

ESF, Lord's Day Service Message  
10/18/2015

## **Love Your Neighbor**

Luke 10:25-37

*<sup>25</sup> On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" <sup>27</sup> He answered: "'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.' " <sup>28</sup> "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." <sup>29</sup> But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" <sup>30</sup> In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' <sup>36</sup> "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" <sup>37</sup> The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."*

If we have to summarize all the laws and commands of God given to man and make a simple statement, what should that be? Jesus says that the statement should be "Love your God with your all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself." In today's parable, Jesus teaches us

what blessings we receive when we love our neighbor and how can we love our neighbor.

## **The blessings we receive when we love our neighbor**

### **1. Life in the light of God**

God is love. So when we love others, we can know God and see God. 1 John 4:7-12 says, *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ...because God is love ... No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

Also we can live in the light of God. 1 John 2:10 says: *Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.* When we live in the light of God, we have no fear. Light gives us a clear direction. Light drives out the power of the Devil who is the king of darkness. So, we can be victorious over the Devil.

An elderly rabbi once asked his students how one could recognize when the night ends and the day begins. One student raised his hand, and said, "It is when, from a great distance, you can tell a dog from a sheep." The rabbi said, "No, that is not it." Another student raised his hand, and said, "It is when from a great distance you can tell a palm tree from a fig tree." He said, "No. It is when you look into the face of another human being and see there your brother and your sister. Until then the night is with you."

### **2. Life with satisfaction**

When you live with a selfish heart and do not care for others, you may think that you are safe and secure. But the exact opposite will happen to you. You feel insecure always, you feel unsafe always and you get thirsty for something always. But when you care for others with genuine love, that thirst will be gone. You will live with the satisfaction of your life. After Jesus compassionately loved a miserable person and led the

person to a joyful new life, His heart was filled with joy and satisfaction (John 4:1-34).

Marion Preminger was born in Hungary in 1913; reared in a castle with her wealthy family, surrounded with maids, tutors, butlers, and chauffeurs. At the age 19, she began her life as an actress.

She had almost everything people want to have to be happy- beauty, money, and fame. However, she always felt empty and unhappy. In 1948, she met Albert Schweitzer who was making one of his periodic visits from Africa to Europe. After spending some time with her, Schweitzer invited her to come to Africa to work in his hospital.

She accepted, and there the girl who had been raised like a princess, became a servant to others. She changed bandages, bathed babies, fed lepers. She wrote her autobiography and called it, "All I Ever Wanted Was Everything." She told of how she had most everything but nothing satisfied, until she began living for others.

## **How can you love your neighbor?**

### 1. Love everyone as your neighbor

When an expert in the law asked Jesus “who is my neighbor?” he meant who is his neighbor whom he should love. In that question, he implied that not all people are his neighbor to love.

But Jesus taught him that all people should be his neighbors. Why? Jesus gives the reason with this parable.

The parable begins with a man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers. He was beaten half to death by the robbers. He was bleeding and lying helplessly beside the road. He desperately needed someone’s help. At that moment a priest went down the road where the man was lying and asking help. But he did not do anything to help the victim and just passed by the place. After that a

Levite came down the same road and saw the victim. He also didn't help the victim and just passed by the scene. Then a Samaritan traveler passed by. When the Samaritan saw the helpless man, he took pity on him and did everything he could to help the man.

After telling this story, Jesus asked the lawyer: "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" The lawyer replied, "The one who had mercy on him." He acknowledged that the Samaritan was the neighbor.

In those days, the Jewish people looked down on Samaritans as mixed-blood people. The Jews had negative prejudices against Samaritans and did not associate with Samaritans. So as a Jew, the lawyer had never considered Samaritans as his neighbors. But through this story, Jesus taught him that Samaritans could be his neighbors.

Jesus taught him that he also could be robbed, beaten half to death and in need of other people's merciful help. If he was beaten, robbed and thrown to the ground as a half dead man, he would need a person who would consider him as a neighbor and reach out to him with helping hands. In such a condition, he would certainly want to be considered a neighbor by anyone who could help him regardless of the person's skin color, ethnic background, religious background or any other human status.

With this lesson, Jesus encourages us to consider all people our neighbors regardless of race, religious preference, or social status. Our human nature excludes many people as our neighbors. Our human nature distinguishes between people we consider and love as our neighbors and people we don't consider as our neighbors. But when we listen to Jesus' encouraging word, we must not follow our nature, but embrace all kinds of people as our neighbors. When you recognize that suffering in this world is common to everybody, and that you yourself can be victimized by something dangerous, and that you also need help from others, you

cannot ignore the pain and suffering of other people. You cannot but consider them your neighbors.

## 2. Love with actions

Loving our neighbors involves action. Of course we can love our neighbors through our kind, gentle or loving words. But true love goes beyond words. 1 John 3:18 says: *Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.* James says in James 2:15-16: *Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go I wish you well; keep warm and well fed', but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?*

When the Samaritan gave his compassionate love to the man who was robbed, he took action. In verses 34-35, we can see what kind of action he took in loving the victim: *He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper.*

### #1. When we love others with actions, we must be willing to take risks.

When the Samaritan took care of the victim, he was willing to take risks. There were several serious risks. What if the man lying on the road was pretending to be a victim to entrap those passing by? What if robbers attacked him while he was taking care of the victim? What would happen to the Samaritan if the victim died while he was taking care of him? After he took care of the victim, the victim might complain of something he had done rather than appreciating him. Such negative things could happen. So, it was risky business for someone to take care of the victim. The priest and the Levite were reluctant to take such risks. But the Samaritan was willing to take the risks.

Jesus always took risks when He loved suffering and needy people. And he encourages us to follow his example. He touched a leper to heal him

(Matthew 8:1-4). Leprosy is a contagious disease. Nobody dared to touch a leper. Lepers should distance themselves from other healthy people. But by touching a leper, Jesus took a risk. By taking the risk, Jesus loved the leper with action and in truth.

There are risks in loving others. What if people take advantage of our kindness? What if they don't appreciate what we do? We may get hurt from negative outcomes. But genuine love is always willing to take risks. In the parable, there is no mention of the victim's response to the kindness of the Samaritan. Loving our neighbor isn't contingent on the neighbor's appreciation. Jesus says in Luke 6:30, *Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.*

#2. When we love others with actions, we have to be willing to sacrifice  
The Samaritan in this parable sacrificed his time and his money to take care of the wounded victim. True love takes action even if it requires sacrifice. That is the love we have received from God through the sacrifice of His Son's own life. 1John 3:16 says, *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.*

Shortly after coming to Christ, Sadhu Sundar, a Hindu convert to Christ, felt called to become a missionary to India. Late one afternoon Sadhu was traveling on foot through the Himalayas with a Buddhist monk. It was bitterly cold and the wind felt like sharp blades slicing into Sadhu's skin. Night was approaching fast when the monk warned Sadhu that they were in danger of freezing to death if they did not reach the monastery before darkness fell.

Just as they were traversing a narrow path above a steep cliff, they heard a cry for help. Down the cliff lay a man, fallen and badly hurt. The monk looked at Sadhu and said, "Do not stop. God has brought this man to his

fate. He must work it out for himself." Then he quickly added while walking on, "Let us hurry on before we, too, perish."

But Sadhu replied, "God has sent me here to help my brother. I cannot abandon him."

The monk continued trudging off through the whirling snow, while the missionary clambered down the steep embankment. The man's leg was broken and he could not walk. So Sadhu took his blanket and made a sling of it and tied the man on his back. Then, bending under his burden, he began a body-torturing climb. By the time he reached the narrow path again, he was drenched by sweat.

Doggedly, he made his way through the deepening snow and darkness. It was all he could do to follow the path. But he persevered, though faint with fatigue and overheated from exertion. Finally he saw ahead the lights of the monastery.

Then, for the first time, Sadhu stumbled and nearly fell. But not from weakness. He had stumbled over an object lying in the snow-covered road. Slowly he bent down on one knee and brushed the snow off the object. It was the body of the monk, frozen to death.

Years later a disciple of Sadhu's asked him, "What is life's most difficult task?"

Without hesitation Sadhu replied: "To have no burden to carry."

Loving in action may be costly. But that is what the Bible encourages us to do. Ephesians 5:1-2 says, *Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*