



Like the Samaritan

December 29, 2019

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As we enter the final days of 2019, closing out this decade, and starting the twentieth year of this millennium, it's common to think on plans and goals for the future. To what places might you travel? Who haven't you seen in a long time? What's on your bucket list? One thing people often wonder at times like this, is how they can be a better person. What habits need to be broken, and what positive changes need to begin? While many people know of God, they long for a relationship with Him, and wonder what they need to do in order to be saved. Each day we turn on the news and hear shocking stories of the loss of life. A few days ago a family's remains were found following a helicopter tour over the Hawaiian Islands. Just when they thought they were living their best life.... How can we ensure that although we physically die, we live an everlasting life in Heaven with God the Father? This same question was asked many years ago by a lawyer seeking to test Jesus's knowledge.

"What must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25-37)

Jesus responded, "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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.

The lawyer asked for clarification, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus, not known for short replies, responded, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³²So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.

³⁶"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

³⁷The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."
Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

I ask you, as we enter 2020, do you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind? Do you love your neighbor as yourself? Honestly, to me the first part is easier than the second part. God is good all the time, people are not.

As you think on your goals, and the personal changes you want to make in 2020, how can you truly live a life that is devoted to God, and the plans He has for you? In what ways can you improve at loving your neighbors? In regards to the parable Jesus told, the first person who ignored the man's needs was a priest - one who has been ordained as a minister. He crossed to the other side of the road to avoid having to get involved. The second person who could have helped was a Levite, a man of similar background as the wounded man. He too, crossed to the other side of the road. We are not told why these two did not help. Maybe they were afraid they would also be robbed and beaten. Maybe they didn't know how they could help. Maybe they thought the man was already dead. The third person was a Samaritan, who in those days would be the least likely person to help a Jew. The [Samaritans](#) were known as half-breeds, half Jew and half Gentile. They worshiped false, pagan gods, and idols. Additionally, the Samaritans would do detestable things such as pouring pigs' blood in the temple to make it unclean for the Jews polluting their holy place. Yet, we see that it was a Samaritan who took pity on the dying man. He took six different steps to ensure the man would be okay.

In 2020, how can you behave more like the Samaritan? In what situation do you need to speak up or take action rather than pretending you don't see what is happening? What relationships need to be mended? I wrote in a blog last year, that we can make great change with just [one step](#). What one step might you need to take? Additionally, who might you need to forgive? Who do you begrudge for ignoring your needs? The priest in the example makes me think about church hurt. The Levite, of similar background as the dying Jew, makes me think about family hurt. Who do you need to forgive? Jesus said in Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Be a peacemaker in 2020. Paul tells us in Colossians 3:13, "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." AMEN!

Have a Happy and Blessed New Year in the Lord!
Kim

