

# Ascension Lutheran Church

Pastor Godkin's Sermon for the week of July 11, 2010

## How to Be a Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Our text is from the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke:

Jesus said to him, "Which of these three, do you think proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

This is the text.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the story of the Good Samaritan is one of the most well-known parables of Jesus. There are hospitable and his name has become an expression of someone who shows unusual kindness and extraordinary care for someone in need. Across Canada and the U.S. there is the "Good Sam RV Club" which provides campgrounds, discounts and other sorts of benefits. We also have "Good Samaritan Laws" that protect people who choose to help others who are sick or injured. To topay them a great compliment.

Within the parable of the Good Samaritan we find a human relationships, how we interact with one another, examples of what not to do and a good example of what

This parable of the Good Samaritan opens with quite a violent scene: we see a man minding his own business as he walks down the road and is met by a group of thugs who rob him, beat him senseless, take his clothes and leave him half dead on the side of the road, completely helpless. Now one way of looking at this story is that it represents on a larger scale the sins that mankind don't need to look far to see similar acts of violence and atrocities in the world: the needless wars being fought overseas which in the end benefit only a select group of ruling elites; we see murders, muggings, gang violence and the list goes on and on.

While most of us, I assume, do not do violent things, we do things that end up hurting other people in one way or another. We can get out of hand, for instance, lead to a verbal altercation, and then perhaps to saying some hurtful words. There is power in words and they can be used for good but if used unwisely words can hurt more than physical acts of aggression. As James wrote, "The tongue is a restless evil, full of deadly poison."

But perhaps the majority of our sins are those things that are not so obvious. We call these "hidden" sins. This is what this parable is getting at.

picture or a mirror if you will, of our lives. Here we see a picture of ourselves and our neighbour.

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son are regular basis I'm sure that we are all guilty of. A moment of letting our guard down, then to a harsh tone of voice. There is power in words and they can hurt more than physical acts of aggression. The tongue is a restless evil, full

gswedon't do. Oftentimes, it's the sins of omission: things we should be doing but aren't. This is what this parable is getting at.



At times it can be confusing as to the best course of action. The world is obviously a complicated place and things don't always seem so straightforward. Wouldn't it be great if we had clear-cut directives about each situation we face in our life! But instead, God gives us freedom to make our own decisions and He gives us one simple principle to live by. And that is to love. Love is the fulfillment of the Law.

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The Samaritan in the parable is a model for our deeds of love and compassion. The Samaritan befriended a racial enemy. The Jews to the south in Jerusalem and the Samaritans to the north were enemies; they were like oil and water and yet the Samaritan put their differences aside to help his fellow man.

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The parable shows that the Samaritan was willing to show love through his actions. He seemed to have no limits. He snowballed as he reached out to the man. It says she took care of him and arranged for him to go home. He took care of him and arranged for him to go home. He took care of him and arranged for him to go home. He took care of him and arranged for him to go home.

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This Good Samaritan reminds us of Jesus who doesn't tithe. He is a model for us and yet He is much more than a model. He is the means and the power for us to do good.

He is the ultimate Good Samaritan. He is a model for us and yet He is much more than a model. He is the means and the power for us to do good.

Like the Samaritan, Jesus befriended His enemies. In the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. He set no limits to His love. He even went to death and damnation on our behalf, to save us. Before we came to faith we were side of the road left for dead. But Jesus came to the cross and gave us a new life by His resurrection. He promised to be ours for all eternity.

He says in Romans 5 that "at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly" ... and that we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He went to death and damnation on our behalf, to save us. Before we came to faith we were side of the road left for dead. But Jesus came to the cross and gave us a new life by His resurrection. He promised to be ours for all eternity.

Our Lord Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection not only give us eternal life, but He also empowers our deeds of compassion; He enables us to "go, and do likewise" (v37). It says in First John 4, "We love because He first loved us in Christ and in us can spill over into love for others. In short, it is Christ's love that takes away our burdens and enables us to do likewise for others, to love as He has loved us.

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Love is not always easy that's for sure but that's why we have the Holy Scriptures. The more we can be fed with His Word and Sacraments and the Good News of Christ's love for us, the more we can begin to emulate His compassion to others around us.

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The prayer of St. Francis captures this spirit of Christ to read that now:

Christian love quite well. I would like

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,*

*where there is hatred, let me sow love;*

*where there is injury, pardon;*

*where there is doubt, faith;*

*where there is despair, hope;*

*where there is darkness, light;*

*where there is sadness, joy;*

*O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek*

*to be consoled as to console;*

*to be understood as to understand;*

*to be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive;*

*it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;*

*and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life*

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Indeed, through Christ, God's love is with you always and His strength. Go in peace. Amen. The peace of God that surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

ys and His strength. Go in understanding, keep your hearts