

In our text this morning, there are two essential components. While most Bibles will entitle this passage of Scripture, “The Parable of the Good Samaritan,” it should be noted that this parable was prompted by a question put to Jesus by a lawyer. One commentator says that another appropriate title for this passage is, “The Contest Between the Lawyer and the Teacher. This morning we deal with both of these topics.

Luke 10:25-37—And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?”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.”²⁸ And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?”³⁷ He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

The longest recorded sermon of Jesus is the series of lessons known as the Sermon on the Mount, which are recorded in Matthew’s Gospel from chapters 5 through 7. At the end of chapter 7 we read, **Matthew 7:28-29**—*And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching,²⁹ for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.*

Jesus is the great master teacher who spoke with authority, but not like the scribes. The scribes, because they were copyists, who produced copies of the scrolls of God’s Word, were assumed to be teachers of the Word of God because they were familiar with it. Jesus’ authority was essential to His being the eternal Son of God, the promised Christ, by whose Spirit the Scriptures were inspired. But from the human

perspective, Jesus had no official credentials, no study under a recognized teacher and therefore, no acknowledged authority from the Jewish leaders. Jesus has just met with the 72 disciples who have come back from a successful mission. And Jesus has expressed praise to God in which He thanked God for hiding these things that is, the message of the Gospel, from the wise and learned and revealed them to babes, to people who received His teaching sincerely like a child. Jesus was taking a shot against the system of the Judaism of His day which nullified the Law of God and was devoid of grace, mercy, and compassion. It was not the faith that had been given to the people through the prophets. The religious system espoused by the Jewish leaders in Jesus' day had denigrated to a judgmental, legalistic, self-righteousness. Upon this scene comes a man who exemplified that which Jesus condemns. His goal is to embarrass the Lord before the people. In dealing with this lawyer's inquiry, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus gives what is perhaps one of the most well-known stories of the Bible—the Good Samaritan, or as one commentary puts it, the Samaritan who cared. **True saving faith is a gift of God; we are not saved by our works; however, our faith will be proved as genuine by our works. And my neighbor is anyone who comes across my path and in need of help, or assistance which I am able to render. What person, or persons has the Lord brought into your life who is now a neighbor in need? Will you go and do likewise?**

THE LAWYER'S CHALLENGE

Vs. 25—*And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"*

When we think of a lawyer, we imagine a courtroom scene where an advocate defends a person accused of a crime. The lawyer here is not that kind of lawyer. Instead, this man is an expert in the law of Moses; he is a professional in the application of the Torah. Much of his time would be spent debating the law with other law experts, arguing and splitting hairs. This professional seems to have disdain for Jesus, the untrained rabbi, who has the admiration of the people. His intent is to put Jesus to the test and perhaps embarrass him in front of the crowd.

He asks about inheriting eternal life. What a glorious subject, eternal life is not just living forever; it is of endless duration in a priceless quality of inexpressible joy and glory in the presence of God. Jesus defines eternal life as knowing the true God and Jesus Christ, who was sent by the father. Commentator William Hendrickson offers this observation: "It is not suggested that this law-expert was aware of the full significance of the term he used, but it must be admitted that he was making

inquiries about a most important matter. On the other hand, does not the very fact that everlasting life is such a glorious commodity make a wrongly motivated question about it all the more reprehensible?"

Baker New Testament Commentary - Baker New Testament Commentary – Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke.

Jesus answers with a question of his own. *He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" The implication is that if this man is an expert in the Law, he should know the answer.* The answer he gives is in fact, a summary of the 10 commandments, a summary that Jesus gave on occasion: "*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.*"

This is a combination of two verses, the first part is from the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:5. The second half is from **Leviticus 19:18**—*You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.* **Jesus acknowledges that the Lawyer is correct.** ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

Let's unpack this summary statement.

We acknowledge two points of focus with the ten commandments. The first four reveal how we are to love God: worship no other Gods; don't make images of God; don't misuse His name; and worship Him on the Sabbath. **The second deals with our relationship to other people and we express love them them.** Honor your father and mother; don't commit adultery; don't murder; don't steal; don't bear false witness; and don't covet your neighbor's spouse or possessions. You cannot have genuine love for your neighbor without a true love for God

The essence of true religion is genuine love for God which overflows in sincere love our neighbor. Notice the four-fold "with all." Love the LORD with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind. Our love for God is to be accomplished with every molecule of our being.

It may appear that Jesus is teaching salvation by works; he is not. If one could truly obey God's law then they would live having earned eternal life. But no one can ever do this.

If the lawyer fully understood the implications of this Jesus' answer, "do this and you will live." he would have fell down before Jesus and cried out for mercy because he would have been convicted of his sin.

The Lawyer's Sin—²⁹ *But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

Here is the very crux of the issue with this expert of the Law—He believed that he could earn his way to heaven. He had no clue that he was in need of God's mercy, and this reveals that this so-called expert of the Law didn't really understand God's law. God's Law reveals God's righteous standard. When a person fully understands the impact of the Law and the need for obedience from the heart, as well as what we say and do, they realize they fall far short of God's standard and the only recourse is to cry to God for mercy.

Dr. Sproul writes: *We are unable to understand the mercy of God until we understand the law of God and how the law of God reveals to us our sin and our hopeless inability to justify ourselves. The law drives us to Christ, who alone can justify sinners who are unjust. The lawyer who challenged Jesus made the worst mistake he could possibly make. He thought he could justify himself. Probably most people think the same, that they can say to God, "I led a good life." Compared to what? Compared to the law of God? Not a chance.*

No one has ever perfectly kept the law. James speaks against showing partiality, that is favoring one group over another. **James 2:8-13—***If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. 11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

JESUS TEACHES THE LAWYER JUST WHO IS HIS NEIGHBOR

The master gives the story of a man who heads down the road from Jerusalem the 21 miles to Jericho. The man is stopped by highwaymen, murderous thieves who beat the man, rob him and leave him for dead.

A priest passes him by and leaves him, offering no help. A Levite comes across the man and goes to the other side of the road and hurries along past the injured man. I have heard people say that the priest and the Levite were on their way to fulfill

their duties at the temple; they were pressed for time and did not wish to be late. Well remember Jesus is giving a story and does not give the motives of these men—just that they leave him half dead without assistance; there is no excuse for that.

I think it is significant that Jesus identifies the first two men as a priest and a Levite. This also is an intentional slam against the Judaism of Jesus' day. Further insult comes with the identity of the man who helps the injured man. This man is a Samaritan, a despised half-breed remnant of the pagan Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Notice the extent of the care given. Jesus tells us the Samaritan had compassion on this injured man. ***Should not the priest and Levite have known of the compassion God had lavished on the Jews and exercised the same on this fellow human being?***

³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’

Speaking about the concept of “compassion”. R. C. Sprouls writes, *We tend to cheapen this concept in our culture today. We say, “I feel your pain,” and walk on the other side of the street. Of course, true compassion goes far beyond mere feelings. If a person has real compassion, he doesn’t just feel it; he shows it. In Psalm 103:13, we read, “As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.” What father would leave his son half dead in a ditch because he had an appointment somewhere else? God’s compassion for His children took Jesus to the cross. God didn’t just feel bad for us. Jesus didn’t just take care of us. He demonstrated that compassion by doing everything to heal us and to redeem us.* Sproul, R.C.. Luke: An Expositional Commentary (p. 311). Reformation Trust Publishing. Kindle Edition.

The priest and the Levite were professional clergy who should have reflected the compassion of God, but they didn’t. The Good Samaritan, of a people hated by the Jews, likely by this lawyer, is the one who is expressing the compassion God expects from those who know God. This isn't a story about how nice “we” are. It's a story about how one of “them” helped one of “us.” The story implicitly reveals how far from the grace of God the Jewish religion had fallen. It may have been reluctantly acknowledged, but the lawyer is correct as to which of the three was the true neighbor of the injured man—the Samaritan who showed mercy and compassion.

James 2:14-19—*What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?*¹⁵ *If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food,*¹⁶ *and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?*¹⁷ *So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*¹⁸ *But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*¹⁹ *You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*

In 1992, Watching the Los Angeles race riots on TV, Reverend Bennie Newton learned that wilding thugs were assaulting truck driver Reginald Denny on a nearby street corner. He rushed to the scene, but when he arrived, Denny was gone. But the gang was already pummeling another innocent bystander.

The mob had ripped construction worker Fidel Lopez from his truck, robbed him of \$2,000, bashed his forehead open with a car stereo, and even tried to slice his ear off. Then they stripped him naked and spray painted the married father’s chest, torso and genitals black. Reverend Newton saw the depravity and threw himself over Lopez’s body. Waving his Bible, Newton yelled “Kill him and you have to kill me, too!” Shamed back to reality, the crowd dispersed while the minister prayed in the street for Lopez to regain consciousness. When he could not hail an ambulance, Newton drove Lopez to the hospital himself.