

SOME OF US MAY REMEMBER THE “**BEATLES**”,,, BACK IN THE 60’S SINGING “**ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE**”. NOW THERE’S NO DOUBT,,, THAT THERE’S TRUTH,,, IN THOSE SIMPLE LYRICS.

IF WE WERE TO LOOK AROUND THE WORLD TODAY,,, IT’S CLEAR TO ME,,, THAT **A GOOD DOSE OF LOVE WOULD PROBABLY CURE,,, MANY OF OUR WORLD’S ILLS.**

**BUT,,, THAT’S EASIER SAID THAN DONE! ISN’T IT?**

I MEAN,,, WE DON’T HAVE ANY PROBLEM LOVING THOSE WHO ARE CLOSE TO US,,, OR WHO ALREADY LOVE US,,, LIKE OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS,,, BUT; HOW ABOUT LOVING THOSE,,, WHO ARE DIFFERENT FROM US? HOW ABOUT LOVING OUR ENEMIES?

**THAT MAKES IT A BIT HARDER,,, DOESN’T IT?**

IN FACT,,, IT GOES AGAINST NORMAL HUMAN NATURE. **ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN!** WHEN SOMEONE DOES SOMETHING TO US,,, OUR NATURAL HUMAN RESPONSE,,, IS **TO WANT TO GET EVEN!** IT SEEMS THAT **HATRED**,,, IS ALOT EASIER TO GENERATE THAN **LOVE.**

IN TODAY’S PARABLE,,, JESUS TEACHES SOMETHING THAT’S TOTALLY RADICAL. HE SAYS,,, **FOR GOD’S PEOPLE,,, LOVE IS SOMETHING,,, THAT REVERSES THE NATURAL RESPONSE OF HUMAN NATURE AND THAT EXTENDS EVEN TO OUR WORST ENEMY.**

YOU SEE,,, THINGS WEREN’T THAT MUCH DIFFERENT IN JESUS’ DAY,,, THAN THEY ARE TODAY. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE WAS,,, THAT INSTEAD OF THE MAJOR DIVISION BEING:

**CHRISTIAN / MUSLIM (OR) PROTESTANT / CATHOLIC**  
**IT WAS,,,**  
**JEW / GENTILE (OR) JEW / SAMARITAN.**

TO THE JEWS,,, IN JESUS’ DAY,,, THE SAMARITANS,,,

WERE A DESPISED PEOPLE.

THAT WAS BECAUSE,,, *THE SAMARITAN RELIGION,,, WAS A MIXTURE OF,,, JUDIASM,,, MIXED IN WITH PAGAN RELIGIONS,,, OF THE MANY DIFFERENT COUNTRIES,,, FROM WHERE THIER CITIZENS HAD BEEN BROUGHT,,, BY THE ASSYRIANS,,, 600 TO 700 YEARS EARLIER.*

EVEN THOUGH THEY CLAIMED TO WORSHIP,,, ACCORDING TO THE TRADITIONS OF THE PATRIARCHS,,, THEY DIDN'T WORSHIP IN JERUSALEM. INSTEAD,,, THEY CHOSE TO SET UP A SEPARATE TEMPLE IN SAMARIA.

WHILE JUDIASM HAD SOUGHT TO PURIFY THEIR RELIGION,,, OF ALL PAGAN PRACTICES,,, SAMARITAN WORSHIP DIDN'T. BECAUSE OF THAT,,, *IT WAS CONSIDERED AS TAINTED,,, BY THE JEWS!* SO THE JEWS,,, SIMPLY WOULDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE SAMARITANS,,, AND IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE FEELING WAS MUTUAL.

SO,,, *THAT'S THE CONTEXT IN WHICH JESUS SPEAKS IN THIS WEEKS SCRIPTURE. A FEELING OF HOSTILITY AND ANOMOSITY,,, EQUAL TO,,, OR,,, PERHAPS EVEN GREATER THAN WHAT IS SHOWN BY SOME PARTS OF OUR OWN POPULATION,,, TOWARDS OTHER RELIGIONS OR CULTURES,,, IN RECENT DAYS.*

BUT WHAT THIS PARABLE IS REALLY ABOUT,,, IS,,,

*THE NATURE OF LOVE!*

IT BEGINS WITH AN EXPERT IN THE LAW,,, POSING THE QUESTION;

*TEACHER,,, WHAT MUST I DO,,, TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?*

THIS MIGHT SOUND LIKE A GENUINE QUESTION,,, IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE FACT,,, THAT WE KNOW,,, HOW OFTEN THOSE "*EXPERTS*",,, HAD TRIED TO TRAP JESUS,,, WITH INNOCENT SOUNDING QUESTIONS,,, ON OTHER OCCASIONS,,, AND AS LUKE TELLS US,,, THIS QUESTION WAS NOTHING MORE THAN ANOTHER TRAP.

BUT JESUS WOULDN'T ALLOW HIMSELF,, TO FALL INTO THEIR TRAP,, SO EASILY.

INSTEAD,, IN THE MANNER OF A GOOD TEACHER,, HE TURNS THE QUESTION,, AROUND AND BACK ON THE QUESTIONER,, BY ASKING:

***WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW? HOW DO YOU READ IT?***

WELL,, THIS LAWYER,, KNOWS HIS STUFF,, AND HE QUICKLY REPLIES WITH THE ORTHODOX RESPONSE.

***“YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD,, WITH ALL YOUR HEART,, AND ALL YOUR BEING,, WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH,, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND,, AND YOUR NEIGHBOR,, AS YOURSELF.”***

NOW,, PERHAPS HE HAD HOPED,, THAT JESUS,, BEING THIS RADICAL TEACHER FROM GALILEE,, MIGHT QUESTION THIS ORTHODOX RESPONSE,, OR PERHAPS,, HE'D BE A LITTLE SURPRISED,, WHEN JESUS APPLAUDS HIS ANSWER. IN FACT,, JESUS SAYS;

***“YOU HAVE ANSWERED CORRECTLY, DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE!”***

WELL,, CLEARLY,, THAT WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR THIS LAWYER. HE DIDN'T WANT TO BE TOLD HOW TO LIVE,, AND HE CERTAINLY DIDN'T WANT TO LOOK STUPID IN FRONT OF HIS PEERS,, SO,, WE'RE TOLD,, THAT HE SOUGHT TO JUSTIFY HIMSELF.

HE UNDERSTANDS THE IMPLICATION OF JESUS' SHORT STATEMENT AND HE REALIZES THAT JESUS' ANSWER,, ***IS AN IMPLIED CRITICISM OF HIS LOVE OF DEBATE,, RATHER THAN ACTION.***

BUT HE'S BEEN ON THE ***DEBATING TEAM*** FOR A LONG TIME,, AND,, HE'S NOT GOING TO BE PUT OFF THAT EASILY. SO,, HE ASKS FOR FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF THIS SIMPLE COMMANDMENT,, BY SAYING:

***“AND WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?”***

***THINKING TO HIMSELF: BOY,, HAVE I GOT YOU,, JESUS!***

BUT JESUS ISN'T ABOUT TO LET HIM GET AWAY WITH

**THAT!**

**HE HAS A SIMPLE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION AS WELL,,, BUT THIS TIME,,, JESUS' ANSWER COMES IN THE FORM OF A STORY.**

**HE DECIDES TO TELL THE STORY OF A JEWISH MAN,,, WHO WAS GOING DOWN FROM JERUSALEM,,, TO JERICO AND WHO FELL VICTIM TO ROBBERS.**

**THIS WAS A HAZARDOUS JOURNEY,,, BECAUSE IT WAS AN ISOLATED ROUTE AND ALSO... A NOTORIOUS PLACE FOR BANDITS TO ATTACK SOLE TRAVELERS AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED.**

**SCRIPTURE TELLS US,,, THAT THE JEWISH MAN WAS BEATEN,,, ROBBED AND LEFT FOR DEAD,,, AND THAT THE ROBBERS THEN LEFT AND WENT ON THEIR WAY.**

**A PRIEST CAME ALONG AND SEEING THE MAN LYING THERE,,, HE CHOSE TO PASS BY,,, ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE STREET.**

**NEXT,,, A LEVITE CAME UPON THE BEATEN MAN AND HE TOO,,, CHOSE TO PASS BY ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE.**

**THEN,,, A SAMARITAN TRAVELER CAME UPON THE SERIOUSLY INJURED JEW AND HE WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION AT THE SIGHT OF THE JEWISH MAN.**

**THE SAMARITAN MAN Poured OIL AND WINE OVER HIS WOUNDS,,, BANDAGED THEM AND THEN HE PUT HIM UP ON HIS OWN ANIMAL,,, TOOK HIM TO AN INN AND CARED FOR HIM.**

**THE NEXT DAY,,, THE SAMARITAN MAN GAVE THE INKEEPER TWO SILVER COINS AND INSTRUCTED HIM TO TAKE CARE OF THE INJURED MAN AND TELLING THE INKEEPER,,, THAT IF HE SPENT MORE THAN THE TWO SILVER COINS,,, HE WOULD REPAY HIM UPON HIS RETURN.**

**JESUS ASKED THE LAWYER: *WHICH OF THESE THREE,,, IN YOUR OPINION,,, WAS NEIGHBOR TO THE ROBBERS VICTIM?***

**THE LAWYER ANSWERED:**

***THE ONE WHO TREATED HIM WITH MERCY!***

**JESUS SAID TO HIM: *GO AND DO LIKEWISE!***

**JESUS' CHALLENGE TO THE LAWYER,, IS;  
**TO GO AND DO IT!****

**TO A LARGE EXTENT,, JESUS WAS PRESENTING A CHALLENGE TO THIS MANS; *SELF-SATISFACTION,, HIS SELF-LOVE,, HIS SELF-RELIANCE,, AND TO HIS SELF-ISHNESS.***

**IN THE END,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, JESUS IS TEACHING US,, THAT WE ARE ALL;**

**“**EACH OTHERS NEIGHBORS**”,, AND,, THAT WE SHOULD;**

**“**TREAT EACH OTHER WITH LOVE AND MERCY!**”**

***BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, WE DON'T HAVE TO BE TAUGHT TO LOVE OURSELVES DO WE? THAT COMES NATURALLY,, AND FRANKLY,, WE'RE PRETTY GOOD AT IT!*** THERE'S NO TRICK IN LOVING OURSELVES. THE TRICK IS: KEEPING **SELF-LOVE** FROM BECOMING **SELFISH LOVE.**

**THE BIBLE TEACHES,, THAT AS BELIEVERS,, OUR DEEDS,, WILL BE JUDGED BY GOD,, AND OUR PLACE IN THE KINGDOM,, WILL BE AWARDED,, IN PART,, ON HOW WE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS.**

**(\*) DO YOU LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR?**

**-MORE THAN YOURSELF?**

**(\*) DO YOU HAVE WHATEVER IT TAKES,, TO CARE FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR,, LIKE THE SAMARITAN?**

**-NO MATTER THE COST?**

**-EVEN IF IT'S INCONVENIENT? AND,,**

**-EVEN IF IT'S AGAINST YOUR BEST INTEREST?**

**(\*) DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THAT PRIEST,, AND LEVITE,, OR,,**

**(\*) DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH JESUS?**

**LET'S SHOW OUR LOVE AND OUR COMPASSION,, TO THOSE AROUND US,, WHO ARE IN NEED,, AND**

**ESPECIALLY,, TO THOSE IN OUR OWN CHURCH.**

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, *THE WORD,, OUR LORD  
JESUS CHRIST,,* IS VERY NEAR!**

**WHAT JESUS SAID,, TO THE PHARISEES,, THAT DAY,,  
SO LONG AGO,, HE IS ALSO SAYING TO US TODAY,,  
WHEN HE SAID,,**

**“GO AND DO LIKEWISE!”**

***IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT  
+++ AMEN+++***

**( 1,269) WDS,, 6 PGS**