

“The Figure of Christ” Luke 10:23-27 – Trinity 13 2021

Grace and peace in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our text for today includes one of the best-known parables of Jesus, the parable of the Good Samaritan. For many people today, the phrase "Good Samaritan" means someone who shows compassion to a stranger. Now, the point of the parable is that God wants us to show love even to our strangers, and even to enemies.

“A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.”

The Levites were assistants to the priests in the Temple of Jerusalem as deacons are to pastors of the church today. These religious men did not want to get involved in the problems of the man who fell among thieves and passed by to one side.

“But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’”

First, let’s talk about what a Samaritan is. There are still Samaritans in Israel. The Samaritans are a mixture of Jews and other ethnic groups. Many centuries before Christ, when the people of Israel

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returned from captivity in Babylon and wanted to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple, the Samaritans attacked them. So, for generation after generation, there was enmity between pure Jews and Samaritans. However, the Samaritan in the parable had compassion and did more than was required to help the Jew.

Then the Lord said, “Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?” Indeed, it was not the priest or Levite, but the Samaritan.

Let's look at the context of the parable. “And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” And he answered, “You shall love the Lord 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.”

Our Lord Himself said this is the summary of the law, God's holy will for us to live as His children: love God and love your neighbour (Matthew 22: 36-40). We confess this every Sunday in the confession of sins. Then the Lord said, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”

However, the doctor of the law was not satisfied. He wants to show his righteousness. He wants to know exactly how far he needs to go to “save himself”. “But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbour?” Then Jesus taught by this parable that God's law does not forbid acts of mercy. Obedience to the law is not only to obey some rules, or put on a show of piety, but its purpose is to show mercy.

If you love God in your heart, the fruit of this love is to show love to anyone who needs the love of God. Today many people in this part

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of Canada are in trouble and need mercy. On the streets of our cities, people hold signs that read "Please Help." There are sick children, people who go hungry, disabled people who need assistance, and lonely seniors who need companionship. What should we do in these situations? How do we respond if we know the love of God? Mercy for others is the fruit of God's mercy to us. Sometimes it's hard to help others. We are all so busy, we do not like to think about the problems of others. However, the Lord tells us no law prohibits mercy, so in these situations, we can show God's love to others. We also have many opportunities to show God's love to our family, neighbours, and acquaintances.

But it goes deeper - there is a further meaning to this parable. The Good Samaritan is not only an example for us to help others in their need. The doctor of the law asked Jesus, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And the Lord said, love God and love your neighbour. But what's wrong with the question?

Love is the fulfilment of the law. In the books of Moses, there are many rules for the people of Israel. Our epistle (Galatians 3: 15-22) says that some of these rules were to prepare the Israelites for the first coming of Christ, the Law of Moses also reveals the moral law for all nations. Above all, the priority in our lives should be God, while the second priority should be the welfare of our neighbours.

But who can obey the moral law perfectly? Nobody except our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus' answer to the doctor of the Law was to show him his sin and our sin as well. We are all sinners. None of us has in our heart the perfect compassion to show love whenever we meet the needy on the streets.

In the above verses, Jesus told his disciples. "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see: For I tell you that many prophets and kings

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desired to see what you see, and have not seen; and hear what you hear, and have not heard. "

Of whom did Jesus speak? Himself Jesus Christ is who many prophets and kings desired to see and hear. Jesus Christ fulfilled all the law in our place, died on the cross and won the promise of eternal life for us. We can not love God first, but God loved us first in the person of Jesus Christ. We can love God and love our neighbour when we hear the Word of God and the Holy Spirit touches our hearts. The prophets and patriarchs of the Old Testament did not have this Word in its plenitude, because it was fully revealed in Christ.

Therefore, in this parable, the Good Samaritan is not only a good example for us, he is the figure of Christ for us. We are the man who fell among thieves because we can not help ourselves when we fall into sin. We are not half-dead, we are completely dead in sin and under God's condemnation. But we have a Savior, He that showed mercy and did more than was required for us.

So the Lord said, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see and hear," because this is the good news of Jesus Christ. We are justified therefore by faith, not by our works. In this, we have the peace that passes all understanding. Amen.