

The Good Samaritan – A Parable

A child was out exploring, in the bush. The sun shining through the trees looked nice, and the great rocks on the ground where all great rocks, small ones, large ones. He could see where the spiders had made their webs, and watched as a bug got caught in a web. Fascinating. Oh, well, maybe it is time to go back home. At first he thought he could find his way out, but after a few starts in different directions realized he was really lost. What to do! He called, and yelled, he sang and whistled. He checked where the sun was. It was further down in the sky. He was beginning to get scared, **and afraid about not knowing** how to get himself back to his home. As he continues to walk in circles, he sees another young person through the trees. He yells at them, and says he is lost. And asks if they can help him. The youth says, “well, I am lost too, but stay close, and take my hand, and we will find our way through to get home together.”

Well, the folks in Colos’sae aren’t lost yet. But Paul is sending a letter to these saints and faithful brothers ‘in Christ.’ When he says the words of ‘In Christ’ it speaks of their *spiritual* position. When they were saved, God placed them ‘in Christ’, “accepted in the beloved.” Meaning from then on, they had His life and nature. They would not be seen by God as children of Adam, but He would now see them in all **acceptability of His own Son**. Just As He accepted Christ, so he accepted them because they were ‘In Christ’. The expression ‘In Christ’ conveys more of intimacy, acceptance and security than we can perhaps understand. And we as His children, are ‘In Christ’ as well.

He also gives the salutation of *Grace* and *Peace* from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. These two words Grace and Peace are blessings, to them as well as us. *Grace* was a common Greek expression, while *peace* was a common Jewish greeting; and the words were used at meeting others or when parting. **Grace** pictures God stooping down to the sinners and lost humanity in loving and tender compassion. **Peace** summarizes all that results in the life of a person when they accepts God’s grace as a free gift. R.J. Little said: “*Grace* can mean many things, and is like a blank check. *Peace* is definitely part of the Christian heritage, and we should not allow Satan to rob us of it.” **The order of the words** are likely significant: grace first, then peace. If God had not first acted in love and mercy towards us, we would still be in our sins. But because He took the initiative and sent His Son to die for us, we now can have peace with God, peace with man, and the peace of God in our souls. After having said all this, it is still hard to ever adequately define such words of Paul’s. And he said all this in the first 2 verses of this Book of Colossians.

Then went on to give Thanks and Prayed for the believers in Colos’sae. He talked with the folks who led the faithful in Colos’sae, and heard of their faith and love which went out to all the saints and others. There was nothing local or sectarian about their love. They did not love only those of their own fellowship, but wherever they found true believers, their love flowed out freely and warmly. This should be a lesson to us as well that **our love should** not be narrow or limited to our own local fellowship, or just to missionaries from our country. We should recognize the sheep of Christ wherever they are found, and give them our affection and help when needed.

In the continuation of last weeks Luke 10 reading, today it's about the Lawyer and the Good Samaritan. Vs. 25-37. The lawyer we hear about is an expert in the teachings of the Law of Moses, and was probably not sincere in his question. **He was likely** trying to trick Jesus, to put Him thoroughly to the test. Perhaps he thought that the Lord would repudiate the law. To him, Jesus was a Teacher, and eternal life was something he could earn on merit.

Now Jesus would have taken all this into consideration when He answered him. If the lawyer had been humble and penitent, Jesus, as Saviour would have likely answered him more directly. Under the circumstances, Jesus directed his attention to the law. What did the law demand? It demanded that man love the Lord supremely, and his neighbour as himself. Jesus told him that **if he did this, he would live.** (in Deuteronomy 6:5 – “*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 Leviticus 19:18 “*and, your neighbour as yourself.*”) So the guy knew his law.... Word for word.

It might seem here, that the Lord was teaching salvation by law-keeping. But that was not the case we find out. God never intended that anyone should ever be saved by keeping the law. The Ten Commandments were given to the people **who were already sinners.** The purpose of the law is not to save us from sin, but to give us knowledge of sin. The function of the law is to show man what a guilty sinner he could be or is.

Jesus' statement, “Do this and you will live,” was purely hypothetical. If His reference to the law had had it's desired effect on the lawyer, he, the lawyer would have said, “If that's what God requires, then I'm lost, helpless, hopeless. I cast myself on Your love and mercy. Save me by Your Grace!” Instead, he sought to justify himself. **Why would he?** (have we ever tried to justify ourselves, when we have not been honest with ourselves?) The lawyer, no one had accused him. He was conscious of fault, but his heart rose up in pride to resist. He asked, “Who is my neighbour?” It was an evasive tactic on his part.

In answer to the lawyer's question about ‘Who was his neighbour?’ Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan. The robbery victim, (likely a Jew) lay half-dead on the road to Jericho. The Jewish priest and Levit refused to help; perhaps they feared it was a plot, or were afraid that they too might be robbed if they hung around. **It was a hated Samaritan** who came to the rescue, and applied first aid, and who took the victim to an inn, and who made provision for his care. To the Samaritan, a Jew in need was his neighbour.

Then the Saviour asked the inescapable question. Which of the three proved to be the neighbor to the helpless man? The one who showed mercy, of course. Yes, of course. Then the lawyer should go and do likewise. “If a Samaritan could prove himself a true neighbour to a Jew by showing mercy to him, then all men or women are neighbours.” **Can we be a true** neighbour by helping out a friend who is burdened by work or caring for someone while they take a break. By showing up in their time of need, and being with them.

Max Lucando, says in the introduction to Colossians in his NKJV Study Bible.....

To qualify for welfare, you have to admit you're poor. To qualify for bankruptcy, you have to admit you are broke. To be admitted to a hospital, you have to admit you're sick. And to go to heaven, you have to admit you are hell-bound.

We're willing to do the first three, but the fourth? **That's a tough one.** That's enough to trip up a fellow. Not easy for a decent guy to admit he's a sinner. Hard for a pretty good girl to confess spiritual destitution. Oh, it isn't at first. When we first meet Christ. When life is a mess and the future is bleak. When we don't have anything to lose because we've lost it all. It's not hard to admit it at first.

But then, by God's grace, things get better. Bills get paid. The dog comes home. The pantry gets full. The face we see in the morning mirror has a smile on it. And with time, the person in the mirror grows a bit proud. A bit puffy. A bit, shall we say... cocky?

We forget where we were, we forget what God gave. We gradually begin to think that God is lucky to have us on his side. We begin to see salvation not as a toss of the life preserver to the sinking but as a journey in a rowboat: God's grace handling one oar and our good deeds handling the other. **It's not that Jesus isn't necessary**, it's just that Jesus isn't enough.

Slowly, deftly, we begin believing in the doctrine of salvation by Jesus.....plus, plus. Jesus plus good deeds, Jesus plus the right doctrine, Jesus plus the right Bible translation, Jesus plus the right charitable activities.

Paul gave the church in Colossae, and us, his instruction..... he stated in no uncertain terms that if we are saved it is because God rescued us and not because we learned to swim. God is a verb and we are a noun. God does the saving and we do the receiving.

Through Jesus, all we do is accept it. We might as well admit it. Did the Lawyer?????

It is not difficult for us to see in the priest and Levite a picture of the powerlessness of the law to help the dead sinner; the law commanded "Love your neighbour as yourself," (Lev. 19:18) but it (the law) did not give the power to obey. Only our heart 'in Christ' does. It is not difficult to identify the Good Samaritan with the Lord Jesus **who came to where we were**, saved us from our sins, and made full provision for us from earth to heaven and through all eternity. Priests and Levites may disappoint us but the Good Samaritan never does.

The story of the good Samaritan might have an unexpected twist to it. It started off to answer the question "Who is my neighbour?" But it ended by posing the question "To whom do you prove yourself a neighbour?"

Amen.



Scripture Readings – July 13, 2025 – for LCUCPC

Colossians 1:1-14 NRSV Ue

Salutation

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

² To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Paul Thanks God for the Colossians

³ In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel ⁶ that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. ⁷ This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, ⁸ and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. ¹¹ May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, so that you may have all endurance and patience, joyfully ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Luke 10: 25-37

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

²⁵ An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷ 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, Jesus said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

²⁹ But wanting to vindicate himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and took off, 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 while traveling came upon him, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, treating them with oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him, and when I come back I will repay you whatever more you spend.' ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

May God's spirit shape our understanding of these words.

And may they awaken in our hearts.