**Luke 10:25-37**

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” **26** He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” **27** 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 neighbor as yourself.” **28** And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” **29** But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” **30** Jesus replied, “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. **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, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. **34** 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. **35** 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.’ **36** Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” **37** He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

**“A Neighbor Like None Other”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (Gal 1:3-5) The Good Samaritan is more than a story, but has become an actual inheritance to our society. Unlike other countries, you see the title, “Good Samaritan” quite a bit, but especially those places that seek to help the suffering like at hospitals and care centers. The “Good Samaritan” has even become an award given to a person for going beyond what others would do. As much as our culture suppresses and cuts down the church, no one has taken any actions to get rid of the Good Samaritan.

Now summarizing the Good Samaritan simply to be about going out of your way to help others only makes it half way. It is to take the Law, but to pass over the Gospel. It is to worship works, but see no value of faith. Jesus went out of his way to tell this story to a very specific person who asked a very specific question. The lawyer stated, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Love was the answer, but the Good Samaritan story was far more than about exposing the hypocrisy of lovelessness in life. It was a call to repent and believe in the grace God has sent in His Son for eternal life. The steadfast love of Jesus our Good Samaritan extends to us the way of love without limit.

1. **The law of love is unbound, but we want a way that comes with limits.**
2. By answering correctly about loving God and His neighbor, the Lawyer had no other option but to ask, “And Who is my neighbor?”

* He knew the impossible demands of the Law were out of his reach.
* Yet, Jesus refuses not let him get away with limiting God’s demand of love.
* The violence that came upon a man traveling was not the shocker.
* The true revelation came in the “hands-off” approach of a priest/Levite (hero) compared to the Samaritan (enemy).

1. Every person by nature ends up taking a narrow view of his or her neighbor.

* People who make the claim to love everybody tend to love nobody.
* The new tolerance today is about redefining love and not caring for all people.
* We see violence on TV, but what about those placed before us every day? (Pass by them!)
* Christians must end confess how far off we are when that “Samaritan” silences us. (The person with tattoos compared to a clean cut guy too busy to care, the devotion of a single mother compared two fighting spouses and even the immigrant who takes up every opportunity to make a difference regardless their religion.)

1. **Christ more than fulfills love, but proves the love of God is good for sinners.**
2. The Lawyer was called to love because God’s mercy had

come to him.

* Jesus was the true Samaritan, the foreigner, the One sent from the Father out of love for a sinful world.
* Repenting over the impossible law of love meant the lawyer had to confess being the half-dead person in need of the love only Jesus could give.
* This would become evident at His cross, when the religious leaders waged their heads passing by Him while Jesus passed over none saying, “Father Forgive them for they know not what they do.”
* Even the violent ways of wicked men that cause much grief in life Jesus loved for He said to a thief, “Today, you will be with me in paradise.”

1. This call to love is still good today because Christ in mercy comes to love us.

* The outsider in our midst, the compassionate Savior toward sinners is what Isaiah foresaw also being the, “one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Isaiah 53:3)
* Yet, He perfectly fulfilled the Law by His sacrifice for God demanded this love and dead humanity needed this kind of loving neighbor.
* This good Samaritan looks beyond fear to faithfulness that saves for, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us” (Galatians 3:13),
* He has drawn near to us and so daily your watery death in Him by baptism is how Jesus arises with love for you, mercy to show you, healing to work in you, and has removed the need to pay any bill.

1. **This way of love by God promises eternal life, but also spills over into our lives.**
2. Christ enlivens love making it greater than a written code or some self-absorbed feeling.

* This is love with the source not in man, but God for He has, “delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”
* By Word and Sacrament, Christ now works with love as that innkeeper of His Church by what He does in the office of the Holy ministry.
* Love compels this perfect priest to pray and be our advocate always encouraging us to pray in this world, “Our Father who art in heaven.”
* Instead of robbing us of life and limb, Christ bestows love that graciously brings peace and hope where we only see death.

1. Since Christ has loved us as that unforeseen Samaritan, so we do the same to others.

* It is not as out of the way as we first might picture or as extraordinary as we might want it to be.
* Being the Good Samaritan is something that stares us in the face. Luther remarks, “We’ll find (God) right close to home: in the person of our wife, child, servant, master, mistress, the civil magistrate; also, in our neighbor’s house, on street corners, at the marketplace, everywhere. There we should be doing whatever we can out of friendship, love, and duty. God will look upon it as having been done to him” (Postils Vol 6. 410).
* Certainly, love compels us to pray as those who see the suffering and problems caused by the murder of police officers in Dallas or the continued slaughter of children in the womb.
* As those belonging to a kingdom given by the perfect Samaritan, it is more than about money, but love that is time consuming, gets personally involved, and remains faithful to the end.

So here we are, in a society that likes the Good Samaritan, but not so much Christ and even less His Church. However, the continued temptation is to narrow down that definition of neighbor no less than the Lawyer did. To love God and not our neighbor is empty just as to love our neighbor without God is useless. The inheritance of the Good Samaritan benefits our society only because Jesus has taught us the value of every human being. It comes from the fact that God has sent a neighbor like none other for all people. The steadfast love of Jesus our Good Samaritan extends to us the way of love that is without limit. Amen. Now the peace of Christ that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.