Love Your Neighbor As Yourself


I. DO NOT GET INVOLVED SYNDROME.
A. We all have the problem of not wanting to get involved in other people’s matters.
B. We probably all know of some instances where people refused to get involved.
C. Story:
   1. “On a brisk cold afternoon in Bourbannais Township, Illinois in March, 1999, two vehicles collided. In what was to be the worst train crash in American history, a flatbed truck had pulled across the tracks loaded with 50,000 pounds of steel. A witness said the driver ran through the warning lights and around the safety gates. The driver said they were not working properly. The train, an Amtrak passenger carrier named “The Heart of New Orleans,” was headed towards that picturesque southern city. Since it was night, many of the passengers were already asleep in beds unaware of the danger that was only moments away. When the train struck the truck at 85 miles an hour, some said it was like hitting a solid wall. The cars of the train bucked and derailed and some of them caught fire. On one of the cars, right next to the burning sleeper car, was a load of Mississippi high school students on their way back from a long school trip. When the accident happened, they were as frightened as anyone. One of the students was seriously injured with a broken vertebra in her back. Since most of the kids were unharmed, they could have run to safety, but instead they stayed around to help other passengers, many of them hurt, to get out safely. They were hailed as heroes. A few days after the accident on a nationally televised program, one of the young men responded by saying, ‘We aren’t heroes. I hope we acted in the way most people would act under similar circumstances.’ The sad fact is that history proves that many people would not act that way.”

II. THE QUESTION
A. Luke 10:25 “And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”
B. Apparently he had the concept of a works alone salvation.
C. Jesus turns the question to him.
   2. His response:
      a. Luke 10:27 “And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.”
      b. He was quoting what the law said.
   4. He had failed to trap Jesus.
      a. He had convicted himself of his own failure to fulfill the law.
      b. So the additional question.
         (1) Luke 10:29 “But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?”
         (2) Did he really not know who his neighbor was?
Jews believed in helping their neighbor but defined it as a select few Jewish relatives and close friends.

This lead to the parable of the Good Samaritan.

**III. THE TREACHEROUS ROAD.**

A. **Luke 10:30** “And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.”

B. **The Bible is geographically correct.**
   1. Jesus said the traveler went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.
   2. Jerusalem is about 2,500 feet above sea level; Jericho (about 20 miles away) about 1,100 feet below sea level.
   3. Within 20 miles you descend 3,600 feet.

C. **It was a dangerous, treacherous journey of deep ravines and narrow passages.**

D. **It was known for its marauding bandits lurking behind every bolder and crevice.**
   1. As late as Jerome it was known as “The Red Way” or “The Pass of Blood.”
   2. William Barclay says that in the 19th century travelers had to pay local Sheiks for protection before travelling and as late as 1930s.
   3. Josephus records that just prior to Jesus relating this story, Herod had released 40,000 workers from his temple rebuilding project and many of these became highway robbers out of desperation.

**IV. THE TRAVELER.**

A. **Luke 10:30** “And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.”

B. **We do not really know about the man.**
   1. Jesus provides us with a lack of details about him.
   2. He could very easily be anyone of those hearing Jesus, or us.
   3. How would we want to be treated if this happened to us: Mat. 7:12 “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

C. **His circumstances.**
   1. A lone traveler on a very dangerous road.
   2. He “fell among thieves.”
   3. To the thieves he was just another helpless victim to be exploited.

**V. THE THIEVES.**

A. **Luke 10:30** “And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.”

B. **Were they, as Josephus reported, men who had lost their jobs and now down on their luck.**
   1. What difference would it make?
   2. Because one person suffers does not give them the right to inflict suffering on another innocent person.
   3. Sounds like many today.
      a. We make offenders into victims.
      b. We blame someone else instead of taking personal responsibility.
c. God will hold us accountable.
(1) Rom. 14:10-12 “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at
nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11For
it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every
tongue shall confess to God. 12So then every one of us shall give account of
himself to God.”
(2) 2 Cor. 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that
every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done,
whether it be good or bad.”

C. Their beliefs.
1. Greed: Money was all that was important to them.
2. Might makes right.
3. What is yours is mine if I have the power to make it so.

VI. THE THEOLOGIANS.
A. Luke 10:31-32 “And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed
by on the other side. 32And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by
on the other side.”
B. The priest.
1. Priest acted on behalf of the people to make sacrifice for them to God.
   a. A priest would serve 2 weeks during the year, one week at a time.
   b. Most priest lived in Jericho and thus traveled this road 4 times a year.
2. They were expected to have compassion on others.
   a. Heb. 5:2 “Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way;
      for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.”
   b. Heb. 7:28 “For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the
      oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.”
3. The priest saw him, and thus had the opportunity to help; Jam. 4:17 “Therefore to him
   that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”
4. Reasons for his conduct.
   a. It might have been a trap by a robber.
      (1) At this time the priesthood was for those who could afford to pay for
          it.
      (2) It afforded good pay, benefits, and a comfortable retirement.
      (3) Thus, there were many charlatans masquerading for priest.
   b. If on his way to Jerusalem to serve, he might have become ceremonially
      unclean.
      (1) Num. 19:11 “He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven
days.”
      (2) This would have affected his ability to serve.
   c. There is no way to justify his actions.
C. The Levite.
1. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests.
   a. Only sons of Aaron served as priests and the oldest male descendant of
      Aaron was High Priest.
   b. All other Levites were servants to the priests.
      (1) They began serving at 20 years old.
      (2) They were permitted to serve fully at 30.
   c. They did the cleanup jobs and prepared for ceremonies.
2. We have a servant who refused to serve.
   a. He was willing to serve God, but not one of God’s children.
   b. 1 John 4:20 “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”
   c. Failing to serve our fellow man is a failure to serve God.

D. This is not all that different from a lot of religious people today.
   1. We fail to translate sermons into service, attitudes into action.
   2. Jam. 2:15-16 “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”

E. Mat. 25:45-46 “Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

VII. The Samaritan.
A. Luke 10:33 “But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,”

B. Samaritans history.
   1. They came from the intermarriage of Jews with Gentiles.
   2. The Jews who had been left behind after the deportation of Israel to Assyria at the destruction of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) in 722 B.C.
   3. Gentiles were moved into their place.
   4. The intermarriage produced the Samaritans.

C. Jews attitude toward the Samaritans.
   1. They were half-breeds, heretics, outcasts, dogs, unworthy of any kindness or compassion.
   2. Jews thanked God daily they were not born a Samaritan.
   3. Gentiles could become a proselyte, but not Samaritans.
   4. Samaritans had an equally strong hatred for the Jews.

D. Why use a Samaritan?
   1. Herbert Locker writes: “Was it not to rebuke an unreal, heartless, compassion less, formal, organized religion and to reveal in the Samaritan the real essential spirit of religion?”
   2. He then adds that Arnot said it was: “to smite a blow at the two poles on which a vain Jewish life in that day turned: They trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.”

E. His actions.
   1. He saw the Jew.
      a. It did not matter that he was a hated Jew.
      b. He had compassion on him, he simply knew he was in need.
      c. The Jew would also have to put his feelings aside and accept the Samaritans help.
   2. He took care of him.
      a. Cleansed his wounds.
      b. Poured in oil and wine (to disinfect and to heal).
      c. Placed him on his own animal, while he walked.
      d. Took him to an inn, and continued to take care of him.
      e. Paid the innkeeper to take care of him and he would pay the money back.
      f. The innkeeper knew the character of the Samaritan (he trusted him).
3. Luke 10:34-35 “And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.”

VIII. THE TWIST.
A. The original question was: Who is my neighbor.
   1. The lawyer might have anticipated a question he thought Jesus would ask, and maybe even prepared an answer.
   2. Instead notice Jesus’ response; Luke 10:36 “Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?”
   3. Instead of answering who is my neighbor Jesus asked, “Who is a neighbor?”
   4. The idea is “Do not go checking out the needy to see who is one of my neighbors, but go about being a good neighbor by serving all who need your help.”

B. The lawyer’s response.
   1. Luke 10:37 “And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.”
   2. The original question.
      a. Luke 10:25 “And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”
      b. The real answer is to go and show compassion and mercy on your fellow man.
      c. This is just as applicable today.
         a. Gal. 5:14 “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”
         b. Rom. 13:8-10 “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. 9For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 10Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”
         c. Jam. 2:8-9 “If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.”

IX. THE LESSON
A. Jesus expects us to be servants.
   1. John 13:12-17 “So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. 16Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”
   2. Jesus is our example; Mat. 20:28 “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”
   3. Gal. 6:10 “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”
   4. We should serve all
      a. We must look past race, religion, gender, economic status, etc.
      b. Be a neighbor to: the homeless, lonely, sick, those grieving, and the lost of the world.
B. **Do not allow your religion to keep you from being a Christian.**
   1. Some are so enslaved to a program they cannot do good to others.
   2. Some congregations are so enslaved to their budget they refuse help because it is not in their budget.

C. **The Second Mile Religion.**
   1. Mat. 5:40-41 “And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. 41And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.”
   2. The Samaritan could have stopped any way along the way, just poured in the oil and wine, and left.
   3. He went the second mile (and third and fourth).
   4. We must strive to go the second mile in helping others.

**Conclusion:** Let us not be like the priest and Levite, but imitate the Samaritan.