

RELIGION AND MY NEIGHBOR

The Ministry of Neighboring #3, Luke 10

February 21, 2021

"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."
Matthew 9:12-13 (Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6 when responding to the Pharisees)

Listening to Jesus

²⁵ *On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

²⁶ *"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"*

²⁷ *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.'"*

²⁸ *"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."*

²⁹ *But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

³⁰ *In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem"*

³⁶ *"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"*

³⁷ *The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."*

Jesus told him, "Go, and do thou likewise."

Luke 10 (with a reminder from Matthew 17:5)

- 1) Jesus asks the right question: "what is written?" and not "what do the lawyers say?"
- 2) The answer to "what must I do?" is _____ (John 6:39)
- 3) Mercy reflects the steadfast, *hesed*, love of God!

Why did Jesus choose a priest and a Levite?

. . . 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. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side."

Luke 10:30-32

- 1) Jesus offered a serious critique of the temple system in which priest and Levite reveal their complicity
- 2) The lawyer knew that he was even more complicit in the Temple Industrial Complex

What the priest and Levite should have known all along

⁶ *For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.*
Hosea 6:6 (which Jesus quotes in Matthew 9 and 12:7)

⁴³ *“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Matthew 5 (reflecting back on Leviticus 19)

⁸ *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

Romans 13

If you see your brother’s ox or sheep straying, do not ignore it but be sure to take it back to him. ² If the brother does not live near you or if you do not know who he is, take it home with you and keep it until he comes looking for it. Then give it back to him. ³ Do the same if you find your brother’s donkey or his cloak or anything he loses. Do not ignore it. ⁴ If you see your brother’s donkey or his ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it. Help him get it to its feet.

Deuteronomy 22

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

James 1:27 (I eventually had to get to James!)

Three more thoughts about neighbors

1) Worst, the priest and Levite missed the heart of God

The word of the LORD came to me: ² “Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her detestable practices ³ and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says to Jerusalem: Your ancestry and birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. ⁴ On the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths. ⁵ No one looked on you with pity or had compassion enough to do any of these things for you. Rather, you were thrown out into the open field, for on the day you were born you were despised.

⁶ “Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, “Live!”

Ezekiel 16

¹⁰ While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and “sinners” came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?”

¹² On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³ But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Matthew 9 (see the same theme in the three parables of the “lost” in Luke 15 and in Luke 19:10)

2) Warning: present day priests, Levites and lawyers can make for poor neighbors as well

⁸ If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking 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 commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

¹² Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³ because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

James 2

3) Being a Leviticus 19/Luke 10 kind of neighbor is impossible without the scandal of grace

³⁰ What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. ³² Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³ as it is written,

*“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”*

Romans 9 (quoting from Isaiah 8)

Resources for a ministry of neighboring

Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon, *The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door* (Baker Books, 2012)

Kevin Harney, *Organic Outreach for Ordinary People* (Zondervan, 2009)

The Bible Project team has great stuff on Luke at <https://bibleproject.com/learn/luke/>

Spurgeon has a classic sermon, “Go, and Do Thou Likewise” at <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-good-samaritan/#flipbook/>

J. C. Ryle’s commentary on Luke 10 at <https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/110.htm>

I appreciated Deffinbaugh’s sermon at <https://bible.org/seriespage/36-good-samaritan-luke-1025-37>

Timothy Keller has a good example of exegeting Genesis at <https://www.monergism.com/first-wedding-day-%E2%80%93-genesis-218-25>

I have really appreciated D. A. Carson’s Good Samaritan video at <https://youtu.be/DvRIpoRnsU>

The Bible Project team has a great video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4isSyennFo>, and poster and study for Genesis at <https://bibleproject.com/learn/genesis-12-50/>

For Luke’s gospel, I read I. Howard Marshall’s volume in the NIGTC (Eerdmans, 1978), Walter Liefeld’s commentary in the EBC (Zondervan, 1984) and William Hendriksen’s volume in the Baker New Testament Commentary series (Baker Book House, 1978).

Bob Deffinbaugh has a good series on Genesis at <https://bible.org/series/genesis-paradise-patriarchs>. His sermon on these texts is titled “The Meaning of Man.”

This Regent College lecture featuring non-North American mission leaders is a good introduction to the challenge of serving from a position of power: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zU5UrExPhQM>

I found this podcast transcript from Julie Roys very helpful in understanding the contemporary dangers of the “Temple Industrial Complex,” at <https://julieroys.com/gospel-meets-evangelical-industrial-complex/>