Being A Neighbor: “Look For The Helpers”

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday March 10th, 2024

Text: Luke 10:25-37 (Galatians 5:14) Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:43-45

# Intro

1. A lawyer, an expert in the Old Law, once asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:25-29)
   1. Luke 10:25  And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”
   2. Luke 10:26  And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?”
   3. Luke 10:27  And 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.”
   4. Luke 10:28  And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.”
   5. Luke 10:29  But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”
2. Jesus had also taught that in addition to loving our neighbor, we must love our enemies as well!
   1. Matthew 5:43  “You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.'
   2. Matthew 5:44  “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
   3. Matthew 5:45  so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
3. Brad Meltzer has written a children’s book called, “I Am Mr. Rogers” (published October 31, 2023) about the life of Fred Rogers. Mr. Rogers entertained & taught children for decades and left us with his iconic question, “Won’t you be my neighbor?”
   1. Mr. Rogers used this warm invitation to connect with viewers and emphasize the importance of kindness and community.
   2. There’s a section of the book that focuses on the lessons of kindness that Nancy Rogers (1903-1981) instilled in her son, Fred, who would later teach children on his TV show.
   3. She was a compassionate and caring woman who knitted sweaters for American soldiers from western Pennsylvania during their service in Europe. Additionally, she volunteered regularly at the Latrobe Hospital (Latrobe, PA). Mr. Rogers usually wore a sweater hand-knitted by his mother!
4. We will view the Good Samaritan parable from Jesus through the lens of kindness and compassion that Nancy Rogers taught her son, Fred, who would become Mr. Rogers.
5. Let us look for opportunities and ways to be a neighbor!

# The Good Samaritan

1. *Luke 10:25-37:* 
   1. A lawyer (scholar of the Law) asked Jesus how to inherit eternal life and Jesus had him answer his own question from the Law *(Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Mt. 22:35-40).*
   2. He then asked another question, “Who is my neighbor?” which prompted Jesus to tell a parable about the “Good Samaritan” (Luke 10:30-37).
      1. A man is robbed and beaten near to death.
      2. A Priest and a Levite pass by and do nothing but move to the other side of the road.
      3. A Samaritan is on a journey but stops because he had compassion on him and bandages him, puts ointment on him, places him on his own beast and takes him to an inn for the night.
      4. The next day he gives the inn keeper two-days’ wages and says to take care of the man and if anything is left the Samaritan will cover it on his return trip.
   3. At the end of the story, Jesus asked, “Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?”
   4. The lawyer answered correctly, “The one who showed mercy toward him.”
   5. Jesus told him, “Go and do the same” (“Go, and be a neighbor!”).
2. The Samaritan’s compassion was sacrificial (It cost him time, effort, oil, wine and money)!

# The Good Samaritan Proved to be a Neighbor

1. What Nancy Rogers teaches on kindness and compassion can be seen in the story Jesus taught about being a neighbor in Luke 10:25-37. Mr. Rogers taught these things to children for decades!
2. **Look for Helpers:** When Fred Rogers was a young boy and saw scary things in the news, his mother would tell him to “look for the helpers.” She taught him to focus on the people who were always there to help during difficult times.
   1. **Luke 10:31-33:** The scary part of the story is the robbers. Highwaymen were a real threat then. Paul says he was in danger of robbers in II Corinthians 11:26.
   2. After the robbers part of the story who are the helpers?
   3. Not the priest and the Levite! (Luke 10:31-32). They “passed by on the other side.”
      1. Their attitude toward religion: a ceremonial type of religion.
      2. They thought they could not go wrong as long as they performed certain specified things---observe the right days, eat the right foods, offer the right sacrifices and perform the right temple ceremonies.
      3. They could pass by a dying man and feel justified as long as they went through their ceremony. They might have said, “That’s a pitiful case” and then excused themselves.
      4. Showing kindness and compassion would have been an inconvenience as they would have been unclean, and they apparently had other things to do!
      5. They could see things that needed to be done, but they just “passed by on the other side.”
   4. The Samaritan, a foreigner, who the Jews would have considered an enemy, was the true helper here.
      1. **Luke 10:33:** “A Samaritan came by…and he had compassion on him.”
      2. That was the difference: The robbers did not have compassion, the priest and Levite did not, but the Samaritan did.
      3. When you learned that he had compassion, you knew that he would take care of everything.
      4. Jews & Samaritans: hundreds of years of hatred and animosity.
      5. Yet the Samaritan “had compassion” (Matthew 5:43-45: He showed love to an enemy).
3. **Encourage Goodness:** His mother encouraged Fred to make goodness attractive. She believed that one of the toughest assignments in life is to make kindness and goodness appealing to others.
   1. **Luke 10:31-33:** The robbers didn’t show goodness. They robbed & beat the man.
   2. The priest and the Levite didn’t show goodness. They “passed by on the other side.”
   3. The Samaritan showed goodness, at great cost to himself!
4. **Share Responsibility:** She instilled in him the idea that we live in a world where we need to share responsibility. It’s easy to say, “It’s not my problem,” but she believed in responding to the needs she saw around her.
   1. **Luke 10:31-33:** The priest and the Levite acted as if it wasn’t their problem. They ignored the need that they saw and “passed by on the other side.”
   2. The Samaritan “proved” to be a neighbor because he took the problem on as if it were his own!
5. **Be Kind:** Mr. Rogers learned from his mother that there are three ways to Ultimate success: the first way is to be kind, the second way is to be kind, and the third way is to be kind.
   1. **Luke 10:33-35:** Jesus tells us that a Samaritan was on a journey, meaning he had places to be and things to do, but he saw the need and “had compassion.”
      1. In his compassion, the Samaritan did what needed to be done.
      2. His help was impartial (He did not check his color – did not care that the man was a Jew).
      3. His help was spontaneous (He did not consult with others or form a committee).
      4. His help was personal (He got his hands dirty and blood on his clothes).
      5. His help was thorough (He did not decide, “I have done my share, somebody else can take him to the inn”).
      6. He saw it through at great personal expense! (His time, ointments, bandages, his own comfort as he let the man ride on his donkey, and his money as he paid for a night and left two-days’ wages to continue the man’s care).
      7. He had compassion and acted on it!
      8. To the Samaritan, a Jew in need was his neighbor.
6. **Unique Contributions:** His mother recognized that everyone has different gifts and ways of expressing themselves. She taught him that each person brings something valuable to the world.
   1. **Luke 10:33-35:** The Samaritan contributed to the beaten and robbed man’s well-being in a variety of ways.
   2. Despite being on a journey, he stopped and tended to the man’s wounds and then made sure he was somewhere safe before he journeyed on.
   3. The man had clearly been robbed and so the Samaritan used his own money & placed the man’s care on his tab should two-days’ wages not be enough.
   4. Jesus points out that all of this was because “he had compassion” on the man.
7. **Embrace Uniqueness:** She encouraged her son, Fred, to accept people exactly as they are, recognizing their uniqueness and the chance to live in a redeeming way.
   1. **Luke 10:31-33:** Jews & Samaritans: hundreds of years of hatred and animosity (John 4:9: Jews have nothing to do with Samaritans).
   2. This foreigner, as Jesus called a Samaritan who was healed of his leprosy in Luke 17:18, didn’t care that the man was a Jew.
   3. Apparently, neither did the priest or Levite, since they saw a bloody mess and “passed by on the other side.”
   4. Help for this Jew came from an unlikely source – because compassion and kindness see through personal bias & prejudices!
8. **Say “Yes”:** Fred’s mother appreciated the times he said “yes,” even when it meant extra work for him and seemed helpful only to someone else.
   1. **Luke 10:31-32:** The priest & Levite said, “No.”
   2. **Luke 10:33-35:** The Samaritan said, “Yes.” It did mean extra work for him and even cost him from his own treasures.
   3. Saying, “Yes” to helping this robbed and beaten man cost him time, resources and money. *(Don’t N.A.V.Y.: Never Again Volunteer Yourself)*
9. **Worth and Worthiness:** She believed that the world needed a sense of worth, and each person was worth another’s time and effort.
   1. **Luke 6:31:** Jesus also taught that we ought to treat one another the way we want to be treated.
   2. **Luke 10:33-35:** The Samaritan showed that this man, beaten and robbed, was worth his time and resources!
   3. The priest and Levite didn’t treat the man as worth anything and didn’t treat him the way they would have wanted to be treated!
10. **Kind Words:** She understood the power of kind words. Imagine the impact if each of us offered just one kind word to another person.
    1. **Luke 10:35:** The only words recorded by Jesus that the Samaritan said were kindness towards the man and a promise to repay all that was needed to the innkeeper, “Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.”
    2. “Take care of him…I will repay you.”
    3. The Samaritan could have called it good when he arrived at the inn and paid for one night. But he wanted to make sure the man was cared for and so he charged the innkeeper to “Take care of him.”
    4. By saying, “Whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you,” he was saying don’t charge anything to the man he brought in, but charge it to the Samaritan’s tab!
11. In tragedies it is great to see who is being a neighbor by “looking for the helpers.”
12. In being a neighbor, don’t just “look for the helpers” but be a “Helper!”

# Saints Are to Be a Neighbor

1. When asked, “Who proved to be a neighbor?” the lawyer answered correctly, “The one who showed mercy toward him.”
2. Jesus told him, “Go and do the same” (“Go, and be a neighbor!”).
3. The two attitudes contrasted between the lawyer and the Samaritan in Jesus’ story:
   1. The lawyer: “Who do I have to love?” (“Who is my neighbor?”)
   2. The Samaritan: “How can I be a neighbor?”
4. Galatians 5:14: For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”
5. Jesus said to love one another as He loved us (John 13:34-35) and forgive as He forgave us (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13) – He was the example in all that He said and did!
   1. **The parable Jesus told shows that our neighbor is anyone who needs us!** (Not just a geographical position, but a need)
6. Christians are commanded to be compassionate, loving individuals – Colossians 3:12-14:
   1. We are to have compassion for one another – I Peter 3:8; 4:8
      1. Does your compassion go as far as the priest and the Levite*? (Do you pass by on the other side when you see a need?)*
      2. *What if it’s Sunday? What if I get my suit and tie dirty?*
   2. We are to have compassion for the lost – Jude 22-23 (“Mercy” is “compassion” in NKJ)
      1. We are to teach them *(as Jesus taught the crowds in Mk. 6:34)* so that they may repent and be saved from the fire! *(II Tim. 2:24-26; Jude 22-23)*
   3. We are to have compassion for our enemies – Matthew 5:43-45; Romans 12:19-21
      1. We are to pray for those who hate us and persecute us! *Hard thing to do!*
      2. To offer them the physical help as we are able *(Rom. 12:19-21; Gal. 6:10)*
      3. To offer spiritual help when needed: to seek to correct and forgive, not to humiliate and condemn (*Col. 3:12-14; II Tim. 2:24-26; Jude 22-23)*

## How we treat others in this life is how we will be treated in the life to come!

## Matthew 5:7: The merciful will receive mercy *(means compassion and is same word used in Mt. 18:33; I Tim. 1:13, 16; Jude 22-23)*

## Colossians 3:12-14: We are to be people of mercy, compassion & forgiveness.

## Go, be a neighbor, be a helper!

# Conclusion

1. The power of compassion...
   1. Was an example by the Samaritan to show how to be a neighbor *(Luke 10:36-37)*
   2. Saved the world from sins and reconciled man to God in the death of Jesus *(John 1:29)*
   3. Saved Paul and exemplified the grace and mercy of God *(I Timothy 1:13, 16)*
   4. When shown by us today we will be shown compassion on Judgment Day! *(Matthew 5:7)*
2. Look for ways to be a neighbor; look for ways & opportunities to be a helper!
3. If you are not a Christian, you need to be! He has shown such compassion for you; He died and paid your debt with His own blood and promises rest for your soul. Repent and be baptized!
4. If a Christian with unrepented sin in your life, His compassion is extended to you as well, repent and He will forgive you. We will forgive you. Repent before it’s everlasting too late!
5. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!