

## Proper 10 C – Go and Do Likewise

1. Looking back at all of the sermons I've written for this week of the church year, I was shocked to realize that I have never done a sermon on the Good Samaritan
  - a. Along with the prodigal son this parable is unique to Luke and one of the best known and loved of Jesus' parables – even by nonbelievers!
    - i. I think it's because it resonates, like the prodigal, with the image of ourselves as we would like to be
    - ii. It illuminates the best qualities of human nature – selfless care of a stranger at the cost to oneself.
  - b. During the past several years of COVID and social unrest we've seen examples of it over and over
    - i. The medical personnel and first responders who continued to work at risk to themselves in order to save others
    - ii. Or an international example like the citizens of Poland and other European countries who have opened their homes to have Ukrainians live with them
  - c. Most of us will never be called upon to be that kind of Good Samaritan
    - i. Many people are good neighbors to others by giving them some of their extra tomatoes or by shopping or cooking for a sick friend nearby.
    - ii. For our friends, we may go out of our way in time and expense to help them with a project or out of a jam and even more significant struggles
  - d. But for a stranger? We rarely do more than acknowledge their problems seldom willing to sacrifice time and money let alone our lives to help.
    - i. That's what the parable of the Good Samaritan is all about – sacrificing oneself for the sake of stranger
    - ii. And it's not just a good moral tale (though it is that) it's a reflection of God's love for us, the lengths to which He was willing to go to save us
2. Let's look more closely at this well-known parable and see it in a whole new light – not just an example for us to follow but a revelation of what God has done for us
  - a. In our text, as we often happens in the Gospels, a lawyer questions Jesus regarding what must be done to inherit eternal life.
    - i. Jesus points him back to the Law and asks him how he understands it.
    - ii. The lawyer summarizes by quoting Deut 6:5, "**You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might,**" and Lev 19:18, "**you shall love your neighbor as yourself.**"
    - iii. When Jesus tells the lawyer do these things and you will live, the lawyer asks who his neighbor is.
  - b. That's the real question isn't it? How far does our duty to love and serve others go, what are its boundaries?

- i. As sinners it is not natural to love those we haven't met, and we don't even love those we know as well as we should
  - ii. When the Law makes unqualified statements like these it is impossible to live up to them, we know we can't love and serve *everybody* fully all the time.
  - iii. For the person who lives under the law it becomes necessary to qualify the Law in order to provide an escape hatch, a loophole where you're not bound by its stipulations so that you're not guilty.
- c. Jesus then tells this parable to illustrate who He means, **"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead."** (Luk 10:30)
  - i. We assume the man was probably Jewish, though it's not stated.
  - ii. Two Jews, who were supposed to know the Law about loving God and loving their neighbor as stated above, pass by the man without stopping,
  - iii. We don't know why...perhaps they were trying to avoid being made ritually unclean by coming in contact with what could be a dead body – they both served in the Temple
  - iv. But then, of all things a Samaritan, an enemy of the Jews, from whom no good was expected, stops and binds the man's wounds and cares for him at his own expense until he's better.
- d. This parable like so many of Jesus' parables was meant to show not only human hypocrisy in not caring for people but also to reveal God's character
  - i. In our sinful condition we are like the man who had fallen amongst the robbers
  - ii. Our sin has rendered us beaten and dead by the side of the road, unable to help ourselves
  - iii. Further, we are unclean, unworthy of help, our sin would defile one who is clean
  - iv. And yet the sinless Son of God, deigned to take on the likeness of sinful human flesh, born of a woman, born under the Law to redeem/save those who are under the Law
  - v. He provided for us not by paying for lodging until we were better but exchanging His life for ours – He died so that we might live.
- 3. So, when Jesus asked, **"Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?"** (Luk 10:36) the answer was obvious it couldn't be avoided
  - a. The lawyer then replies, **"The one who showed him mercy,"** Jesus said to him, **"You go, and do likewise."** (Luk 10:37)

- i. For us having received that kind of mercy, that kind of grace, He tells us the same thing He told the lawyer who was questioning Him **“Now you go and do likewise.”** (Lk 10:37)
- ii. We have been shown mercy so that we can show mercy through the power of the Holy Spirit, doing what doesn’t come naturally.
- iii. Christ came on a rescue mission to save us when we couldn’t save ourselves and having been saved, we’re sent back out to do the same.
- b. I just read an article on Christianpost that relayed the conversion of a Satanic priest in S. Africa to Christ.
  - i. Why did he convert? Because he received unqualified, unconditional love from a Christian, something he had never experienced (sadly)
  - ii. The article states **“I’ve never known unconditional love in my whole life...there’s only four Christians in my whole life that have shown me what unconditional love is. I want to thank those four people. Words cannot express what you have done for me...You have showed me everything. You have showed me the love of Christ. I have seen it in you,”**<sup>i</sup>
- c. Many in the church still ask, “Who is my neighbor?” seeking to qualify who Christ died for and with whom we should share the message.
  - i. Christ died so that all might come to a knowledge of Him and live.
  - ii. What part of, **“For God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only Son, that *whoever* believes in him should not perish but have eternal life”** (Joh 3:16) sounds like it didn’t include everyone?
  - iii. Our neighbors are every other human being, Christ died for all of them.
  - iv. Our mission is to **“Go and do likewise,”** not just for those who are like us but people like that Satanist, or those wrestling with gender identity, or hateful racists, or political opponents (since politics has taken on religious qualities for many Americans), in short anyone.
- d. Will it be messy...will it be uncomfortable...you bet!
  - i. If we are successful will our church look and sound like the church you grew up in...no!
  - ii. There will be those wrestling with all manner sin and temptation and past lives that look nothing like polite church-folk lives
  - iii. But the church will look like it was supposed to – a hospital open to all who have been left for dead in their sin where Christ puts us back together.
  - iv. As the Lord has loved and served you through Christ, go and do likewise for your neighbor.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.christianpost.com/news/satanic-church-leader-experiences-the-love-of-christ-steps-down.html>