

Samaritans. An inferior people, from the northern kingdom, a mixed race of Israelite and pagans, they held to the first 5 books of Moses, mixed in some pagan rituals; rejected the prophets like Isaiah, Elijah, Hosea, rejected Jerusalem and the Temple worship. Parents, don't let your child date a Samaritan. In the Old Testament reading, when God's people are shown mistreating their half-cousins, there's sharp rebuke, that's not how you treat others, even if they are wrong. Samaritans -outcast, despised, people you look down upon, don't associate with.

The parable of the good Samaritan seems pretty obvious. Being called a good Samaritan, a nice compliment. If you come across someone robbed, beat half to death, or drop something, need help, you should help them. Very few people (Christian or not) who would argue against such an ethic. Basic *golden rule* stuff. "Don't be like the Levite or priest; be like the Good Samaritan, go and love your neighbor."

You were inadequately taught if the Good Samaritan is not all about Jesus. Of course, the moralistic (for you), ethnical (for society) lesson here, **you go and do likewise**. Love for God with your all, love for neighbor with your all, should drive you to acts of compassion. Compassion means you suffer with them, suffer for them, compassion is not warm fuzzy thoughts about poor souls, like in Nepal if you saw those mudslides that killed 1000s, Lord have mercy. That's sympathy. Compassion as Jesus has compassion as He sees sheep without shepherd, anyone who doesn't have a faithful pastor, the Lord hurts over them. Compassion hurts you on the inside, and you act with your time, your resources, with your work.

Don't look for loopholes or exceptions as to who you have to love as neighbor, like the Lawyer, not **who is my neighbor**, that is, who must I love? But Jesus turns it on him, says **who proved to a neighbor?** Show mercy, compassion, even to those you don't want to.

Perhaps though, there's more that Jesus is teaching. Evil men aren't the only thieves and murderers among us. Martin Luther upon arriving in Wittenberg has a young boy commit suicide. According to the Roman church, suicide, a mortal sin, condemned to hell, cannot be buried in church cemetery. Luther makes a profound statement: *Some say that according to God's justice this boy is damned because he took his own life. I say he was overcome by the devil. Is this child any more to blame for the despair that overtook him, than an innocent man who was murdered by a robber in the woods?* Luther will dig the grave, bury the young boy in the church cemetery.

Jesus says Satan has been **a murderer from the beginning** and **a thief who comes only to steal and kill and destroy**. There's more to this parable than someone getting jumped in a dark alley or you help someone in need.

Here, the presentation from throughout all Scripture is now at play in Jesus' parable. The heart of all teaching, even the Reformation, the question, **what must I do for eternal life?** A man going from the holy city, all fallen humanity stripped by the robbers as demons and sin, left for dead, physically alive but spiritually

helpless; as humanity, entirely incapable of rescuing itself. If there's any doubt about justification (how can a sinner come before a holy God, how are you saved), the term is even built into the parable itself. **The man seeking to justify himself.** The priest and Levi, corresponds to the God's holy Law, (even note the Epistle), the Law has no power to heal or save. Justification, a righteousness God demands, then comes -the Good Samaritan-we know to be Jesus, an outsider, one despised by His own people. Christ enters our broken condition, with compassion, saves the dying. What the love of man for God, or any decisions, or any works of the law cannot do, He binds up wounds, that is forgiveness, pours out 2 Sacraments, oil, for a cleansing, anointing as pointing to baptism, anointing of the Holy Spirit, baptismal cleansing of death to life. And wine, medicine of life, prefigures the holy Eucharist, Christ's own blood shed to cleanse guilt, strengthen the soul, medicine of immortality. He drops this dear man at the inn, of course the church, gives the innkeep, pastors charge to provide care. The inn, the church, a hospital for sinners; where the wounded, dying, restored to life, where Christ continues to provide for the care of souls with 2 denarii; Word, Sacraments, His servants in the holy Ministry, His treasures to provide ongoing care until He comes back.

This is how all the Church Fathers, Lutheran Fathers understood this parable, as Christ instituted and charged His Church, His pastors with the ongoing care of souls, in this world; as you're attacked by demons and evil, even your own sin, until He comes back.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? Lies at the heart of all church teaching even the Reformation. The lawyer with ill intended-motives asked, **what must I do to inherit eternal life?** What a question. Simple, as it is impossible. You could ask, what must I do to inherit the crown of England and be King? **What must I do to inherit eternal life?** Keep the God's holy Law perfectly, all means all, your heart, strength, soul, mind; perfect love to neighbor. Do this and you will live. But no can meet its demands except One. Only one Good Samaritan. **What must I do to inherit eternal life?** Nothing.

You go and do likewise. Receive what the Good Samaritan provides: the care, the healing, receive healing and life in the oil and wine of His Sacraments, He provides here, this inn.

You go and do likewise. You have eternal life by grace, so go and live in His mercy, showing mercy to others, be as Christ, the Good Samaritan to others.

You go and do likewise. Act in mercy, compassion, not just ones that are easy to love, not difficult. Mercy to love your neighbor takes work, it may be hard, messy, thankless, swallowing your pride, cost you time and money, it may not even seem to make a difference, but the mercy you show always matters.

You go and do likewise. Your acts of compassion, your mercy, your good works and prayers hold back the forces of darkness in a dark and dying world

Go and do likewise, you live, confess and act as Christ to the world with no hope or life.