**7/13/25**

**Completely Radical Economy**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**Luke 10:25-37 (NRSVUE)**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

I would venture that many of you out there know the story that we heard from our Gospel today all too well. For that fact, I am all but certain that you could probably retell it in some way, shape, or form. I would also be willing to bet that you would manage to get out the very same points in relation to the all too popular story of the Good Samaritan.

However, I am here to challenge you and your mindset a little bit. I bet that there is probably a twist or two to the story of these travelers that you may have simply never considered or even encountered before. For it is possible that you may have only looked at this story through the lens of who did right and who did wrong. However, that is only merely scratching the surface. So, if you happened to have the chance to slow down and explore just a little bit deeper, then you might have come to realization that this story does not even kick off or exist without the lawyer’s presence. The lawyer has general questions of a teacher, a Rabbi, and Jesus is more than willing to answer them.

So, first off, the lawyer inquires what must be done in order to inherit eternal life. The lawyer provided an answer once Jesus turned his very question back on him. He put his critical thinking skills to use while even providing an answer from scripture. The lawyer of course knew the greatest commandment, and he recognized that he had the answer to his very own question all along. However, if you happen to know a lawyer or two, then you know that they are not typically done with one good question, one defense, or even one rebuttal. This lawyer decides to press on in typical fashion to seek further proof, justification, and confirmation. The lawyer was still hungry for more, and I reassure you that he was not being spiteful as many may think. This behavior our discourse is just an extremely normal practice of that particular profession. So, we hear that the lawyer’s next question where he inquires who his neighbor even is. In response, Jesus rolls up his sleeves, and it is story time. We get examples and further critical thinking here. As a matter of fact, “Instead of describing who is a neighbor, he discusses how to be a neighbor. He switches the conversation from neighbor as an object you decide to love to neighbor as the subject—how you (actually) embody being a neighbor.” (4) Jesus then puts the question back on the lawyer for another answer. Which he seemingly knew the entire time despite not wanting to admit to it, or even being willing to actually humble himself. For going out and showing mercy was indeed the answer, but there really is more to just this answer in the **completely radical economy** of Jesus.

Well, now that I have drawn out the lawyer’s role in this story, I would venture that there may be several of you out there that are extremely committed to scripture. You may have a very analytical lens, and you may have caught all of this and put it all together already. However, I am not all too certain that you may have bridged it together with the **completely radical economy** presented by Jesus in building relationships. Let alone with those that we do not expect or desire to, or the importance and need to even care for those same folks. To top it all off we are called to do so in no particularly prescribed way other than through the very same acts of kindness, love, compassion, mercy, and grace that Christ first showed the disciples and people back then, along with those of us that explore these scriptures to this very day. Stewardship of all creation is the ultimate exchange, that far outweighs any transaction that can be made, but yes it might possibly take money, time, and even effort, it also takes the right mindset, and even more so… the right heart. To add more to this mindset of a **completely radical economy** that I am speaking of we must also remember that, “We are called to nourish our own relationship with God and to love our neighbor as ourselves, but not instead of ourselves.” (12)

So, let’s press pause here. Let’s allow that mindset and mentality to simmer a little bit in our hearts and minds. I also want to take this time to show my appreciation like I try and remember to do every week. I do not want to get so excited about the story and the sermon that I just push on. I want to thank you all for your continued commitment to this community of faith that has gathered here on the conference call and in these very pews, as well as for giving me another opportunity to explore and wrestle with these very scriptures as I deconstructed and reconstructed this story over and over again. I also want to thank you for letting me work in, with, and through it all with the Holy Spirit right alongside of me as my guide so that I would be able to feed you and myself yet again. For without you and your very presence I may not have done the work here, and I may have really missed a vital point or two. So, thanks be to God that we are gathered together here in this very space!

Now, I am also going to charge you and myself with one more thing before we dive back into this Gospel Reading. It is my desire for all of us to go out there in the world and share this story with just one more person and give them the very same opportunity that we were granted here today. I want us to share this story with someone who could not be here, or who may not come to church regularly, or even with someone that does not even come to church at all. Allow them a chance to hear and wrestle with things about the Good Samaritan story just like you and I. Just go out and plant the seed, and more importantly, let God do the rest!

Alright, now that the story and alternative mindset has simmered a little bit. Now that the thank you and charge are in place. Let’s dig back in and explore what I was even talking about when I brought up the very term of Jesus’ **completely radical economy** in the first place.

So, as you know, I recently spent a week at Seminary in three intensive classes that were three hours long each session. I will say that even though this was my second set of three summer classes, somehow at nine hours a day we found ways to study and break things down in a manner or two that I was not very familiar with. I will also admit that one of the best statements in one of my classes that still rings in my head to this very day is from Professor Martin Otto-Zimmann. He said that, “Stewardship becomes an outward expression of an inward transformation.” That is some deep stuff right there! That needs some unpacking for sure, and unpacking we will do.

That statement marks out to me that the parable just does not provide a story of three people that chose to do something or not, but it is an entirely different way to look at Stewardship. Of course, we can pick out the fact that the Samaritan paid two denarii to the innkeeper, and he would pay more once he returned for those services and other things rendered. Although, let me actually elaborate on my point that I made earlier and even go a little further. “He did not give up his life for the stranger, but rather shared life with him. And further, he made a referral!” (12) We need to remember that our society, our concept of stewardship, should never solely be one of a transactional or financial basis. Our mentality of stewardship should be about that tagline we hear all too often of being about our “time, talent, and treasure” all mingled together and all served out. All those aspects are precisely what the Samaritan man delivers in this parable, and yet that is despite him being the least likely person to even be doing so! The two other people, the Priest and the Levite, had the very same principles in their respective doctrines of faith that they studied and practiced, but they chose to keep on going with their lives and not live them out. There was no inward transformation for those two, but there was for the Samaritan! Their mindset must have been too small, or too reserved for people that were not like them, or quite possibly only for times and places that they might receive glory and praise for doing precisely what this Samaritan did regardless. It is a shame, yet it is a reality of every day life. Now, I do not want you thinking that I am coming down on my brothers that did not choose to step up, but it is also really hard not to. Good thing God handles all things and has all things figured out even through those figures we might expect the least from.

I bet that just like the Priest and the Levite we manage to forget that, “Our job is and always has been to take people where they are and lead them closer to Christ.” (10) If we are not the very example set forth here in this parable by the Samaritan, then a person just may never encounter Christ in their lives at the very moment that they may need it the most! They do not have to be beat up and hurt in the physical manner that this person in the ditch was. The world, life circumstances, health, finances, people, or any number of things could have done all the beating up in various other ways. Being a child of God is not just about the clothes we put on, or the practices we observe, but it is more so about the most basic and raw aspects of life that have us living out and being a part of that **completely radical economy**. We are to care for and love one another, no matter what, no matter where, and no matter how. Loving any of our neighbors in need can be extremely messy and even rather inconvenient, but it is a requirement and expectation of the Christian life that Jesus modeled to us. Furthermore, it is the way to love the Lord our God by putting words into action. In a **completely radical economy** we may very well be moving outside of the proverbial box and doing and being things we may have never even considered before.

So, as we close things off here today, I want to provide you with another charge. I hope that you will consider the words and mindset that you heard. I hope that you go ahead and live this example out to the fullest by showing kindness, love, compassion, mercy, and grace to someone that you may have never even considered doing so for before. Let us remind ourselves of our calling and purpose on this here ball of mud, and that is to care for and love our neighbor, just as if they were Jesus present right here with us. Let us remember that everyone is our neighbor no matter what they look like, where they came from, or what their need is. Let us act in a similar and yet counter-cultural way in the **completely radical economy** we spoke of today precisely as Jesus did. Hopefully this will bring us back into balance, and it will be so normal that we all are out there being “little Christs” precisely as Martin Luther promoted.

**Amen****.**

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 July 13th, 2025

 5th Sunday after Pentecost

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 Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

 We are left with the much harder question: “Will I choose to be a neighbor?”

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 Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

 The Parable of the Good Samaritan has all the makings of a good story: conflict,

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 In the Lukan context, the parable of the Good Samaritan is prompted by a dialogue

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 The lawyer asks good questions and gives good answers.

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**Luke 10:25-37 (NRSVUE)**

Jesus is challenged to explain what is involved in obeying the greatest commandment. He tells a parable rich in surprises: those expected to show pity display hard hearts while the lowly give and receive unexpected and lavish mercy.

25 An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” 27 He answered, “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.” 28 And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

29 But wanting to vindicate himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 30 Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and took off, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while traveling came upon him, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, treating them with oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him, and when I come back I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ 36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” 37 He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”