

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time "Do This, and You Will Live" (Luke 10:25-37)

Today, Jesus tells us a parable we know well—the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

It's a story with such power and clarity that even those who don't believe in God often use the term "Good Samaritan" to describe acts of selfless kindness.

But as familiar as this story may be, Jesus wants to take us beyond the surface.

He wants us to enter into the parable, to see ourselves within it, and most importantly, to live it.

It begins with a question:

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"There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test Jesus and said,

"Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

The question is asked by a lawyer—an expert in the Law of Moses—someone trained to think, debate, and dissect every word of the Torah.

His question sounds sincere, but Luke tells us his motive: **he wanted to test Jesus.** He wasn't trying to understand.

It's an attempt to make Jesus look like a fool among the Jewish scholars of the Law.

"He stood up" – a position of authority, not a student.

"What must I do to inherit eternal life?" - He was trying to justify himself.

How often do we do the same?

Before I sound too condescending about this scholar, I know I have asked questions, not because I want to learn, but because I want to make a statement and show superiority.

Sometimes we ask questions, not to change, but to defend our comfort zones.

Like the lawyer, we want the boundaries clearly defined.

We want to know who counts as our “neighbor”—and who doesn’t—so that we can love the right people and ignore the rest.

But Jesus, as always, flips the script.

He doesn’t respond with a lecture or a rulebook.

Instead, He tells a story—a simple but piercing story about human need, indifference, and mercy.

A man is attacked by robbers and left half-dead on the side of the road between Jerusalem and Jericho.

SCREEN SHOT:



It’s a mountainous road where thieves can surprise their victims and quickly hide after the attack.

A priest comes by—a man of God, respected and holy.

He sees the man and crosses to the other side.

A Levite comes next—another religious figure, committed to the temple.

He, too, sees the man and walks away.

They excuse themselves from responding to the need, presumably because the Jewish law indicates that contact with blood or death would defile a priest or Levite.

Then comes the Samaritan.

Now, this would have shocked the audience.

Jews and Samaritans were enemies.

They had a long history of division, prejudice, and bitterness.

For Jesus to make a **Samaritan** the hero of the story was unthinkable—offensive even.

And yet, it's the Samaritan who **sees, stops, touches, heals, and pays**.

He doesn't ask the man's religion, nationality, or worth.

He sees a human being in pain, and he chooses compassion.

That's the key. He chooses compassion.

This story is not just about helping people in need.

It's about how we **define "neighbor"**.

The lawyer asked, "*Who is my neighbor?*" but Jesus responded with, "*Who was neighbor to the one in need?*"

Do you see the shift?

It's not about asking who qualifies to be loved.

It's about becoming the kind of person who **loves without limits**.

That's the deeper challenge of this Gospel.

Jesus ends the parable not with praise, but with a command:

"Go and do likewise."

"Do this, and you will live."

Not "*think about it.*" Not "*feel inspired by it.*"

Do this.

Our faith means little if it stays in our minds.

The priest and the Levite may have had all the right theology, but they failed in action.

The Samaritan, considered unclean and heretical, lived the heart of God's law: **to love your neighbor as yourself**.

So, where do we see ourselves in this story?

Maybe you feel like the **wounded man**, broken, abandoned, in need of mercy.
If so, know this: Christ Himself is your Good Samaritan.

He sees you. He has compassion.

He binds up your wounds and carries you to healing.

Maybe you feel like the **Samaritan**, moved with compassion for a world in pain.
Then live it out. Don't wait for someone else. Step in. Love generously.

But if we're honest, many of us are like the **priest and Levite**.

We care. We mean well. But we're busy.

We're cautious.

We're overwhelmed by the needs around us, and it's easier to cross to the other side.

Think especially of the immigration crisis we face today.

Most agree that our immigration policy needs reform because nations need a way to protect their borders.

However, I am disgusted with how a mass deportation policy is being carried out.

This is a quote from a letter that our Archbishop, many other bishops, and leaders of other faiths wrote about their concerns for the provisions in the recent US budget for mass deportation:

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“Our faith organizations have long favored the creation of legal avenues for migration and a legalization program for immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for years and contributed their hard work to our economy. We believe the adoption of these policies, instead of the implementation of a mass deportation campaign, would not only benefit immigrant workers and their families but be in the best interest of our nation.”

Should immigration reform consist of violently apprehending honest, hard-working people at their place of employment?

Some say that undocumented immigrants should enter the country legally.

The process is highly complicated, lasting for decades, and is impossible for people who don't have the education and economic means.

So the system is broken, but is arresting a parent in front of their children, by an agent dressed in full military gear, the right way to fix the system?

Immigrants have been labeled as horrible criminals.

Yes, some undocumented immigrants are criminals, but the vast majority are not.

They are our neighbors.

These are complex issues to grapple with, but we can't ignore the inhumanity of the current deportation process.

Today, Jesus lovingly confronts us in the same way he confronted the lawyer who wanted to make a fool of him in public.

To a man who was more interested in defining "neighbor" so he could exclude everyone else from concern, Jesus gave the example of the Good Samaritan.

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**Which of these three, in your opinion,
was neighbor to the robbers' victim?"**

He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy."

Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

So today, let us ask not, "Who is my neighbor?" but "To whom can I be a neighbor?"

Like Jesus, we can see beyond boundaries and categories.

We love not just in words, but in action.

And let us walk the road of mercy, following the footsteps of Christ, our true Good Samaritan.