

WHOSE NEIGHBOR AM I?

Luke 10:21-37

The superiority of love to intelligence or ritual.

ISRAEL'S FORMAL REJECTION OF THEIR MESSIAH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ARE PRESENTED AS JESUS TRAVELS TOWARD JERUSALEM TO DIE (9:51-19:27).

Rejection in Samaria 9:51-56

Cost of discipleship 9:57-62

Privilege of discipleship 10:1-20

SUPERIORITY OF LOVE 10:21-42 –for those who would follow Jesus.

The effectiveness of the apostles' ministry causes Christ to reflect on the privilege received by those who choose to follow Him.

Privileges aren't the most important thing in life for His followers!

LOVE AND TRUST ARE THE PRIMARY BASES OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM

The gospel is NOT for the great and the powerful,
but for those who love God and man.

SUPERIORITY OF LOVE RELATIONSHIP OVER:

1. **BRAINS-INTELLIGENCE 10:21-24**

The understanding of the good news is not for the great minds, nor for the powerful leaders of society, but for the otherwise insignificant ones who love and trust Him.

Spurgeon: "Blind men are little pleased with color, and deaf men care little for music.

Human wisdom cannot make a man without eyes see the light."

God's truth is revealed to "children"; NOT to the "wise".

It's not revealed to the wise and educated. 10:21

It's not revealed to the rich and powerful. 10:23-24

It's revealed to children—to simple people who trust Him. 10:21-22

Mark Twain was traveling with his daughter. In every city they visited, he was honored by royalty, by famous artists and scientists. Near the end of the trip, his daughter said to him, "Papa, you know everybody but God, don't you?"

It's to those who, like babes, are anxious to see and hear.

—who want to know the truth.

—who come without barriers, eager to learn and willing to believe what they hear.

—who want to hear what God says.

Luke 7:29-30: 1 Cor. 1:26-29

Ironsides: "I remember well when ... I met a most interesting servant of Christ ... near death from tuberculosis.... "My stepfather had pitched a tent out in the orchard, and he was staying there when I was taken to see him.... I spent one of the most precious hours of my life, listening to the kindly advice and opening up of the Word of God from the lips of this dear dying man, as he turned from scripture to scripture and brought out precious truths I had never seen. I asked him, "Where did you learn all this? Can you suggest a book I could read which would make these things plain to me? He replied, "My dear young brother, I learned these things on my knees on the mud floor of a little thatched cottage in the north of Ireland as I waited on God over His Word. You may read many books and find helpful things in them, but you will never learn the truth of God in the same fulness as you can learn it on your knees over an open Bible." As I left I felt I had been in the presence of the Lord, for I had listened to one who was taught of God."

*I know that feeling—my recollection of **time spent with Carl Armerding.***

"We all need to take the role of babes to whom God may reveal His secrets. He delights to fill the hungry with good things, but the rich He sends away empty."

[2nd thing our Lord shows love to be superior to:]

2. **RITUAL 10:25-37**

Ironsides: "This to my mind is one of the most misunderstood passages in the Gospel records... People generally think of the parable of the Good Samaritan as simply setting forth a lesson in concern for those less fortunate than we. Recently someone said to me, "I do not need an atonement for sins. The religion of the Good Samaritan is good enough for me." It was to show a lawyer his need of a Savior that Jesus related the parable of the Good Samaritan. What we have before us is the story of a man who was trying to maintain his own righteousness and did not recognize his lost condition."

This was **not a sincere inquiry.**

The lawyer was out to trap Jesus.

The encounter demonstrates that eternal life is *not based on reciting doctrinal formulas, nor observing legalistic rituals, but on a personal relationship with God, founded on love, and demonstrated especially toward those who suffer.*

The lawyer's question: "What must I DO to inherit eternal life?"

10:25— Now isn't *this* good news? **10:26-28**

All you have to do is:

Love God with every fiber of your being and

Love those around you as much as you love yourself.

That's **ALL** you have to do!!!

Just **do that**, and **keep on doing it continuously and consistently**,
and you'll inherit eternal life!

With that, the lawyer comes back again: "Wait a minute, Jesus! How can you do that? **Just who is my neighbor anyway?**" **10:29**

Notice the passage says, he's *trying to justify himself*.

Instead of throwing himself on the mercy of God

Luke 18:9-14; Rom. 10:1-4; he tries to justify himself.

"Let's get bogged down in a definition of who my neighbor is."—a typical pharisaical out!

Tradition limits our responsibility to our neighbor to other religious Jews.

Our Lord removes that cop out completely. **10:30-36**

Your neighbor is the outcast with a need sitting in the path in front of you.

It wasn't a religious Jew helping another religious Jew.

It wasn't a religious Jew helping a Samaritan.

It wasn't even a Samaritan helping another Samaritan.

It was a Samaritan helping a Jew who had been ignored by his fellow Jews!

The two people you would expect to care about their neighbor, the two religious leaders, don't want to lower themselves to get their hands dirty!

Only the despised outcast—this “second-class citizen”—from Samaria cares enough to do something.

Years ago the Prince of Wales visited the capital of India. A barrier was set up to keep back the masses who wanted a glimpse of royalty. When the prince arrived, he shook hands with dignitaries. Then, looking over their heads to the crowds, he said, "Take down those barriers!" They were quickly removed, and all the people, regardless of rank, had access to the heir of the British empire. Some time later when the prince came to that district again, 10,000 outcasts waited under a banner: "The Prince of the Outcasts."

Though he is an outcast, the Samaritan shows the kind of love needed to meet the condition. Why?

He's conscious of God's grace toward him—the undeserving!

The Samaritan loves those who hate him.

He risks his life and spends his money (2 days wages) to help one who would never do it for him if the roles were reversed!

He is never publicly rewarded, and doesn't seem to care.

Now, you go out and imitate him. **10:37**

Jesus turns the question around.

The "religious" man wants to know just how far he has to go.

"Who all do I have to include as my neighbor?"

The Samaritan, moved by compassion, is concerned about whose neighbor he's going to be.

He recognizes that he's a neighbor to the needy person he comes across on the trail.

The big question is: "To whom will I make myself a neighbor?"

It has nothing to do with geography, citizenship, class, race or religion!

*While the issue is **not helping your neighbor**, but rather, **what real religion looks like**, there is a lesson for us on how we ought to minister to others, if we follow a true religion.*

Wherever people need us, we can show mercy to others and be neighbors, even as Jesus did.

Now He speaks to the lawyer—and to us: **"Go and do likewise!"**

Wiersbe: "The lawyer wants to discuss "neighbor" in a general way; Jesus forces him to consider a specific person in need. How easy it is for us to talk about abstract ideals and fail to help solve concrete problems. We can discuss things like "poverty," "the homeless" and "unemployment" and yet never personally help feed a hungry family or help somebody find a job."

"Of course the lawyer wants to make the issue complex and philosophical, but Jesus makes it simple and practical. He moves it from duty to love, from debating to doing. . . .

D.L. Moody was attending a convention and asked singer Ira Sankey to meet him at 6:00 p.m. on a certain street corner. Sankey began to sing on a box at that corner and a crowd began to gather. "Moody spoke briefly, inviting the crowd to follow him to the nearby opera house. Before long the auditorium was filled, and the evangelist preached the gospel to the spiritually hungry people."

"When the delegates to the convention started to arrive, Moody stopped preaching and said, "Now we must close as the brethren of the convention wish to come and discuss the question, "How to reach the masses."""

TWO KEY POINTS OF APPLICATION:

1. To the unsaved—the message to the young lawyer is still true:

Lots of luck!

You'll never be able to DO it!

2. To God's people—re: true religion:

Helping others who will never be able to help you back.

Checking the illustration data base on "the Good Samaritan" text, I was impressed with the many ways people helped others—like the good Samaritan.

- A policeman helps a boy about to jump off a building—and adopts him.
- A doctor does surgery to help a badly deformed person.
- A rich person gives money sacrificially to help the poor.
- A mother risks her life to save her son.
- A businessman started a S.S. class for poor rowdy street boys.
- A nurse committed her life to bandaging wounded soldiers on the battlefield.
- *A bunch of young people help feed the homeless under the viaducts.*
- A friend wrote a letter (or made a phone call) to help another friend in need.
- A church adopts a family of a person dying from AIDS and ministers to them.
- *A couple takes a pregnant teenager into their home and ministers to her.*
- *A church provides Christmas for the families of prisoners in a local prison.*
- *People minister to elderly by providing rides, or taking small children for a "cheer-up" visit.*
- **Church creates benevolence fund to provide for people going through hard times.**

This is what true religion is all about!

God has given each of us gifts and abilities to use for the good of someone who will never be able to pay us back.

We use them for others because we love God first—and love our "neighbor" as much as we love ourselves.

We can sit around arguing, as the Pharisees did, about who our neighbor is, and just how far we ought to carry this, if we want to.

Or, we can minister to the "neighbor" God puts in our path today!

Who is your neighbor?

What are you going to do about it?

"A young boy was walking along a beach, covered with starfish, washed ashore by the thousands. One by one he was throwing them back into the ocean. 'What are you doing?' an old man asks the boy. 'If these starfish don't get back in the water, they'll die,' the boy says. 'You'll never be able to save them all. What does it matter?' The boy looks at the starfish in his hand. 'Well, sir,' he says as he throws the starfish into the waves, 'It matters to this one.'"

O TO BE LIKE THEE!

O to be like Thee! blessed Redeemer, This is my constant longing and prayer;

Gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures, Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to wear.

O to be like Thee! full of compassion, Loving, forgiving, tender and kind;

Helping the helpless, cheering the fainting, Seeking the wandering sinner to find.

O to be like Thee! while I am pleading, Pour out Thy Spirit, fill with Thy love;

Make me a temple meet for Thy dwelling, Fit me for life and heaven above.

REFRAIN: O to be like Thee, O to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art!

Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness **-Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.**