

Marks

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading
Giving Time, Talents & Resources
Spiritual Friendships ■ Service In &
Beyond the Church

of Discipleship

October 9, 2022

Day 1: Luke 10:25

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he said, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’

Judaism in Jesus’ time placed emphasis on behavior more than belief. It was thought one’s believing was authenticated through one’s doing. It is not different today. Many believe that Jesus is the Son of God but of those many, fewer actually act like that statement is true. The “doing” is to follow Jesus just as the early disciples were asked to follow.

Question: Why did the “lawyer” call Jesus teacher?

Challenge: What is the best way for you to express your relationship with God?

Scripture: Mark 12:28-34

Day 2: Luke 10:26-28

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.’

The lawyer answers Jesus’ question by quoting the Shema (Deut.6:5) and then attaches the law of loving your neighbor found in Lev. 19:18. In Leviticus, love of neighbor is a disposition of the heart that is expressed in tangible behaviors. The lawyer correctly interprets the law both in fact and intent. Jesus simply responds with saying, you are right, now act that way toward God and neighbor and you will have life.

Question: What is the “this” the lawyer is supposed to do?

Challenge: Examine your actions over the last week to see how well you have loved the Lord with your heart, mind and soul.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18

Day 3: Luke 10:29

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’

With this follow up question it becomes clear the legal expert is not seeking to learn but to justify his own interpretation. The legal expert has made up his mind and he is just looking for a way to trap Jesus in some sort of mistake. By the Second Temple period the question of who is a resident alien (a resident alien was defined as someone who embraced the covenant with God - Lev.19:33-34) was in doubt because of the general acceptance of Greek culture and the Roman occupation. Among many of the religious leaders the question of who is entitled to have the name “neighbor” was not clear.

Question: What do you think the lawyer expected to hear from Jesus?

Challenge: What does our society say about our responsibilities to our neighbor (however we define neighbor)?

Scripture: Luke 12:1-12

Day 4: Luke 10:30-32

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.’

In the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49) Jesus eliminated the lines that might be drawn between one’s friends and one’s enemies. The lawyer wants to revisit the issue in the guise of the question about neighbors. Jesus does not answer the lawyer’s question but tells a parable. In the Sermon on the Plain Jesus lays out kingdom behavior. Now He tells a parable that explains that behavior in action. The religious establishment in Jerusalem had an interpretation of the law that defined the boundaries along with a lot of ‘oughts’ for individuals to follow that were supposed to show devotion to God.

Question: Why is the man going “down” to Jericho?

Challenge: Look up the difference between a priest and a Levite.

Scripture: John 15:12-17

Day 5: Luke 10:33-35

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.”

The Samaritan, who is by definition (as defined by the religious leaders in Jerusalem) an outcast, is the one who fulfills the law. He treats the person who is bypassed by the religious leaders. It was because of their rules that they could not help him, not because they were heartless. By their rules they could not help him because he was unclean - they thought him dead. The rules caused them to give the person such a wide berth that they could not see he was still alive. The Samaritan uses the concept of mercy to override any worries about the injured man being unclean - in short he showed mercy. This is not simply a story about a person who some thought would not help but in fact does help - but an indictment of the whole religious establishment in Jerusalem. The parable speaks of an individual instance but Jesus is saying that their whole system of finding favor with God is dead wrong because it leaves out God’s love and compassion.

Question: What do you think the Samaritan said to the innkeeper (or perhaps did) to make the innkeeper trust him to come back?

Challenge: Under what circumstances would you do what the Samaritan did for the injured man?

Scripture: Mark 9:17-27

Day 6: Luke 10:36-37

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.’

Jesus concludes the lesson with a reminder that all the interpretations of the law need to begin with the basic premise of mercy. God is compassionate by nature and if we are to be closer to God than we must participate in being compassionate to those for whom Christ died. Jesus has posed a real problem for the religious establishment. They would hold that our relationship to God is based on birth and strict adherence to a set of customs. Jesus is substituting faith with action for entitlement. It is now the lawyer who is trapped into admitting that his interpretation of the law is flawed because it does not rest on the correct foundation.

Question: In this context how is bandaging the man’s wounds showing mercy?

Challenge: What is the lesson?

Scripture: Psalm 40:6-16