



"Man Tell Me - Love Others" Luke 10:25-37

**Westport Christian Church
February 28, 2010**

And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" 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." And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE." But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. "And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

"On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.'

"Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same." (Luke 10:25-37NASU)

Once a young man knelt before a beautiful young woman beside a placid lake. "Darling," he said, "I want you to know that I love you more than life. I want you to marry me. I'm not a wealthy man. I don't have a yacht, a Rolls-Royce or lots of money like Johnny Green, but I do love you with all my heart." The young woman paused for a moment and said, "Darling, I love you with all my heart too. But before I say 'yes,' tell me a little more about Johnny Green."

This is the month of love and in the last few weeks we have looked at "What is true love." We learned how we are to love God. Then we looked at how we are to love our spouse. Last week I shared with you how we are to love our selves. So today we conclude this series—"Love Others."

In our text Jesus has an encounter with a lawyer, a man who knows and understands the law. Yet Jesus doesn't really discuss the law He brings the conversion to love. How do we love others and more specifically, how do we love our neighbor as ourselves. Love your neighbor as your self. Now, I don't think I am the only one that struggles with this am I? I think if we are honest with ourselves, all of us struggle from time to time with putting ourselves ahead of others, even spouses and children. Don't we? The word neighbor means the one near and some times they are the hardest to love!

Here are four excuses we use to avoid loving our neighbor:

1. We change the word, "Love" to another word that requires less effort, such as "tolerate" or "understand." After all, one does not have to work as hard in order to "Tolerate your neighbor as yourself."
2. We replace the word "neighbor" with "friend" or "family members." We would all rather love our friend or brother or grandmother instead of a neighbor that we may not know at all.
3. We simply ignore the last two words of this great commandment. That way, it will be much easier to love your neighbor, since any kind deed that you may do for your neighbor will suffice.
4. The final excuse we often do with this commandment is to change the word "neighbor" (singular) to the word "neighbors" (plural). Once we do this, we can feel overwhelmed with the idea of trying to love everyone in our community. Since we do not have enough hours in the day, nor enough resources and energy to love everyone just like we would love our self, we therefore treat everyone the same. We ignore them equally. (Source--Sermon Central)

John Wesley once wrote, Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, As long as ever you can. (Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations: Signs of the Times.)

We cannot rightly love God or our neighbor until we have God's love in our hearts. If we cannot keep the greatest of the commandments, how can we ever hope to please God? We must not "spiritualize" this parable and turn it into an allegory of salvation. The point is simply that our neighbor is anybody who needs us, anybody whom we can help. The "hero" of the story is a Samaritan caring for a Jew; the priest and Levite—professional religious workers—are not heroes at all. The question we must answer is not "Who is my neighbor?" but "To whom can I be a neighbor?"

If one has the heart of a neighbor, he will see and help a neighbor. It means that we will help others as we can, when we can, and for as long as we can.

In order to love others we must make . . .

I. Contact

Do you recall the action shown by the priest and the Levite? They went right on by did they not? "And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

It says that both of these men saw the man that had been beaten and robbed, yet they walked on by. How many times have we done that? I hate to admit this to you, but I have. I have drove pass people who were walking or broken down along the road. I have walked pass people who could have use my help, but I was busy. I had things to do and places to go. I have done the very same thing, have you?

A survivor of a Nazi death camp wrote these words very bitterly: "Here's to a world that did not care. To those who had eyes but would not see. To those who had ears but would not hear. To those who had voices but would not speak." (Source unknown)

The truth is sometimes it is an inconvenience or even difficult to make contact, but we must.

To express love to other, we must show . . .

II. Compassion.

Compassion is not feeling sorry for someone. Compassion is love in action. "But a

Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

In telling this story, Jesus shares with us how the Samaritan expressed this love in action by simply taking care of this man. Throughout the gospels, time and time again Jesus shows us love in action. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. (Matt 14:14 NIV) It is in that account where Jesus feeds the five thousand.

In Matthew 15, we read, "And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, "I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way." (Matt 15:32NASU) Again Jesus met their needs.

These are only two examples of many where Jesus had compassion on others and showed them love in action. "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion . . ." (Col 3:12NASU)

When is the last time you have shown to others love in action?

To show love to others, we must express genuine . . .

III. Care

And when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

We are called to care for people on three key levels:

Physical: We can easily understand the physical needs of people. This is providing the solid needs of people such as food, clothing and such to people who are in need.

Emotional: This is one of the most difficult areas for the church to understand and create ministries to meet these needs. Emotional needs require special training and extreme compassion in action. We can help meet these needs by creating support groups and counseling opportunities for those who are in emotional need.

Spiritual: This is the key purpose of the church, we are here to meet the spiritual needs of the world. We need to understand that it is impossible for a church to meet spiritual needs without meeting the spiritual and emotional needs of people. We see this time and again in the ministry of Jesus. The simple reality is that every person

has spiritual needs and we have the answer to their problems. We need to meet the spiritual needs of people by showing them the love and grace of Jesus Christ. Finish this sentence. "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you—care."

There is one more point we must see and understand and that is there is a . . .

IV. Cost

"On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you."

What is a soul worth? "What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?" (James 2:14-16NASU)

"We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth." (1 John 3:16-18NASU)

Christ calls us to care for a dying world but the simple fact is that it will take expense and effort to reach the world around us.

Expense comes when we use our financial resources to reach out but money simply will not do the job alone.

Effort comes when we use our people power to reach out to our community. Think about this for just a moment; what would happen if every person here gave one hour per month to outreach events? This church would have a dramatic impact on this community. It boils down to this, how much are we willing to give of our self and our money to win people to the Lord? How much is a soul worth? If we were to ask Jesus, He would say, His life!

Conclusion; Who is my neighbor? The one who needs the love of Jesus Christ.

In the liner notes of "Hello Friend: To Ennis With Love," an instrumental jazz CD recorded in memory of Bill Cosby's deceased son Ennis, Cosby writes: "I'm just trying to find a way to always have proof that a wonderful young man was here . . . Really, a wonderful young man. You know how people hum a song that they love? The people who knew Ennis still hum about him with smiles on their faces."

What "proof" will you leave behind in this world to remind people that you were here? One thing is certain: Your possessions will not suffice as "proof," nor will you're financial worth, nor the extent to which you reached your earthly goals.

Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39), and Paul declared, "Love never ends" (1 Corinthians 13:8). Genuine love for one's neighbors is the one thing that will stand the test of time as proof of a life well lived. (Source: Liner notes, "Hello Friend: To Ennis With Love," Verve Records, 1997.)

AMEN!