

LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS

Loving People the Biblical Way

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT (Matthew 22:34-40)

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind’. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’. All the Law and Prophets hang on these commandments”.

LOVE FOR ENEMIES & THE GOLDEN RULE (from Luke 6:27-36)

Jesus: “But I tell you who hear me: **Love your enemies**, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those that mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. **Do to others as you would have them do to you.** If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even “sinners” love those who love them ... But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back ...”.

THE STORY (PARABLE) OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Cast of Characters:

Robbers

Man (Jew) traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho (a 17 mile trip and a descent of 3300 feet), who was robbed and badly beaten by robbers.

3 Men who had opportunity to help this Jewish man:

- 1) **Jewish Priest** – a professional religious leader (similar to a Pastor today)
- 2) **Jewish Levite** – a lay religious leader/associate (similar to a lay Elder today)
- 3) **Samaritan** – Samaritans were considered enemies of the Jews; Samaritans and Jews hated each other and had racial, religious and political differences. Samaritans were considered inferior because they were of mixed Jewish and Gentile descent. They were also in religious disagreements, such as different bible (Jews = all Old Testament; Samaritans = Pentateuch only); and different places of special worship (Jews = Jerusalem; Samaritans = Mt. Gerizim). At one time the Samaritans had built temple on Mt. Gerizim, but the Jews destroyed it.

Luke 10:25-37: The Parable of the Good Samaritan

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.’

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 (Jewish) 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 (Jewish) 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 (Jewish) 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 (compassion) 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, 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.”

What can we learn about Biblical love from this story?

We should demonstrate love to ALL people, including people that are different from us (even those we consider “enemies”!) (Matthew 22:34-40; Luke 6:27-36)

Characteristics of Biblical love:

C _____

C _____

U _____

S _____

A _____

Meets N _____

Jesus modeled for us with his encounter of the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4)!

CHRISTIANS SHOULD PRIMARILY BE KNOWN FOR OUR LOVE (John 13:34-35)

Jesus: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, you must love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Making it Personal:

1) What are the key points from Jesus’ teaching about loving our neighbors?

2) Who are some of my “neighbors” that I can show more love towards?

3) How specifically can I show biblical love to my “neighbors” from question #2?