



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Matthew 14–28 Sermon Series

Supports Session 12: Active Faith

Sermon Title: “Loving Our Neighbor” (Luke 10:25-37)

Connection to Session 1

We learned this morning that if we have an active faith of loving the least of these around us, we are actually loving Jesus. We find in Luke’s gospel an account in which Jesus was approached by a religious leader who sought to trap Him with a question. Jesus answered his question with the story we know as the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Introduction/Opening

It is easy for us to compare and contrast things. If we compare and contrast ketchup and mustard, we all know that ketchup is always going to win. If we compare and contrast football and soccer, we will end up in an argument. Today’s text includes a comparison and contrast between those who focus on self and those who strive to love others in the name of Jesus. Our goal is to accurately interpret the text while asking ourselves a question: With whom do we best identify?

Outline

Those who focus on self (Luke 10:31-32)

- 1.) *They can know the Bible.* Our story begins with a priest and a Levite. To understand the story accurately, we need to understand what a priest and Levite were. Priests were spiritual leaders of the day and Levites assisted the priests in temple duties. They would have scored well in an Old Testament trivia game. If we were to bring this into modern language, they could be identified as religious leaders.
- 2.) *They can see a need.* As Jesus told this story to “an expert in the law” (v. 25), the story has a man going from Jericho to Jerusalem. While traveling, he “fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him up, and fled, leaving him half dead” (v. 30). It is at this time that the priest and Levite come along. The text clearly indicates that they both saw him. He was stripped, beaten and left for dead. They could not offer the excuse that they were unaware of the need.

If we are being honest, many of us, if not all of us, have done the same thing. It may not be a homeless person at the traffic light, although it could be. A better example may be our spouse or child. We have had a long day and just want to relax. We get home, see an evident need and opt to ignore it. We offer excuses, but the reality is that we opted to do little or nothing to meet the visible need.

- 3.) *They can keep walking.* Upon seeing the need, the priest and Levite “passed by on the other side” (v. 32). The text shows a visible choice. They simply kept walking. Given their background they would have known the calling to love their neighbor as themselves. This is evident in the fact that the expert of the law provided this answer. Simply knowing a Bible passage, however, does not ensure that person will act upon it.

Those focused on loving others (Luke 10:33-35)

1.) *They are compassionate.* The story takes a drastic turn in verse 33 when a good Samaritan is introduced. We need to understand the culture of the times to understand the gravity of what Jesus said. Samaritans were the most hated class of all people. Both the Jews and Gentiles wanted nothing to do with them. An expert in the law would never believe that a Samaritan would ever do anything good.

According to Jesus, this good Samaritan “had compassion” (v. 33). To be compassionate means to see a need and actively strive to meet that need. If we use it in a Christ-centered context, then the need is met in Jesus name. The gospels define Jesus multiple times as being compassionate or feeling compassion for others. Each time He is assessed this characteristic, He meets a tangible need and shares the gospel. The good Samaritan embodies the characteristics of Jesus.

2.) *They meet the needs of the moment.* Next, the good Samaritan bandaged his wounds, poured oil on him and took him to a place of shelter. He used his own supplies to meet the needs of the moment. This cost him and we do not see anything in the text that suggests he expressed regret. As we continue to study the text, we find no delay from the time he recognized the need and personally chose to do something about it.

3.) *They sacrifice for tomorrow.* His final action was to take two denarii and give them to the innkeeper. He told the innkeeper he would pay any other expenses upon his return. Two denarii, depending on the nature of the inn, would have ensured a minimum of 6-weeks for this injured man. He gave sacrificially for someone in desperate need.

Conclusion

When we started this message together, we indicated that we were going to do a comparison and contrast. The differences between the good Samaritan and the priest and Levite are easy to distinguish. We also said that our goal was to ask ourselves who we best identify with in this parable. We can know a great deal about God, as evidenced in the priest and Levite. Or, we can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ in which He changes us, and our actions reflect this change. So, who do you best identify with? How does God want you to respond to this message?

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