

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 13 Aug 2023

Sermon Title : The Good Samaritan

Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng

Text : Luke 10:25-37

INTRODUCTION

“The Good Samaritan” is the first of our 3-part Sermon Series “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly”. Here in Luke 10:25-37, a priest and a Levite did not stop to help a Jew who had been severely beaten, robbed and left to die by the side of the road. Instead, it was a Samaritan, someone despised and rejected by the Jews who stopped to render him the help he needed.

What prompted Jesus to tell the story about the Good Samaritan?

Luke 10:25 – a lawyer who was an expert in religious law wanted to test Jesus and asked Him what he should do to inherit eternal life. The lawyer’s attitude and posture was not of humility and a genuine desire to seek an answer. Instead, he wanted to show Jesus that he knew better. When Jesus asked him what was written in the Law, the lawyer was able to answer correctly from Leviticus 19:18 that “You shall love your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.” Jesus responds by asking him to do likewise, as Jesus was concerned not about whether he knew the Scripture well but whether he applied what he knew. The lawyer however, wanted to justify or vindicate himself and asked Jesus who his neighbour was, so, Jesus responded by telling the story of the Good Samaritan.

- In telling this story, Jesus was trying to convey to the religious expert that it was not about who his neighbour was or who qualified to be his neighbour but more about who he could truly be a neighbour to.

The Good Samaritan

In Jesus’ story, a man was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho about 29km away. The terrain was hilly, rocky, barren and filled with caves and crevices where it was easy for bandits or robbers to hide and ambush travellers. The man was set upon by robbers who beat him, stripped him and stole his belongings, leaving him half-dead by the side of the road.

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

The priest - Coincidentally, a priest passed by the injured man. A priest in those days could only come from the Aaronic line as he performed the important functions of ministering to God in the temple and ministering to the people. Priests were highly regarded as righteous and holy people so Jesus' listeners must have thought that the priest would surely attend to the injured man. However, this priest in Jesus' story walked by on the other side.

The Levite - Next, a Levite passed by. While a Levite was not as high in the religious hierarchy as the priest, he was still an important man. Only men from the family line of Levi were Levites and they were responsible for assisting the priests in their priestly duties of ministering to God and the people. Again, Jesus' listeners would have thought that the Levite, being one of the religious leaders, would at least stop to help the half-dead man. Unfortunately, this Levite saw the man and proceeded to walk by on the other side too.

Jesus' listeners must have been shocked that the two men who were high up in the religious hierarchy did not display the compassion, love and mercy of God.

The Samaritan - Finally, a Samaritan passed by. Jesus' listeners would have thought that there was no more hope for the half-dead Jewish man. In their minds, the best-case scenario would be for the Samaritan to walk by and ignore the injured man and the worst case would be for the Samaritan to even kill the half-dead Jew. This is because the Jews despised and rejected the Samaritans and vice versa. There were 3 reasons for this animosity:

- (i) In 721 BC, the nation Israel was divided into the Southern Kingdom of Judah (made up of 2 tribes) and the Northern Kingdom of Israel (made up of 10 tribes). The Northern Kingdom sinned against God and did what was right in their own eyes. As a result, God's judgement fell upon them and they were conquered by the Assyrians who deported many of them to Assyria. In their place, the Assyrians brought in foreigners who were Gentiles to live in Israel. In time, the foreigners and Israelites inter-married and their descendants, a mixed race, became the Samaritans. The Jews despised the Samaritans as they regarded mixing the blood of God's people with Gentile blood a perversion worse than being a Gentile.
- (ii) The Jews worshipped God in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount while the Samaritans worshipped God on their own 'holy mountain', Mount Gerizim. The Jews were upset as they felt that Jerusalem should be the only place of worship.
- (iii) The Samaritans only accepted the Pentateuch, the first 5 books of the Old Testament (OT) as their Scripture, whereas the Jews had in addition to these 5 books, the prophetic books like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the historical books like Kings, Chronicles, the poetic books like Psalms, Proverbs and other OT books.

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

The relationship between the Jews and Samaritans became so bad that the Jews once attacked Mount Gerizim and destroyed the Samaritan temple there. Due to how the Jews treated the Samaritans, the Samaritans also became hostile towards the Jews.

The Samaritan's acts of compassion/mercy (Luke 10:33-35)

The Samaritan came to where the half-dead man was, had compassion on him and acted on his compassion by carrying out the following 6 acts of compassion/mercy:

- a. He went to the injured man.
- b. He bound up the man's wounds.
- c. He poured olive oil and wine to soothe and disinfect the man's wounds.
- d. He set the half-dead man on his own animal - this was an act of sacrifice as the Samaritan would have to walk the rest of the way.
- e. He brought the half-dead man to an inn and cared for him there.
- f. The next day, He gave two denarii (2 days' wages) to the innkeeper and asked him to take care of the injured man. He ensured that the welfare of the injured man was taken care of by promising to repay the inn keeper when he returned, if the injured man's expenses exceeded the 2 denarii.

Who was the neighbour? (Luke 10:36-37)

When asked by Jesus which of the 3 - the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan, proved to be a neighbour to the man who had been robbed, the lawyer rightly replied, "The one who showed him mercy", and Jesus told him to "go, and do likewise."

Jesus did likewise

Jesus did not just talk about being a good neighbour - He walked the talk:

- Isaiah 53:3 – Jesus was despised and rejected by humanity just like the Samaritans were despised by the Jews.
- Jesus, fully man and fully God looks down at humanity from heaven, sees a half-dead humanity – humanity is half-dead because while we are living, we are not fully living an abundant life, hence, we are half-living, half-dead. When Jesus sees our condition, His heart wells up with compassion, love and grace and He acted upon His compassion by approaching us.
- He dealt with our wounds and poured not just oil and wine but His blood for us.
- The Samaritan gave two denarii to the innkeeper while Jesus stretched out His two arms to be nailed to the cross to pay the price for our sins.
- The Samaritan placed the half-dead man on his animal, but Jesus placed us upon Himself. Isaiah 53:4 – Jesus bore our griefs and carried our sorrows.
- The Samaritan brought the half-dead man to an inn and ensured his welfare was taken care of. Jesus did everything He could to ensure that there would always be room for us in His Father's mansion.

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

CONCLUSION

None of us qualifies or deserves to be Jesus' neighbour but Jesus made Himself a neighbour to us. Jesus is calling us to put aside our personal biasness and prejudices, to look beyond race, colour, language, religion and not to think about who deserves to be our neighbour but how to be a good neighbour to those around us.

A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Appoint someone to read Luke 10:25-37 slowly.
 - a. Who do you identify with most closely in the story – the priest, the Levite or the Samaritan?
 - b. What would it take for you to identify more closely with the Samaritan and be a good neighbour to those in need around you?

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 3a. How has knowing Jesus “did likewise” as a compassionate good neighbour impacted you?
- 3b. Leviticus 19:18 tells you to “love your neighbour as yourself”. How does your understanding of “love your neighbour as yourself” change when you change the question “Who is my neighbour or who qualifies to be my neighbour?” to “Who can I be a neighbour to?”
- 3c. Loving your neighbour as yourself often comes at a cost.
- (i) On a scale of 1-10 where 1 means very unwilling and 10 very willing, how willing are you to pay the cost of being a good neighbour?
 - (ii) What are some obstacles that you need to overcome to pay the cost of being a good neighbour?
- 4a. What are some prejudices you have towards people who are different from you e.g. different culture, religion or even personality? Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and reveal the biasness and prejudices you are unaware of and help you show genuine love to those who are difficult for you to love.
- 4b. It is not enough to know the Scriptures. We need to put what we know into practice. List down some steps you can take to be a good neighbour to someone this week?
- 4c. How can your group members help or encourage you to achieve 4a. and 4b. above in the following week(s), until your next meeting?

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Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action

Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.

5. Share your personal testimony of how God helped you to be a good neighbour to someone whom you felt did not deserve to be loved as your “neighbour”.

OR

Give thanks to God for sending godly neighbour(s) to love and care for you even when you felt you did not deserve it.

6. With a prayer partner, bring all that has been shared in 4a and 4b to God, asking for the Holy Spirit to help you fulfill your commitments.

Pray for your group and our church to become a people of compassion, to strip away preconceived ideas about others, such as cultural, racial, religious or even personality differences. Pray for the Holy Spirit to enable us to love others with Christlike and genuine love and not to look the other way but do all we can to meet the needs of others even when it comes at a cost, so we can truly love our neighbours as ourselves.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Holy Forever – Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkHqxKemCRk>
2. Good Good Father – Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ak0OoFBw3c>
3. Making A Difference – City Harvest Church
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrPMxtUeONE>

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