

## The Good Samaritan - Luke 10:25-37

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing to you  
O Lord.

The good Samaritan can be the most unexpected person who is willing to give of himself/herself in a situation which calls for action.

Yet, giving of self can be a very selfish act as we weigh what kinds of rewards we can achieve. However in this parable, Jesus is speaking about giving without counting or measuring the rewards. Giving from a caring, unselfish, loving heart. Giving because you enjoy and want to give of yourself freely.

Isn't it true. we want our church to stand for many things but when a commitment is needed, it is much easier to back down, to play it safe. It is easier not to give of self, to hang back to calculate the cost as the lawyer wanted to do in our lesson. Jesus saw through his selfishness and demanded he give freely of himself now.

This is one level of looking at this parable. This morning I would also like to look at some other levels of this parable

The first being the question the lawyer asked Jesus. He asked "Teacher what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He is looking for the good life the meaningful life, the satisfying life, the life which God intended for him to have the life that is in a right relationship with God and all of his creation.

He is asking, " how can I get out of the ditches of brokenness, separation hatred and self-righteousness. How can I pull myself up from this kind of life to a life which is not separated from God and other".

Jesus answers him by asking, "What does the law say?" and the lawyer repeats the law. Jesus tells him to do it, but he still doesn't understand so he asks another question about the identity of his neighbor. And in this parable Jesus speaks to the obvious question of neighbor and the implied question how shall I live my life, How do I get myself out of the brokenness of this world? In Jesus answer he tells the lawyer that he can't get himself out of the brokenness of this world, he can't save himself, he can't pull himself up by his bootstraps, he must wait for the good Samaritan, he must wait for the Messiah, he must wait for Jesus.

Can you see this very subtle point Jesus makes as we see this parable from the point of salvation. His question stated, "Teacher what shall I do, notice the "I" He wanted to know how he could have the good life and in a subtle way Jesus told him that by himself he cannot achieve the good life, but only through the savior. And then the savior would show him what was meant by the good life, it is a life of service, sacrifice, and giving of one's self. Jesus showed him two truths in one parable. Jesus saw him missing the point, missing the only way for salvation.

It wasn't what he could do, but what Christ can do for him. After he felt the love, the service, the caring of Christ, then in the parable Jesus commands him to do likewise to love his neighbor in the same kind of way that Christ loved him. Salvation doesn't depend on a person's actions, but on the loving of Christ. Jesus saw that the

lawyer didn't understand at all why he come because he was so wrapped up in himself so he couldn't see Christ as the savior and the Messiah and he couldn't see the love of neighbor either.

Jesus was saying that the lawyer didn't understand what Jesus mission was all about. Jesus came to take the I out of salvation picture. Jesus came as Luther said, "as God's Good Samaritan." Jesus came because we cannot pull ourselves out of the brokenness the bondage of sin which engulfs us each day. We cannot save ourselves no matter how much we try. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life" What shall I do to live the good life, what shall I do to live in contentment and harmony with God and us.

Jesus says nothing. You can't save yourself, that is his job. Then after salvation is secured then Jesus says that life is lived in service to my neighbor.

The reward, eternal life, is given to all as a free gift, no string attached. Our service, our response, our sacrifice comes from a loving heart which has been loved so much by Christ that it cannot help but to love in return. The Samaritan received no reward for his service, he loved period.

You and I are to love period because salvation has been given as a free gift, that is already taken care for us by Jesus.

And that is just the point Jesus is subtly making to the lawyer and to all those who think they can by their own efforts pull themselves out of the ditches of brokenness and bondage to sin. We are wounded by our own wrongdoings, we are broken by the pain of life and we must we need to admit to ourselves that we need a

good Samaritan to come and carry us out of our ditch. Then Christ will come take us upon his back, the back which shouldered the cross, and carry us out of our ditch into the light, the brightness, the glory of living for him and with him.

Then Jesus will point out to us all the others who are living in their ditches and asks us to do likewise. We cannot carry them out and give them salvation, however, Jesus asks us to carry those out who are feeling the brokenness of this world, those who have been mugged, robbed beaten, broken, battered by the forces of this world in which we have no control. These we are to carry out. These we are to minister to, these are the ones in which we can become like that good Samaritan.

The lawyer asks Jesus "What must I do to got the good life?" Jesus answers, "The good life is a gift from God, and when you get it you will be like the Samaritan who helped even his hated enemy, the Jew."

Jesus is saying to the lawyer and to us, not how we should act, but how we will act when we stand in a right relationship to God. When we surrender ourselves to Christ when we allow Him to carry us out of our ditches, we are in the right relationship to God and we are made good neighbors.

Are you a good neighbor?

Amen.

