

Who is My Neighbor?

Witnessing, Made Easier--part 1

We begin a series called "Witnessing Made Easier". The New Testament word evangelism is a "loaded word" in our culture. Evangelism is usually associated with ideas like (1) Shoving our faith down someone's throat (2) Being rude (3) Feeling like you're selling something, like Amway. There is a difference between "good news" and **how** we go about sharing our faith.

Evangelism simply means "good news" in the Greek language.

DAY 1: Are we loving people?

Luke 10:25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"²⁷ 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.'

1. Let's take a look at the "expert in the law." This man would have "known" the Old Testament backwards and forwards. But there is a significant difference between knowing the information in scripture and DOING it.

2. How much did the expert seem to "know?" (vv. 25-27)

3. Jesus asked, "What is written in the Law?" ("Law" means the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament). What was the expert's response? (vv. 26-27)

4. What strikes you about his response?

a. Did he give the right answer? (v. 28)

b. How would you have answered Jesus' question?

5. If he gave the "right" answer, what was missing? Did the expert in the Law believe he was living consistently with his answer?

6. Why do you think Jesus told him, "Do this and you will live?"

7. What did Jesus want the man to realize about himself?

8. It's one thing to claim to be a loving person. It's an entirely different thing to actually love people in daily life.

DAY 2: Who is my neighbor?

Luke 10:30 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. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ 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.'

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

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

2. Yesterday we heard the expert in the Law say he should, "Love the Lord with all your heart... and love your neighbor as yourself." When Jesus pressed him on actually doing that Luke records the expert in the law "*wanted to justify himself.*" He wanted an excuse as to why he couldn't love his neighbor as himself.

Luke 10:29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

3. Jesus tells him a parable.

4. A team of bandits beat and rob a traveler, leaving him for dead.

There are three characters who subsequently walk along the same road and see the victim. Who are they?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

3. The priest works in the temple, performing sacrifices in behalf of the people. The Levite is a worker in the temple. Both men would have had universal admiration in Jewish culture. What did both of them do when they saw the victim?

4. Why do you think the priest and Levite avoided the man?

5. Do you find yourself avoiding helping out when you actually could help? Why do you avoid helping when you could?

DAY 4: Love in action

Read *Luke 10:25-37* (From page 2)

1. Jesus taught the "second mile principle." The gist is, "do more than what is requested or required." (Matt. 5:41).
2. What ways did the Samaritan illustrate the second mile principle? (vv. 34-35)

3. What contrast is Jesus making between the priest and Levite, with the Samaritan?

4. What we really believe is important drives our behavior, not just what *we think* is important.
 - a. What was really important to the priest and Levite?

 - b. What was really important to the Samaritan?

 - c. What is really important to you?

5. The example of the Good Samaritan is an extraordinary example of going out of your way, at great cost to yourself to help someone.
6. But in real, daily life, the opportunities to engage with people and help people are not so dramatic. It may be taking flowers into the office for a woman's loss of a loved one, taking donuts to share with your workmates, taking a cup of Starbucks to someone who loves coffee, taking someone to lunch on their birthday, taking the initiative to meet the new person at work, taking a plant to your new neighbor who just moved in.
7. The principle from the Good Samaritan is simply love in action. What is something you can do this week?

DAY 5: Go and do likewise.

1. Jesus finishes the story and addresses the expert in the Law, again.

Luke 10:36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

2. The man began by asking a question. "Who is my neighbor?"

3. The man finishes by answering his own question. (v. 37)

4. What does having mercy mean to you?

5. Jesus said, "Go and do likewise." How would this change how you treat the people:

a. At work or school?

b. In your home?

c. At church?

6. Summary: Being a neighbor means engaging with anyone God brings your way. Do what you can to make a difference! The essence of the story is the willingness to engage, to jump in the pool, to put love into action.

7. It is likely that God has brought people's faces and names to your attention. Jot down their names. Begin praying for them, asking God to open their hearts and give you opportunities to engage with them, to put love into action.