

The Parable of the Real Neighbor: Luke 10:25-37

Sunday, January 1, 2023
Covenant Church
Pastor Zack Phillips

Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷ 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 neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

A. Introduction

Our angle on this famous passage is the result of the convergence of God's work in our lives lately—the Parish Collective conference, "discernment" at Men's Breakfast, our call for "intentional listening practices."

This parable stems from Jesus' answer about "eternal life"—not getting-to-heaven-when-you-die but enjoying full, abundant, real, Eternal Life *now*.

The parable is not about who our neighbor is but, instead, about whether we will be a neighbor. In other words, **we don't get to choose our neighbors; we only get to choose whether we will be a neighbor.**

B. Nearing

Where the priest and Levite move further away, the Samaritan moves closer. Will we?

"What we thought we saw or heard may not be the case. It could just be our imagination. That conversation I overheard between one of my kids and her playmate from down the street may have sounded like her family is struggling with finances, but I may have misunderstood. Then again, little Carly does seem to eagerly accept every offer for a snack

or to stay for dinner. I see our elderly neighbor across the street mowing his lawn, so I guess he is up to the task. I wonder if it would be a blessing to him if I offered to do that, or is the exercise good for him? Does he enjoy doing it himself? I will never know the answer unless, like the Good Samaritan, I go to the person.” —Ford & Brisco¹

C. An Obstacle to Nearing

John M. Darley and C. Daniel Batson, “‘From Jerusalem to Jericho’: A Study of Situational and Dispositional Variables in Helping Behavior,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 27 (1973): 100-08.

D. Background Conditions

What in the structure, the texture, of our lives is unquestioned “normal”—that we should question in order to open up new ways of loving Jesus? Let’s consider our *experience of time*...

As we flip on the kitchen lights and awaken the computer, it doesn’t matter if it is dark outside, if our bodies feel exhausted, if our neighbor is sick, or if our blood sugar is low; all that matters is that there is work to be done and “time” to do it. An hour is an hour, whether it starts at 11:00 a.m. or 11:00 p.m. —Kelly Kopic²

UCLA researcher Cassie Mogilner-Holmes

Devices: Three observations

E. Intentional Listening Practices

Question: What is one thing that God may have said to you through this sermon?

Some Recommended Reading

Lance Ford and Brad Brisco, *Next Door as It Is in Heaven: Living Out God’s Kingdom in Your Neighborhood* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2016).

Kelly M. Kopic, *You’re Only Human: How Your Limits Reflect God’s Design and Why That’s Good News* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2022) or “The Blessings of Limitations with Kelly Kopic,” Trinity Forum Conversations podcast, Dec 2022.

“Taking Control of Your Time,” Hidden Brain podcast, Sept 26, 2022.

¹ Ford & Brisco, *Next Door As It Is In Heaven*, 39-41.

² Kopic, *You’re Only Human*, 194.