

## “The Living Neighbor”

**Scripture: Luke 10:25-37**

Key Verses: 37 He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Theme: We are commanded to love God and love our neighbors. The neighbor who lives in Christ lives fully as the one who loves and is loved – sometimes as the one who loves and other times as the one who is loved.

### 1) Introduction

- a) This morning we’ll be taking another look at the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Funny thing is, though, neither Luke, nor Jesus, ever calls him the GOOD Samaritan. Just, “the Samaritan.”
- b) And the reality of the context in which Jesus finds himself, and Luke finds himself, is that Samaritans were people living near-by. And like I told the kids this morning, those who lived nearby are our neighbors.
- c) One of the great things about moving to a new town is that we get new neighbors. Not that I didn’t like our old neighbors, but having new neighbors is kind of cool.
- d) On one side we have Tom and Sally Baer, who we’ve known for a little whole back in our seminary days.
- e) On the other side are Joe and Kelly Osborne and Sarah, and a few cows and horses...
- f) Next to them are Casey and Dottie Thomas, and Courtney, and bulldog Maggie...
- g) At first glance, they couldn’t BE anymore different from each other. But they are my neighbors. I didn’t CHOOSE to have them as our neighbors, any more than they chose US as THEIR neighbors.
- h) But God, in His amazing providence, has put us together for better or for worse and I’m very thankful for it. I want to get to know them all better.
- i) One thing that strikes me about being new to a neighborhood is that all our neighbors knew US before we knew them. They knew that WE were going to be their neighbors before WE knew we were going to be there neighbors.

- j) And so the beginning of the relationship was sort of one-sided. WE are the ones that need help right now...WE are the ones who don't know anybody. WE are the ones who are needy, you could say.
- k) And part of being a neighbor is not only caring for those who are your neighbors, but also allowing your neighbors to take care of you.
- l) Our gospel lesson for today from Luke 10 is a parable about neighbors...it's a parable about the people in our lives and the ones NOT YET in our lives.
- m) Turn with me in your Bibles to Luke chapter 10, starting in verse 25...
- n) Pray...

## 2) Scripture

### a) Verse 25a

- i) I'm going to stop there for just a minute and take us a little deeper into this text.
- ii) Luke writes, "just then"...and whenever there's a "just then" there has to be something before it, right? You can't have something be "just then" without something happening "just before".
- iii) So what was it that happen just before the "just then"
- iv) Well, go back with me to chapter 10, verse 1. What did Jesus do?
- v) Jesus sent out seventy people (evangelists) into the towns to which Jesus would be going and COMMANDED them to (verse 8) eat what is set before you (anybody's parents ever say that to them?), cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."
- vi) So Jesus sent them out...GO! PREACH! HEAL!
- vii) And then Jesus warned them that there was going to be resistance...people were going to REJECT the message of God's kingdom...they were going to reject THEM...
- viii) But not everyone...and the seventy came back. And when they returned they reported to Jesus (verse 17), "Lord, in your name even the

DEMONS submit to us!” They were SHOCKED that when they did what he asked and did it in HIS name that nothing was impossible.

- ix) And Jesus rejoiced, not just because they got it and were excited to be in ministry, but because they did with their hearts and were passionate about it.
- x) And in verse 23-24, Jesus told the Twelve (the Disciples), “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.”
- xi) Just then...as if to say that this lawyer was interrupting Jesus, almost...Just then, a lawyer stood up to TEST Jesus.
- xii) Now, how many times in the Bible to people test Jesus and have him fail the test? Never, right? So this lawyer stands up to pick a fight with Jesus.
- xiii) Now this LAWYER is not our modern day LAWYER. The LAW was the Jewish Torah (basically our Old Testament). And so this LAWYER was an expert in the Torah...he was a religious leader, the guy who made sure people were LIVING out the Torah in the correct ways.
- xiv) If it said you couldn't work on the Sabbath, then this LAWYER would interpret that for you. Can I wash my socks on the Sabbath? I don't know...let's ask the LAWYER. He connected the LAW with LIFE.
- xv) And so, I believe, he genuinely wanted to know what Jesus thought about the ultimate question in LIFE...
- xvi) And so he asks Jesus (verse 25)...

**b) Verse 25b-26**

- i) Over and over again in the Bible, whenever someone asks Jesus a question, he answers it, not with a straightforward answer, but with another question. Two reasons why. Some people do that because they don't know the answer...like when my kids ask me a question about my teenage years. Dad, did you ever date girls in middle school? And instead of saying, “Duh, of course!” I would simply ask (basically to

- avoid the subject), “do you want to date somebody honey (as I move toward the closet to check if my gun is where I put it).
- ii) I’m guessing that Jesus doesn’t fall into that category...Jesus knows the answer, right? But he wants the person asking the question to think about the implication of the question and understand the answer more fully. The other reason Jesus asks a question when ASKED a question is because it was cultural. That’s simply how they communicated, especially if the person being asked the question is a teacher.
  - iii) And so Jesus says, “What’s written?” and “What do you read?” Two separate questions...just because it’s written doesn’t mean you have read it. If you have dust on your Bible that might be an indication of an opportunity to read it more.
  - iv) It’s written in order to be read and understood...Jesus was asking both questions to see what this guy knew and understood...
  - v) But he answers well...verse 27

c) **Verse 27-28**

- i) Mr. Lawyer knew his stuff...which Jesus expected because he KNEW that the Lawyer would have memorized the Torah. He would know it inside and out...
- ii) And so Jesus says, “Good job! You got it!”
- iii) “Do THAT and you will live.”
- iv) Again, notice the “live”. The question was, “How do I inherit eternal LIFE”
- v) And the command from Jesus is...Love God and love your neighbor and you will live.
- vi) But this guy wasn’t happy with that answer...silly lawyer. He wanted to justify himself...verse 29

d) **Verse 29**

- i) Who is my neighbor? See ‘cause deep down inside, this lawyer KNEW that he had some enemies...he knew there were some people he didn’t

like. In fact, there were lots of people that weren't JEWISH and if you weren't Jewish then you created some problems for the Jews. And one group in particular, due to their cross-breeding between the Jews and the Gentiles (those who weren't Jewish), was the Samaritans.

- ii) And this lawyer had probably been asked a hundred times by people, "Are those people my neighbors?"
- iii) When we pulled into the driveway in Panama, we had the same question...not because we didn't like our neighbors...we didn't KNOW our neighbors. And the unknown is scary and we tend to withdraw.
- iv) And Jesus, sensing this tension and knowing where the lawyer's question was leading told this parable (this made up story about something in real life...this metaphor)...

e) **Verse 30-37**

- i) Twice now, the lawyer has answered the question correctly and Jesus has told him to "Go and do it"
- ii) We don't know what the Lawyer decided to do...maybe he did. Probably he didn't, because when we get stuck in a certain way of thinking and doing, change can be very difficult.
- iii) Jesus asks us to think in a radically different way...he asks us to count the cost and then follow him.

**3) Application**

- i) The main character in this parable is usually the Samaritan who helped the man in the ditch...that's why he's gotten the title, "The GOOD Samaritan". You know, he's the neighbor that we all want to try to be like.
- ii) But let me challenge us this morning to consider another character in the parable this morning...the neighbor in the ditch.
- iii) You can't be a neighbor without someone on the other end of the relationship. And being neighbors with the deer and squirrels doesn't count, sorry guys.

- iv) There was an old man once who was talking with his pastor and he said, “I DO love my neighbor as myself...I’m single and I live in the mountains.”
- v) And even though we want to be the neighbor who helped the man in trouble, what would it look like to picture yourself as the man being helped.
- vi) If we try to answer the question, “Who is my neighbor?” from the perspective of the man in the ditch, the answer would be as simple as, “Anyone willing to help me” Anyone! Everyone!
- vii) Are there times in your life when you have been in the ditch? Are there times when life has thrown you down and you feel beat up and robbed? Emotionally? Physically? Spiritually?
- viii) Have you had someone there to kneel down at your side, to assess your wounds, and carry you to safety?
- ix) That person is your neighbor...your living neighbor. That person is being Jesus Christ in your life at that moment.
- x) And being a neighbor sometimes looks like you helping other people...but at other times it looks like you being helped?
- xi) Ultimately, Jesus is the one that shows us how to be a neighbor both one that is helping others and one that is being helped. Jesus teaches us to love others...Jesus teaches us to serve and care...Jesus teaches us to listen and use our hands and feet to care for those who can’t care for themselves.
- xii) Jesus also died on the cross so that we could humbly receive the gift of salvation and new life...eternal life.
- xiii) And if you are at a point in your life right now where you feel like the Samaritan who is willing to help those who are in need, AWESOME! Keep up the good work and never grow weary in doing good.
- xiv) On the other hand, if you are the one in the ditch right now, even if you have a hard time admitting it to others or to yourself, then a Savior is waiting to kneel down and pick you up. And Jesus does that first by

offering you forgiveness and freedom from the bondage of sin, and then puts people in your life who are ready to walk with you.

#### **4) Conclusion**

- a) My neighbors are missionaries, lay leaders, and folks who have a heart for those in need. I encourage you to get to know YOUR physical neighbors.
- b) The LIVING NEIGHBOR is both the guy that was helped and the guy that was doing the helping...sometimes we are helped and sometimes we help.
- c) And when we do that in the precious name of Jesus, with the power and leading of the Holy Spirit, then we, too, can rejoice in what God is doing through us and in us.
- d) Jesus calls us to serve and be served with grace out of our singular love for Him.
- e) I know this is my first Sunday preaching and I know that I don't know most of you very well at all, but I want to invite you to pray with me...
- f) And if you feel God speaking to your heart, which I trust he will, I ask you to give your life to Christ...to be lifted up by your neighbor in order to be the living neighbor that God intended for you...
- g) Let's pray...