

Pentecost 5 7/10/22  
Luke 10:25-37 10C

“WHICH OF THESE THREE, DO YOU THINK, PROVED TO BE A NEIGHBOR TO THE MAN WHO FELL AMONG THE ROBBERS?”

“Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?,” Jesus asked the lawyer in our lesson and that is the question Jesus asks **you** today.

Like the devil in the wilderness, this expert in Law of Moses stood up to test Jesus, “Teacher, **by doing what** will I obtain eternal life?”

His question showed what he truly believed: “Teacher, **BY DOING WHAT** will I obtain life eternal?” His focus was not on Christ, but all on himself. He thought he would be saved by what he did – his works. Yes, this lawyer knew the law. He knew the words, but he failed to understand what God was teaching us in the Law of Moses. The reason God gave the law through Moses was so that it could be a mirror **{MIRROR}**.

What do you see when you look in a mirror? **SCARY**. A mirror shows you what you look like. Like a **MIRROR**, God gave us the Law so that we could see that are by nature sinful and unclean; so that we could see that we cannot save ourselves by our works. But, the Jewish religious leaders, their minds and hearts darkened by the shroud of sin and death, forgot to see their sin which the law pointed out. Rather, they thought that God would reward them for their keeping of the law. Very simply said: They thought God would be **so** impressed by them, that they could save themselves by their good works.

“What is written in the Law? How do you read it?,” Jesus replied to his question. This expert in the Law gives us the summary of the Law, “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.” “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” This is the truth of the Scripture. God says to us: Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them (Lev 18:5). Keep the Law **perfectly**, completely, without ever violating even one of its commands, and you will be saved.

“But he, desiring to justify himself, to show that he had kept the Law perfectly, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’” To answer his question, Jesus tells us well-known parable of the Good Samaritan. The priest and Levite, those who knew the Law of God, passed on by, on the other side. They knew the words of the Law, but they did not live the Law. The hated, despised Samaritan, had mercy, went to his dying neighbor, and saved him. Then, Jesus asks, “Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?”

What kind of neighbor are you? I ask you that because you say, “Yes, yes, I would be the Good Samaritan to my neighbor, beaten, dying, by the side of the road.” Really? Ok, so let me ask you: What kind of neighbor are you? For you see, your actions, your life, speaks louder than your words.

God forgives and remembers your sin no more, but you don't. You keep a record of wrongs, resenting your neighbor and feeling sorry for yourself. In fact, to this very day, you still hate your sibling because he/she got great-grandma's doily and you didn't. You don't love, honor, and cherish the spouse God gave you; rather, you attack them with the arrows of hurtful words. Your father in heaven is patient and kind to you, but your child wears out your patience, frustrates you by not doing things fast enough to suit you, so you get angry and express that anger by yelling at

them. When your friend is in despair or depressed, you allow them to languish, scooting right by them without a hug, without a single word.

What kind of neighbor are you? In our lesson this morning, Jesus teaches the point very simply – if we cannot love our neighbor, how can we love God?

In the parable, we are the poor traveler left by the side of the road to die. Just as that wounded traveler could do nothing to save himself, we can do nothing so save ourselves. The Law strips off any pretended goodness that we can wear as a custom to fool our neighbor. The Law *{mirror}* forces us to see ourselves as God sees us -- poor, miserable sinners, who cannot save themselves.

We couldn't and didn't love God and you certainly could not and do not love your neighbor as you love yourself, so Jesus perfectly loved God and your neighbor for you. "For as by the one man's disobedience [ie, Adam's fall into sin] the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience [ie, Jesus' perfectly doing His Father's will] the many will be made righteous," the Bible says (Ro 5:19).

Jesus perfectly obeyed His Father's will even when that will meant taking on your failure to love God and your neighbor. For that failure, He was betrayed into the hands of evil men. He was stripped and beaten with blows and whips, and a crown of thorns as God's wrath against sin was poured out on Him. He hung in agony upon the cross and was abandoned even by His Father in heaven to die the death of your sin. That is what Jesus, your Good Samaritan, did for you.

Risen and alive forevermore, Jesus comes to you. He washes your wounds in the waters of holy Baptism. The wounds that this sinful world and sinful hands have laid on you and the wounds you yourself have

caused are all washed away and you are forgiven and healed and restored. He binds up your wounds with His own righteousness. Wearing the righteousness of Jesus, God declares you good and a sinner no more. And, He feeds you and strengthens you with His Body and Blood.

Jesus gives you mercy, so that His mercy may flow through you. God doesn't need your good works, but your neighbor does. So, God uses your hands, your feet, your checkbooks, to serve your neighbor. God does His work to serve His creatures through you.

The theme of this Pentecost season is living a Christian life. [Our beautiful banner for this Pentecost season reminds us of that truth. The banner shows the apple tree bearing good fruit. The banner](#) helps us remember that we, living in Christ, are to bear fruit worthy of repentance. As a good tree brings forth good fruit, so saving faith in Christ will always bring forth good works.

In our Epistle, Paul writes, "Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord ... bearing fruit in every good work and increasing knowledge of God" (Co 1:10). As little Christ's, we treat others as Christ has treated us. Yes, we love all our neighbors, even those who wish harm upon us or have harmed us, rejoicing with them in the blessings God has given to them and weeping with them in their adversities, helping them wherever and however we can.

The mistake of the lawyer, the priest, and the Levite was that they wanted to choose for themselves whom they would love. But as we remember that God loves everyone, we do not pick and choose our neighbors. We love everyone as Christ loves them.

In the example of the Good Samaritan, we learn what true love for neighbor is. From these words of our Lord, we see that true love does not first ask whom it should help; love helps everyone, even our most bitter

enemy, when they are in need. As God has mercy on you, you have mercy on your neighbor. You listen to your spouse. You comfort the child with skinned knees or frightened by the storm in the night. You call your mom and dad to say “hi”. You hug your grandchild.

Living in Jesus and Jesus living in us, we are a Good Samaritan to our neighbor, as He is our Good Samaritan.