June 25, 2017

Luke 10:25-42

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Luke 10:25. Let me just read our text and then we will get right to work. This is the Word of the Lord,

“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.”

38 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” 41 But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

Lord, I pray that you would bless the reading, and the hearing, and the preaching of your Word, tonight, and that you would shape our lives by it and that we would submit to it. That we would experience conviction and then training and direction, and that we would be changed by your Word. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

So, when you think about Bible stories that are super familiar, especially in the secular world, there is a lot of biblical literature that is really familiar to people outside of the Church. The one I always think about is David and Goliath. You hear that often used as a sort of sports analogy. The Good Samaritan is another one. The first time I remember this story is when I was in the fourth grade and we were on a family trip in California. We had driven from here in Western North Carolina all the way across the country in a 1983 Chevrolet Chevette. It was a three speed in the floor with no air conditioner. I can remember driving across the Arizona desert. We had a cooler filled with ice and water and my mama would put our shirts in that cooler of ice water, wring them out, put them on us, and we would wear them until they dried out in about ten miles or so. It was hot. We were from the mountains of North Carolina so it felt real hot. It was just a real impressionable trip.

On a trip like that, if something can go wrong most likely it is going to. Many marriages have ended in a car on a trip with kids in the back seat when things were going wrong. But we got to go to Disneyland. I’ve never been to Disney World in Orlando but I’ve been to Disneyland in California, so I feel like I kind of have bragging rights. I remember that we came out of the park and the car was broken down. I don’t remember what was wrong but I remember that it wouldn’t work. We were stranded in this faraway state. As Murphy was there with us and as his law would have it, I remember that my parents had travelers’ checks. I don’t know if they do those anymore but some of you remember travelers’ checks. I remember that that day, on the way to the park, the travelers’ checks had flown out the window. We always had the windows down and the checks were clipped on the visor and they were gone somewhere out on the Los Angeles freeway. Things were pretty tense when we came out of the park and then the car was broken down.

There was a family that had a van that was converted into a little RV and they were on a family vacation. They came over and were helping us. It was late at night and I remember all the kids—there were three of us at the time and there would be more later—got up in that RV and watched movies. They had snacks and they had a movie player in their RV. This was the early 80s and you guys in the younger generation will never appreciate that. I’m sorry for you. But anyway, we were watching movies, having snacks, and playing board games, and we sat there for three or four hours until a mechanic or AAA or someone came.

I remember when we were driving away, my mama said, “I’m so thankful for those good Samaritans.” I thought, “I wonder if that’s their last name? I wonder if that’s where they are from?” I didn’t know what it was but it was a reference to a Bible story. It’s a story most people know, in fact, I heard recently about a law that is on the books in North Carolina and probably in other states, too, called the Good Samaritan Law.[[1]](#footnote-1) That’s a pretty common Bible story and it’s something people know about. So, anytime you come to a story like that it can be difficult to open that story and learn fresh truth from it, because you feel like you already know what there is to know about it. But, we are hoping and trusting that the Lord will do that tonight.

So, the story starts with this lawyer. Now, this was not the kind of lawyer we think about when we think of a lawyer in our culture and context. It’s not exactly the same thing. Jesus often references experts in the law. An expert in the law was someone who knew Old Testament law in much detail. So this would include Levitical law, the Torah, the Mosaic Law—the law that Moses gave to the people as prescribed by God—and also a lot of extra-biblical literature. Young people, that means that we have the Old Testament writing and then there is a bunch of stuff that really smart people had written and added to it. You might think that they are not very smart, huh? Right you are. So, they were experts in the law who felt like their expertise could bring something to the law. So, there was a lot of extra writing and a lot of it is included in what is known as the Talmud. So, the Old Testament law given by God is called the Torah and man added many, many writings to that in what is called the Talmud. So, oftentimes, when you see the Pharisees interacting with Jesus, and people are trying to trip Jesus up, or when you see Jesus addressing laws that are not biblical, a lot of times what they are doing is going to the Talmud or other non-biblical writings that they had added to it.

This happens in our day. I know that I grew up in a culture where oftentimes the teachings of Christ weren’t enough, so we had to add to it. We had to say to use a certain translation of the Bible, or we say you had to listen to a certain type of music, or we would add things that, quite frankly, are not there. So, to rightly handle the Word of Truth or the Word of God, like Paul tells Timothy, we want to study the Bible, know the Bible, and then submit to the Bible.

See, what this guy has done is he has studied the Bible, and he knows the Bible, but he’s not submitting to the Bible. In fact, he is jacking around with the Word of God and he is trying to manipulate it to make it work for him rather than submitting to it and letting God be for him in his submission to His Word. So, he is trying to use the Word of God in a manipulative way so that it works for him. This is something they would do in that system. So, there was a lot of stress between the religious leaders of the day and God’s people or the people who would follow Jesus. So, ultimately, we know that these guys are the ones who are responsible for killing Jesus. Jesus, obviously, laid His own life down but these were the men, the religious leaders, who were held responsible for it.

So, this man is trying to trip Jesus up, which people have been doing since the beginning of time. We take the Scripture, we adulterate it, we twist it, we change it, we shape it, and we make it mean something we want it to mean. We beat other people up with it while making ourselves feel better about it. So, what he is doing is he is saying, “Okay, so I’m asking you how to have eternal life and you are asking me what does the Law say?,” and then he quotes Leviticus and Deuteronomy. “Love God” summarized the first four commandments, and the first four commandments are a summary of a bunch of other laws, which is his first summary of the Christian life, and then he says “love man” and condenses it even further. Love God and love man completely, fully, wholly, and selflessly. He condenses it down to these two things. So, this guy is going to try to quantify this because he is looking for a way to get out from under it. So, he says, “Now, who is my neighbor?” and it tells us right there in verse 29 that he is trying to justify himself. He doesn’t want to submit to God’s Word.

Church, the best thing we can do every day of our lives is surrender our lives to the authority of God’s Word. We don’t approach the Word of God from an authoritative position but we approach the Word of God in total submission, believing that the Word of God is life. Scripture, speaking of itself, uses word pictures that are almost overwhelming. Fire, meat, bread, shelter, strength, a sword—the Word of God is the powerful tool that God has given us by which we live our lives and also by which we have a measure of His judgment resting on our lives every single day. We know that in Romans 8:1, “There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,” but the Word of God does provide for us what we need to live under an authority that is not ambiguous—that means confusing—but is clear. The Word of God is understandable, profitable, and useful in every way for the believer. It will build us up, it will shape us, it will make us more into people who look like Jesus, walk like Jesus, smell like Jesus, and are literally a fragrant offering and sacrifice to the Father. The Word of God is a beautiful and powerful gift. It’s a great gift. We don’t need to ignore it and we also don’t need to try to manipulate it.

That’s what this man is doing. So, here is what Jesus does. I was watching a highlight video of a fighter recently. Somebody texted me and told me to check him out. His nickname is Big Country and he’s an ultimate fighter guy. He has a mullet, a rattail about that long, a big beard, and he looks like he lives right here, works at Snowbird Outfitters, and comes to Red Oak. He is our kind of guy. He has a belly that looks like he eats a bucket of chicken and two cases of Little Debbie’s a day for about six years. All the other guys come out with their cool music, and their tattoos, and their entourages, and Big Country just waddles out there like he is, a big, hairy redneck straight off the side of a mountain somewhere. He got off of the tractor and walked into the ring. You can tell that he probably learned to fight at bars, and junkyards, and places like that. So, he goes into the ring with two things that are really effective. One, he’s really good at getting hit while not getting hurt. That’s a gift from God. He is gifted at taking a shot. The second thing he is really good at is hitting people with his right hand and making them go to sleep for a long period of time. It’s impressive because these big guys look like Mr. Universe. They come out with muscles bulging everywhere and then there is this chubby dude. You think, “I know how this is going to go,” but then the chubby dude walks out and sort of sticks his head out there like that and lets them pop him a few times. They start getting really confident, and they start getting sloppy, and they start dropping rights, and dropping lefts, and then all of a sudden he just kind of does this haymaker, and then he hits them with the inside of his fist in the temple, or their jaw, and what happens next is fantastic. They go numb, blank, lights out, they are asleep on the mat, and the fight is over. So, if you need some brain candy and it’s been a long day, pull up some highlights of Big Country. It’s really entertaining.

So, what you would oftentimes see Jesus do is get into these conversations where you wonder if he’s taking shots on the chin. You wonder if He’s just going to let them do this and then all of a sudden, with one statement, one comment, one word, or one proper handling of Scripture, the smoke clears and it’s just Jesus standing there. Because oftentimes what would happen is the religious leaders or rulers would try to ensnare Him. In fact, we know from Scripture that from about the middle of His three year ministry or a little bit later, they started to conspire against Him, “How can we kill Him? How can we put Him away? How can we get rid of Him? He is ruining everything.” Jesus knows what they are up to and He’s like, “You are not going to take me and kill me until I’m ready because I’m the One actually in charge of that. You’re not.”

So, what Jesus brilliantly does is He uses the law that He wrote; that He gave to this man. See, this man is seen by the people as the expert of the law but Jesus is actually the expert of the law because He’s the one who wrote it. So, what He does is tells a story that we are very familiar with. You have this man who is going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. If you look at the geography and topography of it, it’s about a seventeen mile journey, downhill, through a mountainous region. Apparently, highway robbery was really common. So, Jesus is painting a picture that is really common to that era and people can sort of identify with what He is saying. Literally, the way the wording is, is that the man got beaten repeatedly. They beat him, and they beat him, and they beat him. They took everything he had. If he had an animal they took it. If he had money they took it. They left him for dead. So, Jesus points out that a priest came along. He sees the man and the priest leaves the man alone. We don’t know exactly what is going on. I don’t know if the guy is dead or groaning, but if the priest touches this man and this man is unclean…some commentators make the point of the fact that the priest is going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, which means that he has been there to make sacrifice. I don’t know. It’s at least worth considering that he is coming back from the most holy and ritualistic of priestly duties, yet he won’t stop to help his fellow man. It’s a really strong, outspoken word against religious activities that are void of compassion toward people. I pray to God that we never become a church—even when we are all dead and gone and another generation has come alone—that Red Oak would never be a church that is religious in activity but completely void of ministering to people who need it the most. Because we need to be a church where every one of us in here is engaging our neighbors, loving our neighbors, and caring about people. I don’t know, maybe he didn’t want to touch the guy. Maybe the guy is dead and the priest then has to deal with the ceremonial rituals of having touched a dead person. Then, along comes a Levite, who would have been an assistant to a priest. Jesus is still painting the same picture. These are Jewish, religious leaders. So, the Levite went on by, too.

Now, I don’t know what the hearers were thinking at this point. That lawyer in particular is probably thinking that next Jesus is going to tell about a good Jewish dude. But, instead, Jesus introduces a Samaritan. When He does this, I am quite positive that the lawyer would have thought that Jesus was going to paint the same picture; the Samaritan is going to come along and do the same thing. The Jews thought of the Samaritans as scoundrels.

To give you a little background, about 750 years before this story there was a group of people called Assyrians. Assyrians were barbaric. If you remember when Jonah went to Nineveh to preach, part of the reason he didn’t want to go was because he hated the Assyrians. Another reason was because he was scared. They killed people and they were barbaric. We can study in secular resources that the Assyrian Empire was a horrific period of human history. They murdered and pillaged and they were like locusts. They would go through a territory and in all of the cities they would rape, rob, murder, and pillage. They would strip it of all of its natural resources and if anybody did survive they would be left with nothing and die a slow death. They would then move to the next place and rape, pillage, rob, and do destruction everywhere they went. They never established any kind of solid monarchy, or kingdom, or dynasty. They were literally led by chieftains and one main chieftain would oversee it all as they just did destruction.

Well, in 722 BC, the Assyrians came into Israel, which was divided into twelve tribes. The Assyrians grabbed the ten northern tribes and carried them into slavery. They raped, pillaged, robbed, murdered, and did what they do. Then, there was a group of Israelites, who were Jews, who then married and began to breed with the Assyrians and they created this race of people called the Samaritans. So, they were seen as mongrels. That’s literally the word that would be used to describe the way that Jews viewed Samaritans. I, as a Jew, looked at you, as a Samaritan, and what I saw was the people who defiled our people. You are a descendant of partnership with the Assyrians. It was really, really ugly to the Jews. So, the Jews hated Samaritans. They just outright hated them. In fact, at one point, in trying to belittle Jesus, they called Jesus a Samaritan. We know that they used it as a slang word, a curse word, a word that would degrade somebody.

We also know, as we saw a couple of weeks ago in chapter 9, that when Jesus came into the villages in Samaria that they wouldn’t hear Him. They weren’t having it. So, He set His face toward Jerusalem and just passed through. So, they had rejected Jesus to this point. It’s really interesting that Jesus brings a Samaritan into the story, particularly that He brings the Samaritan into the story and here’s what the Samaritan does. He spends time, money—here’s the thing; a lot of us will throw money at a problem but we don’t want to throw emotion at a problem. Because you can sign a check and brag about it, but to bring somebody who is dirty and stinky into your house is really uncomfortable.

A lot of people will give money. It is crazy how often I can think that I’ve heard people in my life who will brag about giving money to less fortunate people. It happens a lot. You can throw money at a problem and feel really good about yourself. This Samaritan doesn’t do that. What he does is he goes over to this man and begins to bind up his wounds. I was thinking about it this morning while reading through the passage several times today. I was reading through the text and trying to think if there was something I might have missed. I thought, there was plenty of oil and wine in that area, I’m sure, but there is expense to that. The dude is sharing his stuff. This would be the equivalent nowadays of us being in a situation where someone has been mugged, robbed, left for dead, and rather than trying to get out of there because of the imminent threat, you do first aid, you treat his wounds, and you get his blood on you. Man, they didn’t have latex gloves or sterile gauze. They had a clay flask with some good, fine wine in it. You’d take that and pour it on there and it would serve as an antiseptic. That guy was doing away with what he needed for nourishment. If you grew up Baptist that makes you real uncomfortable—“No, no, no, that wine was only for medicinal purposes.” Whatever. Drink the water in a third world country and get back to me. So, he was pouring the wine on the guy’s wounds. The oil would have been for soothing pain. It was pressed olive oil. These were pretty available resources in that area but this is what the man was carrying. He was giving of himself and his resources. I don’t want to complicate it—he’s just giving of every part of himself to those in need. It’s a simple illustration that Jesus is using. He doesn’t care about his own comfort. He doesn’t care about his own cleanliness. He doesn’t care about his own well-being and health. He’s right there in the middle of robbers’ alley and he’s just helping. Because, at the core of his soul there is another fellow human in need and he’s going to help him.

This is what Christianity looks like. Christianity looks like people who love Jesus, have been changed by Jesus, and so we therefore act like Jesus, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross under the weight of our sin. See, when Jesus went to the cross, you know what was hanged on His shoulders and on His face?—Prostitution, drug addiction, child abuse, those sins that we can’t even fathom wrapping our brains around, were hanged on Christ so that we don’t have to live under the weight of those sins, but Christ has done it for us so that we can live under the weight of freedom. That’s why Scripture says in Galatians that we are not burdened by a yoke of slavery to the law and religion; we are set free in Christ. See, Jesus came to set people free. He came to set people free and the way that He did that was that He entered into the suffering condition of people. I do not want to over analyze or illustrate what this Samaritan is doing. I don’t think the big point here is that he is like Jesus. But I don’t think we have to apologize for saying that this is what Jesus does with us; He enters into our condition and He saves us, and He is expecting us to act the same way toward others.

So, the Samaritan binds his wounds up and puts him on his animal. I think one translation says it’s a donkey. Maybe it’s a camel. I don’t know; it’s probably a donkey. I think only rich people had camels. So, now he’s walking. He’s walking along and leading a donkey. I don’t know if you’ve ever led a horse or an animal with a small child sitting on it but you have to kind of lead the animal and hold the child. I don’t know if he strapped the guy on or if he had him rigged up somehow but he is very carefully moving this man to a safe place. Then, he gets him to this inn and he gives a substantial amount of money so that his care can be continued. Then, it says that he opens up a tab and tells the innkeeper, “I don’t care what it takes, you make sure he lives. I’ll take care of the cost.”

So, Jesus tells this story that we just cannot get to in our own brains. Do you know what I mean? It’s so counter cultural to what they would have understood. We don’t have a Samaritan equivalent in our society. But that’s what it’s like.

Then, the story comes back around and there’s a response. Jesus will often answer questions with questions. So, the man asks, “What do I do to inherit eternal life?,” and Jesus asks him a question, “What does it say in the Bible?” Now, Jesus is going to ask him another question. He says,

“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.’”

It’s really cool. He doesn’t say “the Samaritan.” He doesn’t identify him by his race, his creed, or his skin color; he just says, “Yeah, there is one guy here who showed mercy.” He’s the one who proved to be a neighbor.

“And Jesus said to him, ‘You go, and do likewise.’”

It’s really simple and I think there are two main points that I want to pull out of this. Jesus teaches the man and those listening that a man will prove his love for the Lord in the way that he loves and helps others, in particular, those who are put in his path and are much less fortunate. The law doesn’t provide salvation—Jesus does. Works don’t earn a man’s way to God but a man who is truly saved will live a life of good works and obedience.

Now, that sets up the second point. The first point is that we know the law doesn’t save a man. The second point is that works of the law do not bring salvation; however, true salvation will lead to a life of action. We see this throughout Scripture; where the Word of God will explain to us through examples that if you are really following Christ that an evidence of that is going to be that you are going to obey God’s Word. And one of the evidences is that you are going to love other people. You are going to love God’s Word as God has given it to us. You are not going to distort it, and twist it, and make it work for your life. You are not going to use it as a means to give yourself license but you are also not going to use it as a means to beat other people up.

See, there are two things that people tend to do with God’s Word; we tend to spin into the rut of legalism, which is where we take God’s Word and we add to it strenuous things that we can abide by so that it makes us feel more religious and more spiritual. But the other thing that people do is that they take God’s Word and sort of set it aside and say, “Jesus saved me, so I no longer have to deal with the law. The law is no longer a part of my life. Jesus fulfilled the law and so I can just live how I want to.” See, for thousands of years people lived according to the law. Now, we don’t, because Jesus fulfilled the law. So, people set it aside and say, “Well, we can just live in freedom,” and they will distort the freedom that Christ gives us. That’s called ‘license’—it’s like I’m giving myself a self-subscribed license to live however I want to. The Word of God teaches us that if we really follow Jesus, and we are shaped and changed by the Gospel, our actions will follow what has been done in our hearts. So, we will love Jesus with our heart, soul, minds, and strength, and our actions will follow that.

Scripture teaches us that. Let me share a few passages that I think will be really helpful. Romans 7:4. Listen to this,

“Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’ 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. 10 The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. 11 For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.”

Here’s what he’s saying. I’m going through life and the law exposes sin in my life. When I see the law, the nature that’s in me is a rebellious nature so it says, “How can I rebel against the law?” You see this in small children. Parents, have you seen this in small kids? As soon as there is a rule they think that law is there to be manipulated or broken, right? You don’t have to teach a kid to break the rules; you have to teach them to follow the rules. You don’t have to teach a kid to disobey. You have to teach them to obey. As soon as I’m told not to do something, something inside of me wants to do the very thing that I’m told not to do. It’s fascinating. Think about that. This is a principle in Scripture. We don’t even have to think about whether that’s true in my life. It’s true in your life because the Bible says it. Paul, writing in Romans 7, says that what happens is that the law exposes sin in my life, and the very law that is exposing that sin, I want to rebel against it. That’s where it is good in one sense; because it exposes my need for someone to step in and rescue me—someone who is able to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law that I am not able to fulfill. That someone is Jesus. Amen? Jesus fulfilled the law. He said, “I didn’t come to abolish the law but to fulfill the law.” In Romans 10:4, it says that Christ is the end of the law to everyone who believes. He fulfills it, but He doesn’t fulfill it as if to discard it and throw it away; He fulfills it as if to shine a light on it and say that the law is good because it exposed in you what you needed exposed; namely, that you can’t earn your salvation, you can’t get to God in your own strength. So, the law exposes the core heart of who we are and helps us to understand our need for a Savior, and Jesus is that Savior because He completely fulfills the law—every jot, every tittle, every word, and every line perfectly. He never sins against it. He never sins against it and He goes to the cross as a perfect law-keeper and dies in our place as a perfect sacrifice. It’s beautiful.

Let me read another one. Romans 8:1,

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

Christ has done what we could not do, in that He has fulfilled the righteous requirement of the law. Then, in Romans 13:8-10, listen to this.

“Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

What Jesus teaches us is that with Him in us we can do what the law demands. Though we are not judged by that law—we are judged by the righteous works of Christ—in us we will see that all of the law that is summarized by loving our neighbor as ourself is going to become a reality in our lives. What does that mean? We are going to care about people. You are going to care about people more than you care about yourself if you have Jesus. If Christ is in you, you are going to love people. That’s going to be the mark of a believer. We are going to love people. We are going to care about people. We are going to want to tell them about Jesus. We are going to help meet physical needs. We are going to want to help meet spiritual needs. We are going to want to, most importantly, share the Gospel with them. We are going to care about people. We are not going to be selfish. We are not going to be worried about our stuff, our time, our cleanliness. We are going to care about people. We are going to love people. We are going to want to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus. That’s what it is all summarized into saying.

So, the story kind of shifts gears and I really like what happens next because what Jesus has done here is He has exampled for the lawyer and for us as readers what it looks like to love others—to love my neighbor as myself. He’s shown that. Ultimately, what that Samaritan is doing is what He would want somebody to do for him. If he was in that situation he would want somebody to do that for him. If you were in that situation you would want somebody to come along and help you.

I’ll never forget. I was coming home from college one time from Virginia back down here to North Carolina. There was a girl at college and somehow I knew she needed a ride. I didn’t know her. But she got into my old truck and we had to stop about every fifty miles and put a quart of oil in it. It was awful. I don’t know how that thing ever got anywhere and eventually it stopped getting anywhere. But, at one of our stops I had forgotten to put the cap back on. I kept a case of cheap oil in the back of that old ’67 Chevy. The rocker panels were rusted out and it looked like Fred Sanford was driving down the road. Three on the tree had been converted to three in the floor but I broke the stick, so I had a big old set of vise grips that were my shifter. Every once in a while that thing would run off in second gear and I’d be running down the road and have to get her into third. Anyway, I was coming through Greensboro on 29 and I had to pull over because smoke was coming out of it and I had an oil film on the windshield. That little girl and I had known each other about an hour at this point and she didn’t know what was happening. She was having the experience of her life. It was about twelve o’clock at night and I needed oil. Way through the woods I could see some lights at a place that looked like a farm or something and I said, “I’ve got a gun in the dash,” and I dropped open the glovebox and I said, “Here’s a gun. Do you know how to use one?” She was terrified. I said, “This is a revolver. All you have to do is pull the trigger and bullets will come out. All you have to do is point it right at the bad guy if he tries to get you.” She was scared out of her wits. I said, “I’ll be right back,” and I went into the darkness. I needed a quart of oil to get home. So, I went off and I remember it was the most desperate feeling going from house to house wondering if I was going to get shot. Finally, there were some lights on and a man was out in his shop and he gave me three or four quarts of oil. I got the truck going and we got on home. But, I remember getting back on the road and thinking, “Thank the Lord that guy actually helped me.” If you’ve ever been in a situation where you are kind of sunk or dead in the water where you are facing bankruptcy, or they’re going to take your house, or you can’t pay the bills, and somebody steps in—we know what it’s like to be the person in need. There are times where in our selfishness maybe we need to tap into that and let that drive our own action. Love people the way you want to be loved. It’s that simple. That simplifies it.

Then, there is this beautiful picture with Mary and Martha that shows us the other principle, which is to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. You have Martha busy about the house and she’s working and working. We do this. We get so busy. Oftentimes, when we ask people, “How’s it going with you? Are you walking with the Lord? How’s your time in the Word?” and we get the answer, “Well, I’m just so busy.” “Oh, like Martha in Luke 10.” Yeah, that’s exactly what we do. We are busy, and I know that for me I get real convicted over the fact that oftentimes I’m busy doing ministry and forget to worship Jesus. I’m busy being a good Christian and forget that what Jesus is impressed by throughout Scripture is faith. Like that lady we read about a few weeks ago in our study of Luke; she was bent over and she could barely walk and she touched the hem of His garment. He turned about and said, “Daughter, your faith has made you whole.” He empowers people’s faith. He doesn’t always empower people’s activity. You can be super busy as a Christian, you can involve yourself in a dozen ministries, and you can write checks to a dozen more, but if you are not loving God with a pure heart and aren’t sitting at His feet every day, like Mary is doing—she’s just sitting there and I love what He calls it; He says, “She has chosen the good portion.” If we could see that every day God has a portion for us, a portion from His Word. It’s a powerful picture that if we will take time and sit at the feet of Jesus every day, and read His Word, and talk to Him, here’s what will happen—a love relationship will be cultivated in our hearts. I think a lot of people struggle with this idea of loving God. What’s it look like to love God? Well, start by sitting at the feet of Jesus. What’s going to happen is it is going to begin to unlock emotion in your life toward Christ—and emotion is a lot better than religious activity.

A lot of times emotion gets downplayed. I’ve talked to a lot of people who are very intellectual in their approach to the Christian faith. They don’t want to make it emotional. But we absolutely want to make it emotional. There is a man who was God and He had His body broken for me. If that doesn’t tap into the deepest core of your emotion then I question if the Gospel has really taken root in your life. That’s an emotional thing. It’s an intellectual thing, and we are to love God with our mind, but we don’t get to the mind part and check out. It should rattle us to our core every time we think of the goodness of the Lord. And by sitting at His feet and reading His Word—I read a quote the other day by Billy Graham about his father-in-law who was a missionary to China[[2]](#footnote-2). He would start reading the Scripture at 4:30 every morning and read it until 7am and then start his workday. Two-and-a-half hours of Scripture. He’d probably chuckle at that read-the-Bible-through-in-a-year plan. He’d be like, “That’s it? That’s like a snack.” You’d be reading the Bible through monthly. But Billy Graham said he was the most spiritual man he’d ever known in his life. Literally, the joy of the Lord oozed out of him and the Word of God was on his lips. His life was shaped by the Scripture. If we would just sit at the feet of Jesus before we get busy, before we do the work of the day, and just spend time alone with the Lord, then He will cultivate in us that love. He’s the author of our faith. He’s the author of our love. So when we spend time with Him it’s going to cultivate that.

If you have ever had a relationship with a person, the more time that you spent with them the more you appreciated them and loved them. This is a simple principle. The more time you spend with Jesus, at His feet in His Word, receiving the portion that He has for you, the more you are going to love Him, and as a result that is going to mean that you are going to love others better. Jesus has given us two incredibly practical principles here that somehow sum up the entire Old Testament, fulfilled in Christ. It’s simplified and given to us as two things. Here are thousands of years of revelation from God through prophets, written and put on pages by the leading of the Holy Spirit, laws that created an entire ceremonial system, and entire worship system, fulfilled in one man’s thirty-three year life, who was God in the flesh, and then He says, “Let me make this simple for you. We will break it down into two things; love God more than you love anything else and love people more than you love yourself, and you will do the Christian life the way God intended it to be done.” Amen?

Let’s pray.

Lord, we love you, and we thank you, and we praise you for your Word and for the application of it in our own lives. Thank you for conviction of sin and thank you for instruction in righteousness. Thank you for showing us what it is to die to ourself and our own desires and to love other people really well. You exampled that for us, Jesus, in your life and now you want us to do it in our own lives. So, help us to, please. God, I pray that we would be a church full of people that are on mission, that are loving our neighbors well, that are engaging people with the Gospel, that are not obsessed with the busyness of life but that we would spend time as individuals at the feet of Jesus. That we wouldn’t be like the lawyer and manipulate the Word of God to make it work for us but that we would understand that you are for us, not against us, and if you are for us then the best thing we can do is live lives of obedience to you. God, I pray that we would worship you in spirit and in truth and that we would love others well and that that would be a defining characteristic of this church and of each one of us in this church. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Let me invite you, if you don’t have a relationship with Jesus—we don’t do long, drawn out invitations here. If you’ve been to churches that do altar calls, we don’t do big ones. We believe in the sufficiency of the Word of God. But if you don’t know Jesus, we would invite you to come to Jesus tonight. Call on the name of the Lord and be saved. The Bible says that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you believe what we read tonight that Jesus is the one who fulfilled the righteous requirement of the law because you could never do that, and if you will receive what He has for you and turn from your sin, He will save you. There will be pastors down front who would love to talk to you and pray with you. You can do it right there in your seat and then talk to us afterwards. We’d love to help you know what the first steps of the Christian life look like. So, let’s stand together and sing.

1. <http://www.naloxonesaves.org/n-c-good-samaritan-law/> (June 26, 2017) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Lemuel Nelson Bell (July 30, 1894 – August 2, 1973) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)