

**Luke 10:25-37**

<sup>25</sup>Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>26</sup>He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” <sup>27</sup>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.” <sup>28</sup>And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.” <sup>29</sup>But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” <sup>30</sup>Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup>Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup>So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup>But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. <sup>34</sup>He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup>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.’ <sup>36</sup>Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” <sup>37</sup>He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

## Sermon – July 10, 2022 –St James

<https://youtu.be/knujQ81iWjk>

<https://youtu.be/RhLZxuWKV1A>

‘And who is my neighbour?’ asked the lawyer. In answer, Jesus told a story.

We know this story, so let’s watch a modern version on this video.

Jesus asks which of the 3 was really a neighbour...

We know...It is the one who showed compassion

So what **is** compassion? Neal Plantinga defines it as a genuine distress over another person’s suffering accompanied by a firm desire to relieve that suffering (and then to actually relieve it if possible). Compassion involves a gut-level, emotional response to another’s hurt followed by a desire to relieve the person of that hurt.

So ‘neighbour’ is not a noun but a verb...it’s something we do.

Cal Thomas says, "Love **talked about** is easily ignored, but love **demonstrated** is irresistible."

“Who is my neighbor?” the lawyer asked. In the end Jesus says, “Never mind that: are **you** a neighbor?” Of course, the two questions are related: the implication of the parable is that, everyone is my neighbor and that is why I must be a good neighbor to everyone. Jesus’ shift in emphasis shows his desire that we be bearers of love everywhere we go. If our hearts are full of grace, mercy, compassion, and love (for both God and everyone else), then we won’t ask, “Who is my neighbor” because it won’t matter: the question becomes irrelevant if you are yourself already *being* a neighbor.

"The Samaritan, is the one who recognizes that there are no rules. Our neighbor is anyone in need. Immigrants in need are our neighbours. People of every sexual orientation in need are our neighbours. Indigenous people in need are our neighbours equally with people who are not.

Daniel B. Clendenin writes "The kingdom of God shocks our sensibilities and bursts our boundary. It subverts our sense of what matters most."

Jesus made a despised Samaritan the hero of the parable. Jesus made him the example for Jewish people to follow to obey the command to "love your neighbor as yourself." That was turning their world upside down. The outcast became the ideal for those who viewed themselves above him. That would have been like making a terrorist into a spiritual example for us to follow. It was shocking; it was confusing; it was offensive to them. There would not have been many who heard this parable who would have signed up to be part of a "Good Sam" club.

We end with a couple more Good Samaritan stories, stories of things we could do or may have done ourselves:

This one is written by Beth Fryer: Once, many years ago, my mom was diagnosed with brain cancer and was scheduled for a surgery.

That morning I attended a college class in which the husband of a good friend was also a student. Most mornings we said hello to one another and that was about it - he would sit with his guy friends, and I usually sat alone. When he entered class that morning, he came and sat next to me. He never mentioned my mom, never talked about the situation at all...he just sat next to me and chatted a bit.

That was the day I learned that sometimes the kindest act is just to BE there...and I always remember this as one of the most touching acts of kindness I've ever received.

This one is written by **John Tindall, Birmingham**

One cold Sunday morning many years ago, when I was a theological student in Leeds and preaching 30 miles north of my college, my fiancée and I were travelling on my Honda 90.

We were inadequately attired for a particularly cold morning. Somewhere along the way, the bike ran out of petrol.

We stood at the side of road shaking with cold and not sure what to do.

Suddenly a car stopped just past us. The driver got out, popped his trunk, took out a gallon can of petrol and poured it in my tank without saying a single word. He put the tank back in his boot and drove off.

We stood there open-mouthed and stunned with gratitude.

To this day we're tempted to think it was an angel.

We may wonder what **was** the lawyer's response to Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan? Did he "Go and do likewise?" We will never know. But we can know what we will do. Amen.

A certain young man, a computer programmer, with a really cool car, went on a road trip from Toronto to Calgary.

Having heard how few and far between the gas stations would be across northern Ontario, he watched his gas gauge.

He didn't know this but, the gauge had broken, and had stuck on full.

To save time, he took a short cut. Unfortunately, about half way across,

He ran out of gas.

He had absolutely no idea where he was.

Not realizing he was out of gas, he looked under the hood.

While he knew a lot about computers, he knew nothing about cars.

And wouldn't you know it, his cell phone wouldn't work either. No signal. No tower in sight. Nothing. So, he sat in his cool car, which was now a hot car, dejected, hoping someone, anyone would come along.

Eventually he spotted a cloud of dust. Coming down the road was a BMW.

The driver was a very well to do woman. There was a Christian symbol, a fish, on the trunk of her car and a rosary hanging from the rear view mirror.

She stopped. But she was in a hurry to get to her daughter's house. It was her grandson's birthday and she had an ice cream cake that she didn't want to melt. Besides that, their priest was invited and she didn't want to be late. So, mouthing excuses, she got back in the BMW and left him there. She didn't even offer to call anyone.

Dejected, the young man sat back in his car.

About an hour later, a traveling evangelist drove up in a car with a "Honk if you love Jesus" bumper sticker on the back. The preacher couldn't help either. He was on his way to preach at a 5-day revival. He was already running late and that's why he'd taken the short cut.

He didn't offer to help and he didn't have any gas. He did give the young man a granola bar. And he did get out and talk about praying your way through problems. He gave a great blessing for the car and the young man's vacation. But then he drove off, the "Honk if you love Jesus" bumper sticker disappearing into the horizon.

Now, even more discouraged, the young man wondered if he'd ever find anyone to help. He was worn out, hungry, thirsty and tired. The young man just sat there. What else could he do. It was at least 20 miles to the last town and he had no idea how far ahead the next town was.

And then he heard something. He actually heard the low rumble of the bass before he saw the cloud of dust. It was the boom of an automobile with big bass speakers, the kind you feel more than hear. It was a big wrecker nearly bouncing down the road to the beat of the music.

It pulled up and out jumped a very young man, dressed in baggies and a hooded sweatshirt. His nose and both of his ears were pierced. And he had a tattoo on each wrist.

Not only did he offer to help but he gave the stranded young man a bottle of cold water, a ham sandwich and some cookies.

The wrecker driver figured out that the young man had simply run out of gas.

So, he gave the young man a can of gas. It would probably be enough to get him to the next gas station. But he also followed him to make sure he had enough gas. If not, they'd stop and siphon some from the wrecker.

The wrecker driver even radioed ahead and had the part for the broken gauge waiting, so the owner of the gas station could repair the car right away.

So, munching on a sandwich, drinking his water, the very relieved young man headed on down the road, with the wrecker bouncing to the beat behind him. The wrecker, by the way, had no fish decal and no "Honk if you love Jesus" bumper sticker.

But it had something else. Something much more important. That wrecker had a true neighbor behind the wheel; a disciple who was listening to booming rap music. (4)

Once, many years ago, my mom was diagnosed with brain cancer and was scheduled for a surgery.

That morning I attended a college class in which the husband of a good friend was also a student. Most mornings we said hello to one another and that was about it - he would sit with his guy friends, and I usually sat alone. When he entered class that morning, he came and sat next to me. He never mentioned my mom, never talked about the situation at all...he just sat next to me and chatted a bit.

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Written by Beth Fryer

It is our calling to finish the story. Yes, to go and do likewise, but also, to keep on asking Jesus, to keep on inquiring, what does it look like to follow God's law? Because if we think we already have the answer, then preaching has also lost its purpose.

I am liking the lawyer this time around. He reminds me of how often I need to ask this question. How unassumingly I can default to certainty about what it means to be a follower of Jesus. How often I fall into anticipated patterns of behavior without stopping to wonder if I am truly embodying my beliefs? Or am I operating with rote and routine convictions?

I feel like I need this lawyer these days. To keep me aware. To keep me vigilant and persistent. Because it is so very easy to slip into the comfortable, especially when it comes to a story like this. It is so very easy to want to be the heroine. It is so very easy to want to be the one who has all of the answers, right, Dear Working Preachers?

I am convinced, more than ever, that the question of the lawyer is the question of faith today. We need to ask it over and over again, and especially when we don't want to. I never want to -- but I have to. And I will because this story reminds me to trust in Jesus' answer. An answer that forces me to answer for myself. And, in the end, that is what faith is supposed to be.

Stories

I stood on the doorstep and cried at her kindness”

We were on benefits for the first time in our lives - even the baby milk was free - and our mortgage was being paid. Our pride was in our boots.

A free supermarket bus used to drop off people outside our house and a lady got off the bus and came down our drive with two bags of shopping for us.

She said she hoped I didn't mind but she'd heard of our troubles from some of the neighbours and had bought us a chicken, fresh cream, cakes and biscuits to help us out.

I stood on the doorstep and cried at her kindness.

I offered to pay but she wouldn't hear of it and said I'd have the opportunity to do the same for someone else one day when our fortunes took a turn for the better.

I've done the same more than once and I'll never forget the stranger who knocked on my door with free shopping for me and my family in our time of need.

**Louise Hobson, Hull**