

Who Is My Neighbor? November 15, 2017

Luke 10:25-37 - And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" 27 So he answered and said, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." 29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.'

36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" 37 And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Historically, Jewish descendants and Samaritans did not get along. I believe that is why Jesus used this example. Hatred and discrimination is not new with this current generation. It has existed since the beginning. Whether we choose to believe it or not, discrimination also exists within the church even to this day. I have seen it (though subtle as it may be it still exists).

In the above parable, two men who were of the faith passed by this wounded man who was probably a brethren and left him there. The first was a Priest and the second was a Levite (remember the Levites were responsible for all activity in the Temple). In today's terms the two men that passed by were people actively

functioning and responsible for church activities. It was a Samaritan who stopped and tended to the battered and broken man. The Samaritan possibly was not of the faith as the Priest and the Levite were.

Look at the answer to the question 'Who is my neighbor?'. The answer is 'He who showed mercy...'. Jesus did not dispute this answer. He said 'Go and do likewise'. We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves. This means to show mercy to ourselves and to those around us. Whom we show mercy to and who shows mercy to us is our neighbor (brethren). Who is your neighbor?

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