

## Our Mission:

To share Christ with the world  
and grow disciples for Jesus



## Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

### Background:

We want to keep in mind that biblical parables were intended to use what is common to provide insight into the nature of God. The parable of the Good Samaritan is a reminder of our ethical responsibilities toward our 'neighbor.' To keep the law, and to realize it is a law of an expansive love beyond those who love us, is a powerful lesson we must constantly relearn. Yet, when we include the interchange between Jesus and Martha, we might find ourselves asking; 'Who is God in this parable, and what does that say about God's relationship with us?'

### Theology Connection:

We are in the season of Lent. Lent invites us to reflect upon the sufferings of Christ and the cost of being his disciple. The call to love will not necessarily make us liked, and often it challenges us to love those we don't like, yet we do so because this is the way of Christ. Jesus will not allow us to separate our relationship with him from the relationship we have with our neighbors and this world. Love of God and love of neighbor are two sides of the same coin.

### Application:

It may seem as if the application is rather straight forward. Samaritans were hated and despised by the Jews. Therefore, we are to see our supposed enemies as included within the gathering of our neighbors. Yet it would seem that without first focusing upon our relationship with Jesus, we are unlikely to adopt such an ethic. As we enter into Lent, might we want to a) make intentional the spiritual disciplines of prayer and worship so that b) we can engage in acts of mercy and service out of a spirit of love.

### The Text: Luke 10: 25-42

<sup>25</sup>On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>26</sup>"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" <sup>27</sup>He answered, "'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.'"

<sup>28</sup>"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

<sup>29</sup>But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

<sup>30</sup>In reply Jesus said: "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. <sup>31</sup>A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup>So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup>But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. <sup>34</sup>He 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. <sup>35</sup>The 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.'

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

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

<sup>38</sup>As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. <sup>39</sup>She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. <sup>40</sup>But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

<sup>41</sup>"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, <sup>42</sup>but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

## ADULT

Lent is typically a season when people give up something in order to focus more clearly upon our walk with Jesus. We don't just give up something to show ourselves worthy or righteous. We make a change recognizing that the change will lead us in the direction Christ would have us go. So, consider the disciplines of Lent; prayer, service, fasting, and worship and make a plan that will nurture your growth.

## YOUTH

Please read Luke 10:25-42

These are two great examples of loving your neighbor and of loving God. Jesus is consistent on emphasizing these two commandments repeatedly in the bible. The two things we remind ourselves in confirmation every week is one, love your neighbor as yourself and two, Jesus loves us unconditionally.

Have you ever had trouble finding a balance between the two, the life of service and the life of spiritual growth? Have you ever noticed someone is better at loving their neighbor while others are better at prayer and service? I think that's what makes our church community so great...is the diversity, it is important to have that mix, that balance.

Which one do you feel you are better at loving your neighbor as yourself or serving others and growing spiritually? This week I would like you to take some time to practice the one that is harder for you to do. How can you practice loving your neighbor as yourself or serving others this week?

Let us pray:

Dear God: Thank you for these two examples of how to follow your commandments. Please help us go and do likewise. Help us listen to Jesus' word and act in a way He wants us to. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

## CHILDREN'S

Read and Summarize:

Wherever Jesus went people would come to hear Him teach about God. They loved to hear Him tell parables. Parables are stories that helped people understand important lessons. Once, a man asked Jesus, "Teacher, what must I do to live forever?" Instead of telling him the answer, Jesus told a parable:

A man was traveling from Jerusalem to the town of Jericho. While he was on the road some robbers attacked him! They beat him up and took everything he had, even his clothes. The man was left alone on the road, he waited for someone to come by and help him. A priest came walking by, do you think the priest helped the man? No, the priest went to the other side of the road and passed right by the man. Next, a Levite came along the road, Levites were good Jews. Do you think the Levite stopped and helped the man? No, the Levite looked at the man and then crossed the road and walked past him. Finally, a man from Samaria came along the road. The Jews didn't like Samaritans, everyone thought that the Samaritans would never help anybody. But this Samaritan was good. He saw the man on the road, and stopped to help, he put oil and wine on the man's wounds. Then he lifted him onto his donkey and took him to a nearby inn, he took care of the man all night to make sure he was going to be okay.

Think:

1. Why did Jesus tell this story?
2. How did the Samaritan help the hurt man?
3. How should we treat others?

Dear Lord,

Help us to be like the Good Samaritan. Please fill us with understanding and love. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.