

Luke 10:25-42

Verses 25-29:

--*And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"*

He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"

So he answered and said, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself."

And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

--(25) Jesus seems to be teaching in a village where He was accepted.

--The religious position of *lawyer* was established under Ezra. These men were to read the law, give its sense, and interpret it. They became teachers, trained up Jewish youth, and also instructed in the law judicially, like we would think of a modern lawyer.

--His question was dishonest, or at least probing or testing. The topic was a common discussion of the day. *Eternal life* was a term that meant more than just endless days; it embodied the type of life God wants us to know.

--(26) Jesus sends the man back to the law. He never diverged from the truth of God's Word.

--(27-28) The lawyer quotes **Deut. 6:5** and **Lev. 19:18**.

--Jesus says his summation was correct. Of course, no one actually has the moral capacity to love God and others perfectly, other than Jesus Christ!

--(29) If there really was a trap, this was it. Here is how the man would defend himself. *Don't we all become capable lawyers in self-defense?!*

--Why do we do this? To save face, or keep from yielding to God.

--Jesus is going to show this lawyer that the answer to his question isn't actually complicated to anyone with the right heart.

Verses 30-37:

--*Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was a neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"*

And he said, "He who showed mercy on him."

Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

--(30) Now, this is a wonderful story, and commentators and expositors use a lot of allegorical types with it. I think it is important for us to keep in mind that Jesus is telling this story for a reason.

--The point is to illustrate the true nature of the brotherly love God expected from the command previously quoted from **Lev. 19:18**. We don't pull the same type of allegorical types from the similar situations and stories like **Lk. 7:40-43**. We must be careful never to lose *what is* clearly communicated for *what may or may not* be communicated.

--The journey from Jerusalem to Jericho was approximately 17 miles. Sections of the road were known to be dangerous, even in those days.

--(31-32) Clearly, this priest and Levite are exactly the type of men who should have stopped to help this man. The Levite even seems to think about it for a moment, and then those good intentions die.

--We are not given their reasons for ignoring the man, because in the end, their reasons don't matter. *Imagine if this were on camera! How terrible would it look?*

--The man was half-dead, but they were half-alive. This is not **eternal life** as God desires.

*Buechner (The Magnificent Defeat, pg. 142): "*There seems then to be a deeper and more terrible truth still, because to be really alive, not just half alive, we need to help and heal him: his need for mercy is matched by our need to be merciful. It is not just for his sake that we come to his rescue. It is also for our sakes. Neither of us can be really human, really alive, without the other; and every time we pass him by and leave him to his own misery, we both suffer for it. We need each other so infinitely more than we are usually apt to see or to admit that we see.*"*

--God is always watching. Our moments with the half-dead we come across are given to us by God. They prove whether we, too, are neighbors or not.

--(33-35) Of course, a Samaritan would be the least likely person to help. There were no dealings between Jews and Samaritans (**Jn. 4:9**), and the Jews accused Jesus of being one to slander Him (**Jn. 8:48**), and, amazingly, they had just rejected Jesus and His disciples in the last chapter, refusing them any type of hospitality.

--Even so, this man has compassion. He stops, bandages wounds, gives generously of oil and wine, puts the man on his animal, pays two days' wages (**Mt. 20:9**), and promises the innkeeper he will return: ***when I come again***. *He isn't passing on the responsibility of neighborship—*Now he is your neighbor...**

--(36) What does Jesus do in all of this? He reframes the lawyer's question. It is no longer, *Who is my neighbor?* The true question is, *Am I a neighbor?*

--Whose needs are we really serving? Others, or our own?

--(37) Jesus' point is clear. We really don't need more information. We need new hearts. This doesn't have to be an allegory to realize that only Jesus Christ has done this perfectly!

Romans 5:6+8+10: *In due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. . . For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son.*

--Jesus has demonstrated the perfect love of God toward us while we were still ungodly, sinful, enemies.

--Paul sums up the practical attitude for us in his letter to the Galatians:

Galatians 6:10: *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of God.*

Verses 38-42:

--*Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."*

And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

--(38) Jesus enters the village of Bethany (**Jn. 11:1**) where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus live. Luke alone gives us this account. We see Jesus two other times in relation to this home. First, at Lazarus' death and resurrection (**Jn. 11**). Second, at Mary's anointing before His death (**Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9; Jn. 12:1-8**).

--The home seems to be Martha's, and she welcomes Jesus and His disciples to stay, which was no easy task!

--(39-40) At some point, Mary leaves off hosting with Martha, and **also** takes a seat at Jesus' feet. Sitting at someone's feet was the place of a servant before a master or a learner before a teacher (**Acts 22:3**).

--The little word **also** is important. It cannot mean that Martha was *also* sitting at Jesus' feet because then the story would make no sense. Clearly, it means Mary had been helping Martha serve, but left off at a suitable time, and *also* sat to hear Jesus' teaching.

--We are told that Martha gets **distracted**, the Greek word giving us the idea of being distracted with care, trouble, or distress. We all know what this feels like! Unfortunately, Martha gets annoyed with Mary and Jesus!

--Remarkably, she boils over and interrupts Jesus' teaching with a complaint.

--**Lord, do You not care. . .** is never a good start. The disciples made the same mistake in the storm (**Mk. 4:38**). They, too, received a fitting rebuke. Jesus is our Good Shepherd.

John 10:13: *The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.*

--Faith never drives us to ask God if He even cares.

--**Therefore tell her to help me.** Martha commands Jesus to command Mary.

--Martha, no doubt, had a heart to show hospitality. That was good. But she was beginning to feel like her inability to do everything she wanted to do was a bad reflection of her as a hostess. She saw Jesus' weariness, His lack of a place to lay His head, and wanted everything to be just right.

--She wants everything so right that she needs to command Jesus and Mary to be what she wants them to be. Martha is trying to conform Jesus and Mary into her own likeness. It is always a bad sign when we need to control everyone around us to make things "right".

--**(41)** Jesus saves Martha from herself with a gentle rebuke. The doubling of her name was evidence of His care for her in that moment, as with Simon Peter (**Lk. 22:31**), and the city of Jerusalem (**Lk. 13:34**).

--Here He is, the Son of God and Son of Man, kindly rebuking His hostess in her own home. He says, *Let's not talk about Mary and Me, let's talk about you, Martha!*

--**You are worried and troubled about many things.** . . Jesus makes it clear that her idea of what to worry about, and His idea of what to worry about, were two very different things. He was not being deprived; she was.

--Are we also worried and troubled about many things? Satan rarely launches a direct attack on our priorities. Instead, he gives us reasons, troubles, and worries that drive us from prayer, Bible reading, church, fellowship, service, private devotion with Him, etc.

--Am I finding myself getting bugged with others? Annoyed with God? Why? What am I worried and troubled about?

Matthew 6:33: But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

--**(42) But one thing is needed.** . . Jesus is reproving Martha, but also inviting her to have her final and ultimate needs met in Him.

--Our gardens, cars, homes, careers, retirements, etc., will all be gone one day. They will be taken from us. But our relationship with Jesus Christ can never be taken.

--This is not a story about activity Vs. contemplation.

--Mary served with Martha, and then later, when she anoints Jesus for His burial, she proves a heart of action when needed.

--Martha, also, was not a pure laborer. She took time to listen to Jesus' word. She spoke with Christ about resurrection at Lazarus' death, and pronounced clearly, ***I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.***

--These sisters get stereotyped, but the truth is, the Scriptures show us a mix of service and worship in both. The question is, *What is the lesson here in this story?*

--The Good Samaritan taught us how to love our neighbors, but here, with Mary and Martha, the Holy Spirit is teaching us how to love God. It is possible to love our neighbors too much, but it is not possible to love God too much. Loving Him is what births love to others.

--Loving Him is the one thing we ultimately need in our lives.

--Just like we should not miss the opportunity to be a neighbor, even more importantly, we shouldn't miss the opportunity to receive from God and love Him in return. He is our one true need. *Martha wanted to give, but Jesus wanted her to receive.*

--This rebuke was given to a devoted follower. Martha's action led to distraction, misplaced priority, and love toward self over Jesus.

--It was an understandable mistake, but a mistake nonetheless.

--Wonderfully, Martha accepts Jesus' rebuke. His correction didn't keep her from having Jesus back in her home, nor did it keep Jesus from wanting to stay with them. In fact, in their last meal together before Jesus went to the cross, we are told, ***There they made Him a supper; and Martha served.*** . . . No anger here, no distraction, no rebuke. Just fellowship and love.

--I think it is also important to notice that Jesus doesn't just rebuke Martha, He also defends Mary (Actually, this happens all three times we find her at His feet! Here in **42**, with His tears in **John 11**, and with a stern rebuke and an incredible reward in **John 12**).

--Jesus was not there to be served, but to be found as Savior and Lord. Mary was giving what He wanted, what He was there to die for, life and relationship with Him. He will not take that from any of His children who choose to love Him and seek Him.

--Bellett puts it beautifully in his book (The Evangelists): "*But Mary had no house for Him. She was, in spirit, a stranger like Himself; but she opens a sanctuary for Him, and seats Him there, the Lord of her humble temple.*"*