

Jesus: The Lord of Our Relationships
Series: Luke
February 18, 2018 Pastor Bill Bump

April 2000 USA Today article: "Being a Good Samaritan means going out of your way to help a stranger in need with no expectation of thanks or recognition."

The situation began with a question.

Luke 10:25 *One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?"*

Jesus responded and gave the answer.

Luke 10:26-29 ²⁶ *Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?"*

²⁷ *The man answered, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

²⁸ *"Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"*

²⁹ *The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

The lawyer asked a question he thought excused him from responsibility, but in doing so, he condemned himself instead.

The lawyer tried to excuse himself by limiting the number of people included in his circle when he used the term neighbor.

Jesus followed up with an illustration.

Luke 10:30-37 ³⁰ *Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.*

³¹ *"By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. ³² A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.*

³³ *"Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. ³⁴ Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling*

him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.'

³⁶ "Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked.

³⁷ The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy."
Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."

Jesus shifted the focus.

Jesus told a story that changed the question from "What kind of person is my neighbor?" to "What kind of person am I?"

The lawyer tried to justify himself by asking who qualifies as a neighbor in the command, "Love your neighbor."

Jesus told a story in which the question about what kind of man is dying is not important; the whole focus was now on the kind of people walking by.

When we get to the end of the story, the question Jesus asked was not, "So, was the wounded man a neighbor?" Rather, it was, "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" (v. 36)

Jesus concluded the story by issuing the religious lawyer and us a practical challenge.

Luke 10:37 The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy."
Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."

Jesus was saying, "Don't be so concerned with who your neighbor is. Instead, be proactive."

I want to challenge us with three words to live by if Jesus is going to be Lord of our relationships:

1. If Jesus is Lord of our relationships, we must be compassionate.

It seems like we have become so desensitized to evil in the world and to human suffering that it hardly fazes us anymore.

God created us with a capacity for compassion.

2. If Jesus is Lord of our relationships, we must be willing to take action.

We need to get involved.

It is important for us to begin to recognize that, for us to make a difference in this world, there must be an investment of time and energy.

3. If Jesus is Lord of our relationships, we must practice self-sacrifice.

Special needs sometimes call for a special expression of love.

Conclusion

Instead of defining who our neighbor might be, Jesus challenges us to become a new kind of person.

Ezekiel 36:26 And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.

My prayer is that each of us will develop a heart of compassion leading to a hands-on, messy, sacrificial, time-consuming action, founded on sacrifice with no expected return.