

“The Road to Life”

Luke 10:25-37

Introduction

Have you ever seen someone try to experience the benefits of something without doing what was required to gain them? As an onlooker, it can be frustrating watching a person attempt to receive what isn't theirs when they are unwilling to do what it takes to get the blessing.

In the book of Luke, Jesus has an encounter with a lawyer who asks a question many ask: “what shall I do to inherit eternal life”(v. 25). This question about life is really one about the benefits a life with God offers. Eternal life is not only about the greater reward that is to come after physical death, but also a level of our experience with God in this life.

Jesus, in typical fashion, replies back with a question to get this man thinking about what he already knows. He asks him about the law of God and what God requires. The lawyer was able to respond with the correct answer, “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. (v. 27). Having the right answer, however, does not necessarily guarantee access to the benefits. In the case of this lawyer, he lacked sincerity, humility and obedience because he was unwilling to honestly seek a life with God.

Jesus' answer gives us insight into who received the benefits of eternal life. In order to experience the blessing of eternal life, it requires obedience to God's commandment of love. This love must be expressed first and foremost to God, learning to love Him with everything we possess: our heart, soul, strength, and mind. It is a whole body, whole spirit, whole life kind of love. And because of that level of love aimed towards our heavenly Father, the overflow will result in love being poured out to those neighbors around us. Loving people well means making the conscious choice to put their needs above our own, to be compassionate and to seek their well-being. These two commands summarized the whole essence of Old Testament law and, when fulfilled, lead to the benefits of eternal life.

Jesus goes on to expound upon what this neighborly love looks like with an illustration. He shares a story of a man who was robbed, beaten and left for dead on the side of the road. Both a priest and Levite came walking by from their place of worship. They chose not to stop and help, but rather cross to the other side to avoid any interruption or interaction with this man in need. He didn't receive the help so desperately needed until a Samaritan, a people group despised and looked down upon by the Jews, came and stopped to care for him.

This picture shows us that our “neighbor” is not just the people who are like us. For Christians, the definition of neighbor extends to anyone in need we come across. The benefits of eternal life are extended to those who learn to love everyone and not withhold their compassion based on their own biases or prejudices. The benefits of eternal life come to us when we are willing to show compassion to anyone, whether or not there are cultural lines drawn in the sand that would normally preclude us from caring. The benefits of eternal life are not limited by racial identity, but rather are forged by our identity in Christ.

Are you wanting to experience the benefits of eternal life? Are you willing to do what God asks when it comes to receiving that blessing? Do you love Him with your whole self? Are you loving others unconditionally, no matter what divides you on the outside? The benefits of eternal life belong to you if you will choose obedience to the great commandment of love!

Getting Started

1. Read Luke 10:25-37. What do you think the ulterior motives of the lawyer were in this passage?
 2. What would you say are the benefits of eternal life?
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Let's Get Personal

1. In what tangible, practical ways are you seeking to love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind? In what ways could you seek to love Him more?
2. How are you doing at loving people? Who in your life is easy to love? To whom do you find it hard to give compassion and love? Why is it hard?
3. What does the Samaritan's care for the hurting man teach you about how we are to approach race and racism? Given the current climate and racial tensions, how could Christians lead the way in loving people across racial lines in order to bring healing and reconciliation?
4. What prayers do you need to pray when it comes to loving God and loving others? Pray it together.

Take the Next Step

1. What are three practical things you could do this week to express love to God more fully? For example, you can spend time in silence and solitude with the Lord, read Scripture or practice praying regularly.
2. Write out a specific prayer about loving someone you may find it hard to love. Ask God to strengthen you as you seek to show compassion to that person. Pay attention throughout your week for ways you might be able to serve that person in love and then implement it.
3. Write out Luke 10:27. Keep it in a place you will see it often, such as your car or bathroom mirror. Try to memorize it and refer back to it as you think about your to-do list.
4. Want to dig deeper? Read the following passages: Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 6:27-36; James 2:8; and 1 John 3:16-18.

Renew Your Mind

*"And 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.'
And He said to him, 'You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.'"*

Luke 10:27-28
