

The Lord's Message: Response to a Crisis

Date: October 8, 2023

Where: Tilghman Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: Luke 10:25-37

The other day, my son, Davey, and I stopped to help a grandma that had a flat tire. It was the left front tire. This tire had been shredded until the chord was showing. There was another woman that had stopped just before we did. She was in the process of getting the scissors jack under the car. I asked if she had broken the lug nuts loose. She said that she hadn't. So, my son and I proceeded to break the lug nuts loose. We were able to break all of them, except for one that was rusted onto the threads of the lug bolts. I just happened to go around the other side of the car and noticed that the other front tire had chords showing and the two back tires were bald.

It was probably a Godsend that we could not get the one lug nut loose. The shape of the rest of the tires could have resulted in an accident. I told her that she was going to need to call the tow truck and have them replace all the tires. She got on her phone and did just that. In no time, a tow truck came and the problem, from our standpoint, was solved.

Grandma got the help that she needed. The rest of us could go on our way. Crisis averted. Do these acts of compassion help us attain eternal life? Some people would think so, but what does the Bible tell us?

Let us pray.

The passage of scripture that is known as The Parable of the Good Samaritan occurs just after Jesus has sent His disciples out by two to "Heal the sick" and "tell them the kingdom of God is near you." The disciples come back with exciting news. Look at **Luke 10:17**. In verses 18 -19, Jesus compliments them on their success. With each blessing, there is always a warning.

In the Garden of Eden, God told Adam and Eve to eat the fruit from any tree in the garden, but do not eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan's temptation comes upon Eve in **Genesis 3:6-7a**. The blessing was to "eat the fruit from any tree", the warning was "except the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil". We have been eating that fruit ever since.

Back to **Luke 10**, Jesus has just blessed the disciples, but know the warning in verse 20. The author of this book, Luke, links together Jesus' warning that one should not be concerned with the evil spirits submitting to them, but to be concerned that your names are written in heaven, in other words, that you have received eternal life.

He emphasizes this point by relating an event that occurred at some point in Jesus' ministry. In verse 25, we are told that an expert in the law is testing the Son of God, Jesus, whose Father had given the Law to Moses. We know that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all one. **In John 14:20 & 25**, confirms this. Everything the Father knows, the Son knows, and the Holy Spirit knows. This is silly that this expert in the Law of Moses is testing the Son, but Jesus humors him.

The expert's question is, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus' response is "What is written in the Law?" and "How do you read it?" The expert replies with "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 "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Now some people do not know when to stop when it comes to digging their own hole. Apparently, this lawyer was one of those people. He asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus tells him a parable. A parable is a short story that is told to convey a deeper truth about the kingdom of God.

Jesus tells him about a man on the road traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. This is a very familiar route that is still a traveled road today. Many people traveled on this route. Of course, most people walked. There was always the threat of robbers or wild animals. This person is attacked by robbers. Not only did the robbers beat the man to a pulp, but they also stripped him of his clothes and left him to die. A priest was traveling this road a short time later. Priests often traveled this road, once their priestly duties were completed, they traveled home. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, did this as recorded in Luke 1:23. The Priest saw the man, but passed by on the other side of the road. A Levite traveling on this same road did so as well. The reason for neither the priest nor the Levite stopping to help the man is found in Numbers 19. God did not want people to pick up dead animals or dead people, because one does not know the result of why this animal or person died. It could have been from a disease. This was to stop the spread of disease. Even today, if a Jewish person dies, they are to be buried within 24 hours.

Nevertheless, neither the priest nor the Levite helped the man. A Samaritan stopped and helped the man. Samaritans are people who are half Jewish, half Assyrian, and half Babylonian. They are considered as the outcasts of society in Jesus' day. This Samaritan bound up the wounds and took the man to a hotel to recover from his injuries. Hence, he is referred to as good.

We are so thankful today that we have Good Samaritans, our First Responders. They put their lives on the line each and every day. They work extremely hard at their jobs. Many are volunteers and have primary jobs. They also have to take time out to train to be able to handle any situation. We are so blessed to have these women and men in our communities. As a church, we pray for you each and every day. When the siren goes off, I pray for you. That God will keep you safe and give you the ability to help those in need. Thank you for your service.

Jesus concludes the parable by asking the lawyer, "Who was a neighbor to this man?" Now, I find it interesting that the lawyer cannot say "The Samaritan," but instead says, "The one who showed kindness to him."

Now, some of you know that I can be very hardheaded. Often times, this parable is preached to show that all people are our neighbors. John Wesley said the whole world is his parish.

I got to thinking about this. The Holy Spirit kept leading me back to the original question. "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" This question has nothing to do with us loving our neighbors. So, what was Jesus trying to convey?

Jesus was taking this lawyer deeper than just being a good neighbor. This lawyer, you and I, are the person that is beaten up and left for dead on the side of the road. We are beaten up by the devil. The devil tempts us to sin. Then when we sin, the devil becomes the accuser. "You say you are following God, why would you sin." "God does not love you, because you are a sinner." The devil heaps shame upon us. We feel guilty of our sin. We are beaten up and left for dead. The priest and the Levite represent the way that we think we can inherit eternal life. The priest represents the spiritual ways that we try to inherit eternal life, such as reading and meditating on scriptures, praying, and fellowshiping with believers. This does not work. These methods are very important to sustain our relationship with God but is not the way to inherit eternal life. The Levite represents the physical ways that we try to inherit eternal life. Doing good for others. Helping a person broken down on the side of the road. Fixing a meal for your neighbors. Just being a good person. Some people think that God will allow them into heaven if they keep doing good. But how much good does one need to do? Look at **Isaiah 64:6**. This is foolish thinking.

Now, you might feel depressed by what I have said. There is Good News. What we cannot accomplish, God has ready done for us. In **Romans 5:8**, even though we are sinners, Christ died for us. This is called Grace. We do not earn it. We do not deserve it. It is God's gift to us. Grace – God's Redemption At Christ Expense.

How do you inherit eternal life? Repent and believe. It is just that simple, but do not trust my word on this, trust Jesus. Jesus says in **Mark 1:15**. It starts with coming before Almighty God and telling God that I want to have a relationship to you. I open my heart and allow Jesus to come in. I believe that Your only Son, Jesus, died on the cross for me to redeem me of my sins. I repent and believe. You will not have religion, but you will have a relationship with God. Because of this relationship you will want to sustain it, by reading and mediating on the Bible, praying and being in fellowship with believers. The result of this will be that you will see others as your neighbors and be in love and charity with them. This will continue the rest of your life, until that day when you see Jesus, face to face.

This is how you inherit eternal life. Amen.