

3---THE ROAD TO JERICHO --- GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10:25-37

25On 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'^[a]; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^[b]" **28**"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." **29**But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" **30**In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of 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, took him to an inn and took care of him. **35**The next day he took out two silver coins^[c] 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."

Today for our Lenten service were looking at the Road to Jericho.

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a man was beaten, robbed and left for dead. She described the situation in vivid detail so her students would catch the drama. Then, she asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?" A little girl broke the silence, "I think I'd throw up."

The little girl got caught up enough in the story
To have a physical/ emotional reaction.
She threw up.
What's your reaction?

Just this past week a young man
was found dead underneath the overpass.
Not a lot of details
Found down by the train tracks.
But did it cause you to pause
Did it cause you to wonder about a man so young
With so much to live for ?
Now gone.
What should our reaction be to the pain and evil in our world.?

Fred Turner, 53, sets out from his home town of Beaufort, S.C., on a walk across the United States to prove, he says, that most people are good. A week later, in Georgia, he is robbed and pushed over a bridge. -- Maclean's, Jan. 4, '93, p. 11.

The road to Jericho isn't ancient history.
 The beaten and robbed man isn't a story of the past.
 It occurs each and every day.
 In 2005 South Dakota had 15,147 cases of Robbery, theft, rape, assault, murder, property damage in a population of 775,933
 One violent crime is committed every 21 seconds in the United States.

I haven't even begun to describe the pain and horror of a religion
 That teaches the honor of suicide bombers and the
 Devastation and destruction that is caused to innocent children and families.

Where is the capacity for human rights?
 Where is the honor that every human being is a child of God and
 Loved by God.
 Where is the knowledge that we are held accountable for how we treat others?

Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan was told to the experts of the law,
 To cut through the rules and regulations that separated him
 from his fellow man, and from his God.

So in this Lenten season,,
 What character do you identify with in this story?

1. The Priest and the Levite?

These were the talkers and picketers of the day.
 These are the do gooders who can only ask questions or give advice.
 1. They can tell you what's wrong with the Jericho Road
 2. They can give you the scoop on the local sheriff and their deputies patrolling the road.
 3. They can complain about the legal system that allows gangs to hang out on the road..
 4. And bemoan the fact of the medical costs and systems that are out of joint with the poor beaten and downtrodden that come off the road..
 But they don't have any real answers to the hard problems of their day.
 But they pass on by, Jericho.
 Their religion is sterile,
 Quarantine in the rules and rituals of their books.
 They would never think of getting their hands dirty to help.
 That would make them ceremonially unclean.
 And 7 days distant from their work in the temple.

But the stranger still gets attacked,
 The traveler still gets robbed, and beaten, and left beside the road.
 If we're like the Priest and Levite we live with an awful lot of guilt, don't we?
 Because, like them, we know better.
 But still we only give 2.9 % of our income to God.
 And once in every 28 years we invite someone to church.

Jesus says: You know the scriptures and what will separate you in the final judgment.

"I was hungry and you fed me,"

Or: "I was hungry and you didn't feed me."

I was beaten and you helped me,

I was beaten and you passed me by.

And by our choice.

We prove or disprove our faithfulness to God.

**"Forasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these
 my brothers or sisters, you did it not to me."**

2. Or maybe you identify with the Robbers.

If you're not going to identify with the priest and the Levite,
 you might as well go all the way and identify with the people who
 actually put him there.

Is there much difference, really?

If you beat and rob the man he lies in the ditch "half dead".

If you pass by and ignore the man he still lies in the ditch. "Half dead".

He's a victim twice around,

The first time physically half dead,

The Second time emotionally and spiritually half dead..

Thinking help was coming and then not getting it.

Priest and Levites happened to pass by,

The Robbers planned..

They laid in ambush.

This wasn't a spur of the moment.

This was their livelihood.

The robbers show us our wicked hearts.

We don't have to be very old to recognize our deviousness and sinfulness.

A young mother wanted to give her little first grader a tongue lashing for getting a D in deportment. But the father prevailed on her to accentuate the positive, so as she signed the card, she said, "Look Johnny, if you are able to bring up that grade in deportment, I'll give you a whole dollar!" A delighted Johnny took off to school. When the other children went out at recess, he stayed behind to tell his teacher: "Look, would you like to make fifty cents?"

There's a new computer out that so human that when it makes a mistake, it blames it on another machine. --Mickey Freeman in PARADE

3. Or, you might relate to the Innkeeper?

You're willing to take responsibility for the care of someone in need?

You're willing to serve, even go out of your way.

A lot of us have done that sort of thing at one time or another, haven't we?

Amazing how your name recognition in the paper, or in a brochure,
Or a certificate on the wall can motivate some people to give and act.
We're in the Centennial club, or the Golden club, the Wolves club.

At least the innkeeper comes off better than the priest and the Levite and the robbers.
He is on the positive side of the equation,
Willing to help when the opportunity presents itself.

And there is a motivation for his help.
Notice he doesn't give his services free.
Nor is there any ½ price offer or coupon.
Kind of like our health systems which are non profits,
but seem to be always profiting.
I know there are write-offs, all across the country and
Do they pay or do you and I just pick up the bills by higher medical costs?.
When is the last time we did something that really cost us ,
And we did it for nothing.

4. Or maybe you really can relate to the donkey?

He at least served

He carried the man bloodied and all.

Maybe the donkey didn't have a lot of say in the matter,
Brayed and honked about it.

Sometimes you don't have a choice either.
Life may have left you a widow,
Or a young single mom or dad,
You in the thick of it.
Nobody else to help the bathe the kids, do the homework,
To clean the house, do the laundry, keep the car running.
You just do it. Cause you're in the thick of it.

Or maybe you do it because some preacher recruited you.
He got you cornered and you couldn't say no.
There you were serving.
For whatever reason the donkey did fill an important role.
It was given a job to do, carrying a burden—and the donkey did it.
Because that's what beastsof burden do,

I guess that's what they were created to do,
Even though donkeys like people can be stubborn,

Josh Billings said: Mules are like some men, very corrupt at heart: I've known them to be good mules for 6 months, just to get a good chance to kick somebody.

5. Maybe you could identify with the victim.

Theologically we might even be able to make a case for that.
The condition he found himself in by the side of the road is sort of like the condition we find ourselves in as sinner.

Lost and alone,

Beaten by the world,

And hurting inside.

We are stripped of any supposed goodness,

and left in a condition in which we sing,

“Nothing in my hands I bring.”

“Half dead” isn't the half of it.

Scripture tells us that we are “dead (*all* dead) in trespasses and sins.”

6. MAYBE you can identify with the Good Samaritan.

Even Jesus said no one is good.

He said to this Expert of the Law “Why do you call me Good Teacher”?

Or do you recognize that I am the good Samaritan.

And unless you allow me to touch your life you will remain outside in your unbelief.

In any case for us.

Jesus becomes the Good Samaritan

He is the one who stopped on the Jericho road.

He is the one who stripped off his clothes

And exposed his back

He is the one who is beaten for our transgression,

Bruised for our iniquities

And by his stripes we are healed.

And we esteem him not.

And yet surely he has born our griefs and carried our sorrows.

This foreigner from another world.

Is “despised and rejected” by the likes of us.

Even as he hung there on the cross.

Father forgive them for they know not what they do.

We pass by on the other side.

Don't know him,

Never heard of him.

The Cock crows and
The Jericho Road eats up another victim.

Jesus ask the Experts of the Law

**“Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor
to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?”**

This Jewish lawyer answers Jesus question
But still couldn't bring himself to say the word “Samaritan,”
but instead walked around the subject:

“The, uh, one who, um, showed him mercy.”

“The, uh, one who, um, shows *us* mercy”

Yes he is the One whom we have so often and so consciously avoided,
whose name we are too embarrassed to say out loud

And yet without him.
I will remain a victim on the JerichoRoad,
Helpless to help myself,
Caught and beaten by sin.
Unless
I can cry out.

Jesus, my Lord and my God.

And in that moment open my heart,
And discover a new road to Jericho.
That leads to a heavenly kingdom.