

Loving Your Neighbor

Luke 10:25-37

Introduction

In Luke 10, we find the well-known story of the Good Samaritan. There is a man, a lawyer to be exact, who asks the question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answers according to the law that he is to love God and love others. You will experience more of God in history when you align yourself specifically with the law of loving God and loving your neighbor as yourself. Yet the man inquires about the practical aspect of this working in his day-to-day life. If loving your neighbor is so important to God, who then is your neighbor? The young lawyer really wants to know if his mercy should extend to neighbors he despises.

The Samaritans lived in close proximity with the Israelites; yet, they were hated. But Jesus so wisely uses the story of the Good Samaritan to demonstrate the type of love we are to show others. In this story, we find a man who has fallen on hard times. He was robbed and beaten and left for dead. A priest and a Levite passed by, but didn't do anything to help the man. The "religious people," who were supposedly acquainted with God's commands and studied the Bible, also chose to not lend a helping hand. Then a Samaritan passed by the man. He was the most unlikely person to help; but, he actually did the right thing. The Good Samaritan went out of his way, at a great inconvenience to himself, to help someone who was hurting.

Being a good neighbor is not a theological or theoretical issue; it is a very practical one. Loving others is demonstrated by what you do for those who are hurting, even if they can't do anything in return for your kindness. Jesus' response to the lawyer also tells us that our obligation to help others is not based on how we feel about those who need our help. A Good Samaritan is one who acts in love by seeking the well-being of others no matter who they are. Stop and ask yourself, "What kind of neighbor am I?" Our love for God should be tangibly expressed by how we respond to the needs we see in others.

Getting Started

1. Reflecting on today's sermon or what you learned from the sermon series "First," how can you know if you really love God?
2. Have you ever been helped by a Good Samaritan? Share your experience with your group.

Let's Get Personal

1. Do you really love your neighbor as defined by today's message?
2. Are you extending acts of mercy to others when you're able and as you are led? How have you acted on this principle in the past?
3. Has there been a time where you have felt led to help and didn't? If yes, what prevented you from taking action? Share with your group.

Take the Next Step

1. There are plenty of ways in which we can visibly see who needs our help like those who are dealing with poverty, homelessness and illness. Yet sometimes needs are not visible. What are some non-visible needs that people often deal with?
2. How can we encourage and help others to express these non-visible needs? If you feel comfortable doing so, share a physical or non-physical need you have with your group? Why is it often difficult to do this?

Renew Your Mind

"Love your neighbor as yourself." Luke 10:27b
