

Sermon Guide

Luke 10:25-37

The Parable of The Good Samaritan revolves around the initial exchange between the lawyer (an expert in the law) and Jesus. As the brief exchange between the lawyer and Jesus progresses, the lawyer asks his pivotal question, “And who is my neighbor?” (10:29). In concert with Jewish sentiments of the day, one’s *neighbor* in the eyes of an Israelite would have surely been confined to those within the covenant community. Thus, the lawyer’s question really has the force, “who within the covenant community do I need to love? Where can I draw the line?” As we said in the sermon, the lawyer was essentially looking for a ‘recipe’ for who to love, and perhaps also had a neatly packaged ‘recipe’ for how to love. Yet stepping out to love our neighbor often requires us to step into chaos, so to speak. As the parable proper illustrates, loving our neighbor according to Jesus requires us to reevaluate *who* we love. It calls us to love those who are very different from us and often those who are naturally very difficult to love. It also requires us to love sacrificially and creatively, in ways we can’t necessarily limit nor prescribe. As such, whereas this lawyer was asking the question “who is my neighbor,” by the end of the parable it will become clear that the lawyer was asking the wrong question. While he wanted to know, “who is my neighbor,” Jesus challenges the lawyer and us to consider, “whose neighbor am I?”

The parable challenges our conception of loving neighbor by (1) challenging *who* we love, and (2) challenging *how* we love. The Samaritan-Israelite animosity in the first century is well documented. Simply put, they hated one another. And yet Jesus calls his hearers to emulate the Samaritan by loving our enemies; indeed our neighbors *include* our enemies. Second, Jesus challenges how we love by painting the holistic manner in which the Samaritan loved the man in the ditch. Applying Paul Miller’s three-steps of love we noticed that the Samaritan (1) looks, (2) has compassion, and (3) acts. These three steps of love to which Jesus calls his hearers in this parable and in other passages throughout the gospel (e.g. Luke 7:11-17; 7:36-50; 15:11-32) is perfectly modeled in how God in Christ has loved us. God looked upon us in our depravity and humble estate. He had compassion and remembered his covenant. Then he acted. It’s only out of this gospel reality whereby we’re freed to love like the Samaritan, namely because we’ve been loved in Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn from this sermon? Specifically
 - a. What insights did you learn?
 - b. What questions do you have? Are there any areas you don’t understand?
 - c. What areas of your life (be specific) do you sense God wants to change as a result of this passage of Scripture?
2. How does this passage challenge who you love individually, as a family, and even as a church body?
3. How does this passage challenge the way we love? What limits do we place on how we love and why?