

September 17 2017

Reading from the Bible Luke 10:25-37

Sermon Sermon Series:

Three Great Loves “*You Want Me to Do What?*”

This morning we are going to study the story of the Good Samaritan. Or as in the beginning of the Storage Wars show, we say-- here is the Good Samaritan; here is the bloody victim, the ruthless robbers, the high and mighty Levite and the priest, and the humble innkeeper. And here is the oil and wine and Jesus the story teller. It is not the kind of wine you would drink but was used for disinfectant and healing.

I have read the story many so times and you probably have too. You probably know it so well, you could tell it by heart. I have seen this story acted out dozens of times and let me tell you boys like to choose the part of the robbers. A person has to have some control when working with boys. They like the part of beating up people. My favorite part is the least likely person that you would think the Samaritan who comes to help.

Let's read it in Luke chapter ten verses 25-37. “Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he said, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What do you read there?’ 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 given the right answer; do this, and you will live.’”

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ 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. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. 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. 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.” Which of these three, do you

think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?’ He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’”

This story is about a real place-this is a notoriously road from Jerusalem to Jericho. It drops down about 3,000 feet in about a 20 mile distance. It has a lot of sheer walls, rocks, many switch backs, and lots of wonderful places for robbers to hide. Even modern day tourists don't go alone on that road at night. Everyone knew the man who was robbed should never have taken it by himself we do not know how that happened. Chances are he was Jewish since lots of Jews lived in the area. Everyone listening to Jesus' story knew the setting of it and about the Pharisee (Levite) and Priest but was not prepared for the introduction of the Samaritan; that part was so shocking and so out of place. They followed the first part of the story and had no problems with it. Robbery happened there all time. They were not really surprised at the telling of the Pharisee passing the injured man. The Pharisees were always concerned about the Law. He did not want to touch a dead body because then he would be contaminated. He would have to go back to Jerusalem and go through a lengthy purification cleansing process. So he looked and then passed by the man. The listeners were not really surprised because Pharisees were sort of uppity. Then we have the priest.

Maybe the man was a decoy pretending to be hurt and would be waiting for the next person coming down the path to rob him. That situation even happens today. The listeners would have some understanding about the priest and Pharisee (Levite) but then Jesus said, Samaritan. The Samaritans and Jews had been feuding for centuries. The Jews wouldn't help a Samaritans and Samaritans wouldn't have anything to do with Jews. We are not sure why the Samaritan was on the road at that time but perhaps he frequently took that route to Jericho. He told the innkeeper he would be returning in the next couple of weeks. He had the money and he had the ability. He also seemed to have a good relationship with the innkeeper. He had a good reputation.

One of the things that I noticed I had never thought about before, the Samaritan bandaged his wounds, oil and wine, he put him on his animal and took him to the inn. I hadn't notice before but he stayed and took care of the injured that night... He wanted to be sure everything was OK. The story tells how he felt inside about the man and he had compassion for him. We, also, need to have compassion on all the people who have been over-whelm and devastated by the recent hurricanes, tornados, fires and earthquakes. The Good Samaritan gave practical help. And

those who have experienced the recent disasters the last few weeks, need our practical help.

Jesus had really, really shocked the people. Then he asked the bright young lawyer, “Who do you think was the neighbor to this man?” In the lawyer’s mind he was thinking, what are the boundary of a neighbor? What can I do so I can be a good neighbor and still be righteous, I want to know who is and who is not my neighbor? His idea of a neighbor was family, the people he knew and cared about, maybe the person across the street, but certainly not just anybody. Jesus repeated the question, “Who do you think was the neighbor? The lawyer couldn’t even say the word Samaritan. He couldn’t even consider that the Samaritan could be a neighbor.

We should have the love in our hearts that is modeled after the heart of God’s. God has shown mercy to us. God forgave without limit to us. God calls us to minister to others as God does. The Samaritan doesn’t fit the average American. The ability to treat others with mercy as they treat us requires the action to think of others made in God’s image. There are a lot of neighbor’s that help other neighbors such as they help when there is drive-by shooting or other terrible act .If our hearts are filled with God’s love, we are filled with energy and motivation. The Samaritan had both. The Pharisee believed in the law. “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.” But They did not did act it out. I believe any and every human being is our neighbor.

That goes beyond being tolerate or staying out of each other’s way which is a good start but that is only a start. We need to give them an extravagant welcome, giving love and solving differences. It is like those wonderful shows about meeting the in-laws and learning to respect each other. We need to become family. We have to learn to respect and love one another.

So what do we do with this? What is our denomination going to try—love of children and love of neighbors. So what do we do? What does our church do? What does Family Crisis do?

I went to a church in Bellevue and I was under care of Seattle Presbytery and I was standing in the middle of the Fellowship Hall. There were probably 125 people around me. I was looking a bit forlorn but not one person came up to see me. I was there for several minutes and not one person came up. I can’t image that happening here in this church in Newport. But that was the measure of that

congregation. There were so busy with people they knew and who they called their neighbors, friends, or their kin, but what do we do when we have visitors? Do we invite them to join us in the Fellowship Hall after the service? What do we do if they want to join one of our groups, the choir, or; they want to be on the council. It is said that most visitors make up their mind in seconds about a church they are visiting. What do we know about them when they leave? Do we know their last name? give them a news letter? Should they be like us? Do they like what we eat? Do they wear what we wear? Do they want to be part of us? Do they want to clean up in the kitchen? Or maybe they need to stay out of the kitchen. I went into one church kitchen and that was enough for me. I stay out of the kitchen. I have been in churches where you weren't supposed to touch anything in the kitchen or you would be down the road to Jericho. We need always to be aware of who we are and how we welcome visitors.

Thank you God for the story, that is very familiar and we are in it, sometimes we are the ones who walk by and say good luck. We would like to be the Good Samaritan. We would like to be the one to show mercy Amen