

Sermon Discussion – 26 May 2024

Read Luke 10:25-37

Getting Started *Sharing from personal experience*

Many people asked Jesus questions because he was becoming quite known for his teaching. Jesus used the story we are discussing today to help answer a question.

Suppose you met a famous teacher like Jesus and could ask him one question. What would the question be?

Observation *Discovering the context*

The story takes place on the road between the city of Jerusalem in the mountains and the city of Jericho, about 20 miles away. The terrain between the cities was rough, desolate, with few inhabitants and frequented by robbers. The robbers at times used tricks like having one of their number appear injured by the side of the road. When someone stopped to help, the others could attack him easily while he wasn't paying attention.

The relationship between the Jews and Samaritans was very similar to the relationship between Jews and Arabs today, or to any relationship marked by strong racial or cultural prejudice. The Jews considered Samaritans as social outcasts, untouchables, racially inferior, practicing a false religion. They avoided any association with Samaritans, traveling long distances out of their way to avoid passing through a Samaritan area. Any close physical contact, drinking water from a common bucket, eating a meal with a Samaritan, would make a Jew ceremonially unclean - unable to participate in temple worship for a period of time. The Samaritans responded quite naturally with strong dislike or hatred for Jews.

- Why do you think Jesus chose these particular characters and this situation to answer the man's question?
- What excuses could the priest and the Levite have used to justify not helping the beaten man?

Interpretation *Discovering the meaning*

1. The lawyer (expert in the OT Law) asked the most important question we can ask- "How can I have eternal life?" But notice he asks "*what must I DO...*" Why can't we work our way to eternal life? To God? Why must we receive it, not earn it?
2. Look at v. 29. The lawyer wanted to justify himself. He wanted to show that he was worthy of eternal life by his own value or efforts. What are some ways that you try to

justify yourself? Even if you are a Christian- how do you try to show how you are worthy or more righteous than others?

3. Consider the original question, *“What must I do to receive eternal life?”* The Bible gives several answers to this question. Here, Jesus says, “Love the Lord your God ..., and love your neighbour...”. In Luke 18:18-23, Jesus says, “Obey God’s commandments..., sell all you have and give the money to the poor, ... then come and follow me.” In Acts 16:31, Paul says, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” In John 3:16, John writes “Everyone who believes in him (Jesus) has eternal life.” Are these different answers or the same answer? If the same, how do you reconcile them?
4. Jesus’ parable about the Good Samaritan shows that the Lawyer was asking the wrong question. Rather than asking “Who is my neighbour?” (an attempt to limit his responsibility under the law). He should have been asking “How can I be a good neighbour?”

In what ways have you or have we as a church been asking the wrong question? Are you trying to lessen our responsibility or are we open to loving and caring for everyone in our community?

Application *Putting knowledge into practice*

- What “neighbours” has God placed in your path that you would rather avoid?
- Does your schedule and finances have enough margin to be available to help others when needs arise? If not, what changes could you make?
- How are you like the injured man and (like the good Samaritan) how has Jesus provided and cared for you in your most vulnerable or hopeless moments?