

### **Luke 10:25-34**

**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 man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

**31** A 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 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 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, brought him to an inn and took care of him.

Good Morning, my sisters and brothers in Christ, I greet you in the name of Jesus. I am **glad** to be here this morning, I am **grateful** to be here this morning. Because of our God's everlasting **greatness** I am able to lift my hands and say Praise Him. Praise Him. Praise Him. Amen.

Since we were last together we have celebrated the Women's Annual Prayer Luncheon; we have endured the 5<sup>th</sup> heaviest snowfall in our region; we have hosted the Family Cabinet meeting of ABCMC and the Ministers Council Luncheon. And don't forget the Pantry was open to help the greater Park Forest Community. And normal Bible Studies and meetings were also held. These are the things we have done and endured since January 31<sup>st</sup> and God has blessed.

And this morning we are adding the reading of the church covenant and the Lord's Supper to our 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday service, because those things are important in the life of this church.

As you know the sermon is almost always taken from the Adult Sunday School lesson. The lesson for this week is the story of the Good Samaritan as recorded in the Gospel of Luke. It would be easy to preach this sermon and remind you that we are called as Children of God, Disciples of Christ, Christians to do exactly what Jesus told the expert in the law, "**Love your neighbor as yourself.**" I have taught and preached the lesson of this passage many times. We know our neighbor is **NOT** defined by racial, geographical, cultural, or even denominational boundaries. As a congregation, a body of believers we do an excellent, no outstanding, job of showing hospitality to ALL who enter our building.

Both last Saturday and yesterday the accolades for our hospitality were ongoing, over the top, almost embarrassing. Positive comments about the building, the bulletin boards, the greeters, the hospitality committee, the menu, etc. were extended to me and then followed by text and email. We know how to put on an event; we know how to host a gathering; we know how to put our best foot forward. Someone said to me "pastor, you know we were not going to let you down." and someone else "we got your back". Thank you for all you have done and will do in the future.

Yet as your pastor I am charged to bring you a message that will challenge you to get better, to dig deeper, to stretch yourselves and that

challenge is **not** around the issues of hospitality. We got that! We love our neighbors and we know how to show it! If you were part of any of the events from the past two weeks, stand up and pat yourself on the back for a job well done!

**However, I believe the challenge we continue to face is in loving God. Don't turn me off!** Let me make my point. We need to learn how to love God, all the time; in all situations; regardless of outcome. Being a Christian is an all-consuming activity. It is an "in sickness and health"; "richer or poorer"; "best, better and worse", until death relationship. Why do I say this is where we need to work because of some of the things I see, hear and have experienced? Let me mention a few:

- **We think the worst of each other, first.** Our feelings are too easily hurt because we think I am being ignored, forgotten, treated differently, etc. we don't consider what may be going on for someone else, we don't love God enough to trust God to work on our hurt feelings and move forward.
- **We don't want to change** or venture outside of our comfort zone our velvet rut, because we can't see what God is going to do with our little bit. And we don't love God enough to step out on faith. (Change our actions or attitudes – this is just how I am – this is how it has always been done – it's not going to make a difference anyway)
- **We have more people on our "don't want to be bothered with list" then we have on our "I need to forgive, forget and move on list".**
- **We act like God is going to judge us based on "I did more than..." rather than "I did the best I could do."**
- And finally we say, **"Someone else will do it".**

Someone is asking why does she call that failing to love God. I am sure there may be other ways to explain this but bear with me:

When a man loves a woman, he can't keep his mind on nothing else  
 He'll trade the world for the good thing he's found  
 If she is bad, he can't see it, she can do no wrong  
 Turn his back on his best friend if he put her down

When a man loves  
a woman, spend his very last dime  
Tryin' to hold on to what he needs  
He'd give up all his comforts, sleep out in the rain  
If she said that's the way it ought to be<sup>1</sup>

Men can you love God like this song says you love your woman?  
Woman, turn me on

Nothing you could say  
Can tear me away from my guy  
Nothing you could do  
'Cause I'm stuck like glue to my guy

I'm stickin' to my guy  
Like a stamp to a letter  
Like the birds of a feather  
We stick together  
I'm tellin' you from the start  
I can't be torn apart from my guy<sup>2</sup>

Can you substitute God for guy?

The point I am trying to make is that it is your love for God allows you to bend and change as you relate to folks who fail to meet your expectations.

Because that is where I believe we need to work and where God lead me last night I want you to turn to the Daniel passage from last week and look at Daniel 1:5 and 8.

*<sup>5</sup>The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.*

*<sup>8</sup>But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.*

and a few words from verse seven

*<sup>7</sup>**The chief official gave them new names:** to Daniel, the name Beltshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.metrolyrics.com/when-a-man-loves-a-woman-lyrics-percy-sledge.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.aldielyrics.com/lyrics/mary\\_wells/my\\_guy.html](http://www.aldielyrics.com/lyrics/mary_wells/my_guy.html)

With verses 5, 7 and 8 in mind let us work with this theme:

**WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO LOVE YOUR GOD  
AND SERVE YOUR KING?**

**SHALL WE PRAY?**

God of heaven and earth before we ask for anything this morning we want to say thank you! Someone needs to thank you for keeping them, someone needs to thank you for saving them, but right here and right now I want to thank you for Jesus. Jesus, who came, suffered, bled, died, rose and now sits with you. Thank you that we now have a way to return to you. Now I ask that you allow us discerning and obedient spirits, so that we may do what we are called to do in order that we might serve you better. Use me Lord, fill me, melt me and mold me, so that the words I have prepared are the words you wish me to speak. We offer this prayer in the name of your Son Jesus the Christ. And all God's people did say. Amen and Amen.

**WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO LOVE YOUR GOD  
AND SERVE YOUR KING?**

Our passage occurs after the Children of Israel have been enslaved because of their disobedience to God. The king has ordered that the healthiest, most attractive and well educated of the young men are to be groomed to serve him.

*young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. (Daniel 1:4)*

They are to be fed from the food that the king eats and to be trained for three years in the service of the king.

**WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO LOVE YOUR GOD  
AND SERVE YOUR KING?**

The first phrase I want to bring to your attention is:

***daily amount of food and wine from the king's table***

The young men chosen by the king were being prepared for the king's service. It was the intent of the king to make them fit into the culture of the society in which they now lived. They would be given better food, they would have their

names changed, they would be taught other languages and expected to bow to the king and other gods.

Does this sound familiar to you? If you are going to make productive slaves/servants of anyone it is easier to do if you take away/change everything they once knew and replace it with something else.

The same rules apply if you are going to be a servant of the Most High God, The Lord of Lord and the King of Kings. You are going to have to make some changes and you will have to make them daily. I say daily, because psychologist, sociologist and even medical doctors cannot agree on how long it takes to break an old habit or learn a new habit. But what they do agree on is that it has to be done daily. We could have saved them the trouble of all that research and just pointed them to Jesus:

*<sup>23</sup>Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. (Luke 9:23)*

The second phrase is

***They were to be trained for three years,***

- we were not born knowing how to do anything – had to learn to walk, talk, feed ourselves yet when we get to our King's house, the church we immediately want to be in charge
- no time to learn the culture, the polity, the constitution
- want to bring how we use to do it – what we heard about – saw on TV to the new house
- don't wish to respect any authority

If you wish to be a leader in God's house you have got to study!

*<sup>15</sup>Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

*<sup>15</sup>Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth. (AMP)<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20timothy%20%3A15&version=NIV;KJV;AMP>

The third and last phrase

***Daniel resolved not to defile himself***

**How do you defile yourself?**

- go along to get along
- keeping up with the Jones
- if you don't stand for something you will fall for anything
- political correctness
- it's your thing do what you want to do

Let's see if we can put it all together!

If you truly love God you will show it in how you treat yourself, your neighbor and your sisters and brothers in this church!

*<sup>40</sup> "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'*

*<sup>45</sup> "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'*

*<sup>46</sup> "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." (Matthew 25)*