative).

Ask yourself if you have forsaken opportunities to be taught Christ’s grace? Ask yourself if you have served and tried to do God’s commandments without first seeking to know Christ and his grace through preaching, study, etc.

Next time you think you need to serve in some way, say during the teaching of a sermon or Sunday school when Christ and his grace is being made known (perhaps it is a necessity such as teaching or nursery duty), but ask yourself at that time: “What is the one thing necessary” and is this the “good portion”? It might be time for someone else to serve and for you to drink deeply of Christ’s grace by sitting at his feet.

As Darrell Bock memorably says: “Service of the hand cannot supercede service of the ear, since the ear guides the heart and the hand” (pg. 1037).

b. Seek the Lord for grace

Our obedience in Christ, our “going and doing likewise” (v.37) in showing mercy is only good when we are doing it out of love and grace for Christ.

Whenever service for God has become a burden to you, something is wrong. Stop! And think about why you're doing the service that you're doing.

When service becomes a burden and you're full of anxiety, you are not full of grace. At that time, seek to sit at Jesus' feet and find the one thing necessary and the good portion that only God can give to you in Christ.

If we serve and we are begrudging God and others because we must serve, then how glorifying to God is that? In light of our context, how can that be a demonstration of love for God and neighbor?

Conclusion

This passage like every other passage in Scripture is not primarily about a lawyer, neither is it primarily about Martha and Mary, nor is it primarily about you!

So many self-centered people in the Church today seeking to find "practical application" in every portion of Scripture, something that they can "take away" for themselves, etc –perhaps an application that they can do with Christ's help, but it is not an application of Christ himself!

What we must learn is that every Scripture, including this one is about CHRIST! ***CHRIST (his Person and Work) IS ALWAYS OUR PRACTICAL APPLICATION!*** Christ and his gospel is what you are to "take away" for yourself in every sermon.

Why? Because you are told to "do"! You are told to "do this and live"; you are told to "go and do likewise"- -and you cannot in your own strength and power. *Ought never implies can!*

Christ did; Christ did this and lived! He was vindicated by God, resurrected and ascended to God's right hand as the one who perfectly loved God and his neighbor as himself.

Christ's love for God and his Samaritan-like compassion has been given to you! It is as if that you have loved God perfectly through obedience as Christ did!

It is as if that you have loved neighbor perfectly like one much greater than a mere Samaritan! Jesus' love and perfect law-keeping has been given to you; his righteousness has been given to you by faith alone!

As the Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 60 reminds us:

How are thou righteous before God? A. Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ; (a)

so that, though my conscience accuse me, that I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and kept none of them, (b) and am still inclined to all evil; (c) notwithstanding, God, without any merit of mine, (d) but only of mere grace, (e) grants and imputes to me, (f) the perfect satisfaction, (g) righteousness and holiness of Christ; (h) even so, as if I never had had, nor committed any sin: yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience which Christ has accomplished for me; (i) inasmuch as I embrace such benefit with a believing heart. (j) (a) Rom.3:21-25,28; Rom.5:1,2; Gal.2:16; Eph.2:8,9; Philip.3:9. (b) Rom.3:9. (c) Rom.7:23. (d) Tit.3:5; Deut.9:6; Ezek.36:22. (e) Rom.3:24; Eph.2:8. (f) Rom.4:4,5; 2 Cor.5:19. (g) 1 John 2:2. (h) 1 John 2:1. (i) 2 Cor.5:21. (j) Rom.3:22; John 3:18.

The Law of God should always humble believers so that they realize just how little they love God and neighbor. I mean, if the Bible teaches that our love for God is revealed in how much we love our neighbor, then all of us would fall short and all of us should realize our love for God is many times just too cold-hearted.

But in Christ, as we gaze upon the beauty, majesty and obedience of the Savior *for us*, we realize that our right standing before God is all because of what he has done, and how he has perfectly kept and performed lovingly through law-keeping. We realize that in Christ, that although we will stumble, and although we will have hearts that are cold toward God and neighbor, we understand through his grace how to love God and our neighbor as ourselves.

And that is an indicative reality you must understand if you are truly to know Christ's love and grace for you, and how you are to serve at his feet in light of this amazing truth!

Thanks be to God!

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Scripture Lesson

^{ESV} **Deuteronomy 6:4-7:** "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

^{ESV} **Leviticus 19:11-18:** "You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. ¹² You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. ¹³ "You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning. ¹⁴ You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD. ¹⁵ "You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to

the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. ¹⁶ You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD. ¹⁷ "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. ¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

1 John 4:7-21: Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. ¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷ By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.