

Zion Church PCA
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AFC Elective: Shaped By Mercy

Lessons from the Loving Neighbor (the Good Samaritan)

Read Luke 10:25-37

Let's assume this passage has something to say about mercy ministry?

- What is the context of mercy ministry?
 - It flows from a discussion about eternal life and loving God
 - We receive God's mercy, and thus become instruments of His mercy

Context: The lawyer's question: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Verses 25-28

- This question of Christ is recorded only three times in the New Testament
- What were the lawyer's motives? Was the question sincere?
 - What is a lawyer?: One who was devoted to the study of the law of God
 - Putting him to the test
- Jesus' first answer was a question
 - He points immediately to the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice
 - What were the Scriptures?
 - **Luke 24:27**: "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."
 - "What is written in the law?"
 - Jesus invokes the law to answer the question
 - What was "the law?"
- The lawyer answered the question with: "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."
 - Is that what "the law" said?
 - **Deuteronomy 6:5** says: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."
 - **Leviticus 19:17-18** says: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. 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."
 - **Matthew 22:36-39** says: "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
 - **Mark 12:28-31** says: "And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this:

'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

- Why did the lawyer answer the question the way that he did?
 - He had studied the law, but it was head knowledge
 - Talks of loving God while simultaneously testing Christ
- Why did Jesus tell him it was the correct answer?
 - No one can earn eternal life by "doing"
- The lawyer did not ask: "What shall I **believe** to inherit eternal life."
- He asked: "What shall I **do**?"
- What did Jesus tell him to **do**?
 - "Do this": "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."
- What else is said about "love your neighbor"?
 - **Matthew 19:16-19**: "And behold, a man came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself." The young man said to him, "All these I have kept. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."
 - **Romans 13:9**: "Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."
 - **Galatians 5:14**: "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself."
 - **James 2:8**: "If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scriptures, "You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself," you are doing well."

Context: The Answer Jesus gave to the question: Verses 29-37

- What were the lawyer's motives?
 - "desiring to justify himself"
 - To show how he had done this; flattery
 - **Matthew 19:20**
 - Don't I already love "my neighbor"
 - Isn't my neighbor my kinsman? [fellow Christian?]
 - To change the subject
 - He skipped quickly past "love the Lord"

- He didn't ask, "Who is the Lord?"
 - "Who is my neighbor?"
 - He wanted to exclude Gentiles
 - Wholesale misunderstanding of God's peculiar covenant with Israel
- How did Jesus answer?

The Story of the Loving Neighbor

- Cast of characters
 - A man
 - Robbers
 - A priest
 - A levite
 - A Samaritan
 - John 4:9
- Setting
 - The road from Jerusalem to Jericho
 - Approximately 17 miles
 - Known as "the bloody way"
- Robbers left him half dead
- Priest and levite
 - Saw him and passed by
 - Those who were obliged to care more (Hebrews 5:2)
 - "Selfishness is the leading characteristic of the great majority of mankind."
 - What reasons must they have given to themselves?
 - Too busy?
 - He must have deserved it?
 - Too dangerous?
 - Too important?
- Abused by enemies; neglected by friends
 - How easy, therefore, it may be for us to **not** love our neighbor
- Samaritan
 - Contrast his self-sacrifice and self-denial with the others' selfishness
 - "As he journeyed"
 - Contrast with "by chance"
 - Only reference in New Testament
 - Jericho was one place of residence of priests who ministered at Jerusalem
 - "Saw him and had compassion"
 - Contrast with saw him and walked by on the other side
 - What preceded this compassion?
 - **Luke 6:36:** "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."
 - He yielded to it rather than to all the other alternatives
 - Busy
 - Late
 - Don't know how to help
 - He was prepared
 - He put resources in reserve and at the ready

- He recognized the immediacy of the need
 - He went (didn't pass by)
 - He immediately began to dispense resources
 - Time
 - Materials
 - Money
 - He "did," but we have no record of what he said
 - What words would have been necessary?
 - At the onset with much of mercy ministry, deeds come before words
 - Deeds of mercy give legitimacy to words of mercy
 - Misplaced words can do more harm than good
 - He put his hands on the man
 - His hands were interwoven with the other balms
 - Bound his wounds
 - Poured on oil and wine
 - Mercy is messy, bloody, sweaty, unpleasant, hard....
 - He put a longer-term plan in place
 - He further changed his schedule
 - Put him on his animal
 - Took him to shelter
 - Personally took care of him
 - Stayed overnight
 - Hired the innkeeper to take care of him
 - Pledged "whatever more you spend"
 - Not "whatever more you need"
 - This encouraged further generosity and liberality to meet the immediate needs
 - Stinginess was discouraged
- Did Jesus answer the lawyer's questions?

Discussion:

- What can I do to put resources in reserve for ministries of mercy?
- What can be drawn from the fact that Deuteronomy 6:5 is followed by Deuteronomy 6:6-9?
- What can I conclude about the context of Leviticus 19:18 being preceded by Leviticus 19:13-17?
- What are the characteristics of loving your neighbor as yourself?
 - Someone who...