

"Things Accomplished Among Us" (Luke 1:1)

Selected Reflections From Luke

Self-justification

Luke 10:25-37

One of the most familiar passages in the gospel of Luke is the story Jesus told recorded in Luke 10, *The Parable of the Good Samaritan*. What introduces that parable should not be overlooked.

There was this religious expert who decided to put Jesus to the test. His question was "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Well, that's a good question and especially the part that assumes individual action: "What shall I do?" You may recognize that question from Acts chapter two or Acts 22:10. When people hear the gospel and want to respond, this question is proper: "What Shall I Do To Be Saved?"

No problem with the question. Jesus replied, "What is written in the Law?" The man answered correctly, so Jesus said: "do this, and you will live."

The man had a follow-up: "Who is my neighbor?" But Luke tells us something about his follow-up. Luke says he was desiring to justify himself. This is where Jesus spoke the parable of the Good Samaritan, then repeated the challenge: "You go, and do likewise."

One of the deterrents to good thinking, learning and Bible study is this desire to justify yourself. First, man has no such power or authority. Romans 8:33 says, "It is God who justifies." We cannot save ourselves by our power. Sin renders us weak and unable to chart our own pathway. Self-justification is out of the question already.

But I should like to warn each of us, that if we listen to Jesus through Scripture – with this desire to justify ourselves, we are blocking the power of the Word to convict us and take us to repentance. Humility and firm objectivity must be our attitude when we approach the teachings of Scripture. If we form the habit of dismissing ourselves from conviction and application, the reading of Scripture does not have its intended outcome.

Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only.

-Warren E. Berkley