

Finding Service and Ministry
Harmony M.B.C., September 8, 2019
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Luke 10:30 And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

Luke 10:31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

Luke 10:32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side.

Luke 10:33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*,

Luke 10:34 And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

Luke 10:35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Most of the time when preachers preach from this scripture, they usually have a subject about who your neighbor is. And that is what Christ gave this parable about. But, if we use spiritual dissection to look closely at this account, we can find a great deal about not only neighborliness, but also about attitudes of people regarding helping someone.

Today, in the U.S., most of us here have had enough contact with folks who are down and out to realize that those people have been reduced to looking for basic necessities, and that is their real interest they focus on. But, with the widespread homelessness and often self-imposed poverty that we find our fellow Americans suffering, there is always a band of people who have discovered that the charity process used in our country is a perfect setting for fleecing people who do have something to give. So, it becomes a challenge to our discernment and wisdom to be able to detect the real from the fake...the really needy from the cultural con artist. If we can do this, we then have no problem identifying what to do...to really help them or to brush them off for the con artists that they are.

In our text, we are dealing with someone who really is in need. That being said, I want us to think in that vein as we look at some truth revealed by Jesus in the way

He put this narrative parable together. I think we have a lot to learn about how we can use situations related to needy people to define our own personal ministry among our fellow man. So, we want to think about ways we can find personal service and a worthy ministry in America today.

I. Reread vv. 31-32 - Being faithful to observe religious rules, or even following a set of humanitarian instructions may not be enough

- ❖ The priest and Levite both knew and practiced certain religious observances, undoubtedly. But with all the religion they lacked the **internal elements** that made them true ministers to men
- ❖ Lack of empathy or pity was evident in their responses
 - Some of the most emotionless people on the planet, and some who are the least helpful to the truly down and out, are also very religious
 - These two undoubtedly were taught about pity and helping the afflicted and needy (Deu. 15:11; Psalms 82:3)
 - Today, in our modern times, there is a general attitude in the U.S. that the religion of humanism contains all the right ingredients to be ideal for ministering to the down and out. Is this really true?
 - In the implementation of the current humanistic philosophy, the design of it demands that the government take away from those who have and give it to those who do not have. This is not only legalizing robbery, but it is born of hypocrisy on the part of those who are for it.
 - In our society, where opportunity presents itself on every side, almost all of the situations involving people who do not have enough to avoid hunger and deprivation, we find that the person in that condition has brought themselves to that through either unwise use of their resources, wastefulness, neglect, or pure laziness.
 - ◆ I want us to be clear that in our parable, this Jew lying in the side ditch is not an irresponsible person...he is not a waster...he is not there because he was unwise in the use of his resources...he has been brought to this ditch by the cruel action of other people (this should be our symbol of those we would make the greatest effort to minister to).
 - ◆ The reason I bring this out is that, here in the USA, we need to be able to discern why someone is in a side ditch, because our ability to help that person...to actually minister...will be affected by why the person is there.
 - The other day, I picked up a bucket outside and saw a little

lizard running frantically around the bottom. That lizard had undoubtedly gotten there while it was out foraging for something to eat...it was one of those things that happens when creatures are busy. I picked the lizard up and turned it loose in the yard...I ministered help to a creature that had fallen into a bad situation while it was TRYING.

- We have more trouble today with the problem of folks needing **help as it relates to the spiritually down and out** than we do with the physically or materially down and out.
 - There are lots of soup kitchens, clothes banks, several homeless shelters that provide food and a place to sleep. But in the midst of all this we have variations on this theme of priest and Levite; people who can give physical assistance but do not have the depth of spiritual life to pick men's souls up out of the ditch.

II. Being in a time and place to minister is not enough provocation for some

- ❖ For the priest: just a glance (suggested by “when he saw him”) sent the priest away. This is symbolic of an aversion to helping fellow human beings
 - Most people have to bring an attitude like this under subjection to enable them to minister to strangers
- ❖ Coming and looking by the Levite did not give him sufficient empathy to provoke him to help. This is symbolic of a detached assessment and deciding to remain aloof despite what is observed
 - If we look for a reason, we can always find one for not ministering to strangers who are on hard times and who may actually make us feel threatened.
 - This could be a setup; those robbers could be using the wounded man as a decoy
 - This could be a scam; how far would people go in bruising themselves up and looking wounded to get you to be sympathetic enough to fall for their scam
 - Even if this is not a scam, what if the robbers are still nearby...pausing to help this guy could give them time to do the same thing to you
 - Behaving somewhat this way can be prudent, but too much speculation will almost always lead sons of Adam to a decision not to help

III. Read v. 33 again - But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, **came where he was**: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*,

- ❖ True ministering and service requires **intent on our part**
- ❖ The Samaritan represents a person who has no personal involvement in the matter at all (explain that this was probably a Jew that was injured and that it was by consent that Jews and Samaritans did not interact at all. No Jew was of interest or any responsibility to Samaritans and no Samaritans were the responsibility or interest of a Jew)
- ❖ Despite having nothing to gain and despite the hatred such a Jew as this might have for him, the Samaritan intends to help anyway
 - Many opportunities in our lives to minister to mankind take this very form
 - Few people have to be coached to minister or do service to family, near kin, or friends. However, for many this is as far as the term “neighbor” extends

IV. Read v. 34 again - And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. Lesson: A fully helpful ministry requires more than a token action

- ❖ The Samaritan could have told the guy, “I’ll call an ambulance.” Or, “here’s a bottle of wine to help ease the pain.”
 - Notice that Jesus makes a point of the “compassion” (v. 33 - and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*)
 - This is the missing element in a world where people won’t help people
 - It was compassion that emboldened the Samaritan to stop anyway
 - It was compassion that provoked him to make all effort to help with the man’s wounds
 - It was personal initiative that revealed itself in the Samaritan when he made a conscious decision to postpone his own business to see to this need
 - It is the single feature that often distinguishes believers whose intent is to make a difference where others are unresponsive
 - ◆ Let’s turn to Numbers 25:8 and see a historical example on that personal initiative in the faithful: Israel has fallen into its worst spiritual state to date; they were under a plague sent by the Lord. In the midst of this one brazen guy brings one of the Midianite women into his tent to commit wickedness in the sight of the whole camp. Phinehas is a type of believer taking personal initiative (for the good of his fellow citizens who were being wicked).
- ❖ Notice the elements of the Samaritan’s assistance:

- actual physical assistance - this should be symbolic of our intent and success at actually touching people's lives
- seeks to promote his healing - this should be symbolic of our attempt and purpose to round out both physical healing and spiritual healing
- sacrifices his own comfort to accommodate the injured - this Samaritan's example teaches us that if ministering is worth doing, it is worth us sacrificing our own comfort to accomplish
- seeks and solicits the assistance of others - if we recognize that people need help beyond our means, let's be ready to ask help from others for those in need.
- spends money to provide for him - this is the acid test of whether we are ready to minister to the full extent that we are able.
- makes arrangements for the wounded man's future care - we should be concerned about the future of those we minister to. Concern and action for their future will pay dividends in the future.
- I have listed the things the man did and what he provided for this wounded man's condition. What this help for him amounts to is that the Samaritan **gave the Jew exactly what he needed**
 - I believe a lot of humanitarian, and even Christian help to those down and out today (in our country) miss the mark. Why? Because that help may be loaded with material assistance, but very often lacks the most critical item such people need. What is that something? **It is a new or refreshed understanding about spiritual needs.**
 - In Luke 16, Jesus gives a lecture about using the materialism, the material wealth, of the world in a way that is approved by the Lord. In that lecture, He asks the question, " **If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?**"
 - ◆ These words actually fit with our subject but I am wanting you to think about what Jesus might be referring to here as the true riches. It is, of course, spiritual things.
 - ◆ In 2Cor. 9:15, the Apostle Paul calls that which we can provide in our personal ministry "the unspeakable gift"
 - We need to make sure that when we see our victim in the side ditch, we do not imagine that it is only a matter of providing some material or physical things.
 - ◆ A person who is on the street in America today may need more than room and board

- ◆ The mother of a baby which doesn't have enough to eat may need more than providing her with a case of infant formula
- ◆ A scared teenager showing up at a shelter may need more than a place to hide out
- ◆ A man sitting on the street corner with a collection bucket out in front of him may need more than some coins or bills
- What is often missing in the offerings to these people that those who have sympathy may try to give is something spiritual wrapped around any or all of that material help.

Additional Info:

- Remember these words by Jesus in:
 - Mat 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
 Mat 25:35 For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:
 Mat 25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.
 Mat 25:37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?
 Mat 25:38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?
 Mat 25:39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?
 Mat 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.
- These words reveal much to us, but the thing I want us to notice is that this is a future event that Christ is talking about. AND...he is remembering and bringing up what was done for the needy in the past.