

“Who’s Your Neighbor?”

Steve Ramer, Pastor

Date: January 21, 2018

Scripture:

Luke 10:25-37

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

On one occasion, a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher, what do I have to do to inherit eternal life?”

He said to him, “How do you read what is written in the law?”

And he answered, “You are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your energy, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”

Jesus said to him, “You have given the correct answer; do this, and you will have life.”

But with a view to justifying himself, he asked Jesus, “But who is my neighbor?”

Jesus replied, “There was a man going from Jerusalem down to Jericho when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him up and went off, leaving him half dead. Now by coincidence a priest was going down that road; when he caught sight of him, he went out of his way to avoid him. In the same way, when a Levite came to the place, he took one look at him and crossed the road to avoid him. But this Samaritan who was traveling that way came to where he was and was moved with pity at the sight of him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring olive oil and wine on them. He hoisted him onto his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins, which he gave to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Look after him; and on my way back I’ll reimburse you for any extra expenses you may have had.’

Which of these three, in your opinion, acted like a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?”

He said, “The one who showed him compassion.”

Jesus said to him, “Then go and do the same yourself.”

Sermon:

Why it is important to contextualize the passage?

We do this in two ways, past and present.

The past, so as to understand how it was likely understood by those who first heard or read it. And the present context so that it can affect how we seek to be faithful to the passage's core message today.

So, I need to ask you, "Who is Your Neighbor"?

Late one evening a man who happens to reside on the 300 block of Remington, was on his way to buy groceries at the Ft Collins Food Cooperative. But soon after crossing Oak street as he made his way north on Matthews a group of three or four rough characters in ski masks and hoodies stopped and surrounded him just outside the Mennonite church.

They demanded that he fork over his wallet, cell phone and give them the brand new leather jacket he was wearing to ward off the winter chill. As they began to push him around a bit, another neighborhood one who also happened to reside on Remington (but further up on the 100 block), was headed west on Oak street on her way to yoga class. When she heard the commotion she immediately crossed to the other side of the street and substantially quickened her pace.

But they kept demanding and pushing finally knocking him to the sidewalk, and as the poor guy fell he lost his glasses. About that time, the owner of a restaurant in Old Town was walking south past the bank on Matthews Street on his way back to his car parked by the library. Hearing all the shouting he quickly darted down the alley instead.

But as they began to rifle through his pockets and pulling his jacket off, two homeless guys (transients merely passing through town) and who were sleeping in the bushes outside a church were awakened by all the commotion. They had decided to take their chances sleeping in the bushes outside the church since both shelters were full and they thought they could avoid another transposing ticket by being on private property. Well, without thinking too long or hard, they jumped up from behind those bushes and began hollering and screaming at those muggers at the top of their voices. And you know what, those two-bit gangsters were caught so off guard that they dropped everything and split.

Then the two homeless dudes pulled out their Obama phones and began dialing 911. They also stayed with that fella until the ambulance and police showed up. While there waited they cleaned up his scratches with some Neosporin and bandaged him up with bandaids from a first kit they had just picked up from a warming center the evening before. The one guy noticed that the new leather jacket had been torn during the scuffle and offered to repair it. (You see, before he had become homeless he had worked in a leather shop who's owner had to go out of business since he could no longer compete with Amazon's prices)

After the guy was lifted into the ambulance, and they hollered their “good-byes” and “God Blesses” to him, the ambulance sped away to the Poudre Hospital’s ER. But, as they were getting ready to collect their things to go, one of the Police Officers, who had also responded to the call, learned that both of those transients had outstanding warrants for trespassing in Library Park. And since their story seemed so unlikely to be true they decided they better haul them off to County Lock up.

On the way one of the officer was overheard reading the previous warrant to his partner. It appears that the original citation was a result of a call to the southeast corner of Library Park, along Petersen street, where an anonymous call had been made by a resident of the 300 block of Petersen, regarding some transients who were hanging out in the bushes close to the library.

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