

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
 Luke 10:25-37/ The Good Samaritan

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³³But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.

The story of the Good Samaritan is something that we can all relate to; how many of us have driven by someone who has car trouble, or ignored someone looking for directions? How many times have we driven by and felt that little pang of guilt? *We could have, we should have, but we didn't!*

You know I was in a hurry! I don't know who those people are! it would be dangerous to put myself at risk to help a stranger.

But more often than not—people outside the church, especially those who aren't Christian point to certain parts of Scripture like Luke chapter 10 and the Good Samaritan, they point to the church and say: *you hypocrites look at all the people in the world you could be helping and you don't. You Christian hypocrites; help those in need!* When we hear those words, we know that they are at least a little bit true.

The Good Samaritan is one of those stories that gets to us all. These Words from Jesus' today are some of the most misunderstood and misapplied words in all of Scripture. Jesus is confronted by a lawyer in today's text who comes to test Jesus.

This lawyer claimed that he knew the whole law. He was an expert in the law and he trusted in his ability to know and distinguish every part of the law. The lawyer comes to Jesus and asks: **"Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"** We know it's a bad question and it's the wrong question. What shall I do?

This notion coming from the lawyer is all about works righteous. What must I do to inherit eternal life? Which laws must I follow? We want Jesus to respond that it's already done for you—you don't have to do anything.

But Jesus doesn't respond this way; he responds to this man's question with another question. Jesus knows that this lawyer has certain idols in his life.

Jesus loves this man enough that he doesn't want the false idols to stand. The same is true for each one of us—whatever our idols are, God says: "You shall have no other Gods before me." We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things; above all people, above all places, above all ideas, and ideals.

This man's idol is the Law. Jesus and his great love for him begins to break down and crush this idol. In verse 26, **Jesus said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?"**

The lawyer answered Jesus based on what Scripture says. Verses 27-28: **“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.”**

This is the summary of the 10 commandments; our relationship with God and our relationship with our neighbor. How does Jesus respond? In verse 28, Jesus said to him, **“You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”**

This man thinks he is already doing these things, that he thinks he has a great understanding of what the Law is and that he is a good neighbor, and a good citizen.

Jesus points him back to his god; if you want to be saved follow the law to perfection, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Jesus is speaking the truth to this lawyer. If you are perfect you have no need for a Savior.

In verse 29 **But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"** On the surface it sounds like a great question, but what the man is really asking is: Who is not my neighbor?

I want to know who my neighbor is so I can define it really narrowly. If it's only the person who is living next door to me, or if it's only this person or that person, then I can feel good about myself. Then I can feel self-justified, then I don't have to feel guilty about all those I haven't helped.

How many times have we failed to help our neighbor in need? It's easy to always put yourself first, so you don't have to get involved with other people's problems. God's Word tells us to first examine ourselves, and repent of all our sins.

Because of his great love for you, Jesus died, so you can live. He rose from the grave so all your sins can be forgiven, and you can have eternal life.

Jesus then tells the story of the Good Samaritan; a man on a journey who is beaten and robbed and left for dead. A priest and a Levite walk by him—two people who are very knowledgeable of the Law; they see the man and walk by on the other side, but they do nothing. The men show no mercy, or care, or love, or compassion.

Then a Samaritan comes by, he has compassion on the traveler. A Samaritan was not considered to be very smart, and probably didn't know the Law.

In verses 34-35 **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.'**

The man wasn't dead, but his wounds were serious, and unless someone saved him, he would probably die. The Samaritan shows compassion, the Samaritan is the savior, the Samaritan is Jesus.

In all the pages of the New Testament the word compassion is only ascribed to one person- the person and work of Jesus.

They didn't think Jesus knew the letter of the law, but Jesus was the letter of the Law. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law—pointing to our need for a Savior and our inability to save ourselves. Jesus is the Good Samaritan.

After Jesus tells the story to the man he asks a question in verse 36: **Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?"** The lawyer replied in verse 27 **"The one who showed him mercy."**

Jesus loved this lawyer enough to tear down his idol of self-righteousness and justification according to the law. Jesus loved him enough to point him to the only one who shows true compassion and mercy, the one who is standing in front of him—God in the flesh. The only way he can show mercy is if God first showed mercy to him.

The Good Samaritan isn't a story to get you to feel bad when you drive by someone on the road or walk by someone in the nursing home. The story of the Good Samaritan is God loving you to expose idols in your life. At times we can think that if we do enough—God will love us.

When we think what we do makes us right before the Lord, our good works have become a false idol that must be smashed by the hammer of God's Law.

But the Law only accuses; the Law doesn't give life, it only brings death. The law cannot help those wounded in the ditch which is us-the law cannot save us. There is only one Good Samaritan-Jesus Christ. He came in the flesh and came to us in compassion.

Jesus took all of our sins onto himself when he was bleeding and dying on the Cross. After 3 days he rose again offering forgiveness full and free.

He has bound our wounds in the waters of Holy Baptism. He has fed us with the bread and wine of his very body and blood in the Lord's Supper.

He has brought us to the Inn of the Church where God's Word is proclaimed in its truth and purity and the sacraments administered according to the promises of God. Jesus has given us the most important thing- the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting.

May God bless us as individuals and families, as a congregation, and as a church body, so that the compassion of the Good Samaritan would abound in us and among us and as that happens, God's works of mercy will abound in our daily lives.

May God grant it to us all. Amen