

Which Man Are You?

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[0 : 00] And Pastor, thank you for this opportunity. I want to translate what the pastor said. He was very kind.

He said, I hit it out of the park in the first service. had high hopes for the second service. What he was really saying was, at your age, if we can get a bun out of you that will advance some runners, we'll be happy.

It is Father's Day. What a great day to be in the Lord's house, to worship together, to spend time in His Word. And I'm preaching from this Bible that has been glued and taped and resuscitated more times than the pastor.

And this Bible was given to me on June 17, 1979, by my lovely wife.

And so it's a great honor to preach from it today. Will you turn with me in your Bibles to Luke 10, 25 through 37?

[1 : 08] Luke 10, 25 through 37. This is from a pastor's point of view. I have studied Scripture time and time and time again.

Same Scripture. Preached on it. Taught on it. Heard it preached on. Heard it taught on. Time and again. And then one day, I'll pick up that passage of Scripture and I'll read it again.

And God reveals a hidden nugget or a gem that I had never seen before. And my reaction is always invariably the same.

How did I miss that for so many years? Well, this is a very familiar passage of Scripture. You all know it.

Hopefully, God's going to reveal a nugget or two or perhaps even a gem that we've never seen before this morning. Luke 10, 25 through 37.

[2 : 13] It's the story of the Good Samaritan. On one occasion, an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. Teacher, he asked, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

What is written in the law? He replied, how do you read it? He answered, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind.

And love your neighbor as yourself. You have answered correctly, Jesus replied, do this and you will live. Now we come to verse 29.

I want to tell you, that verse carries more weight than a lot of books I've ever read. I want you to listen to what he's actually saying. But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, who is my neighbor?

What he's saying is this. I don't have a problem with loving God. God is holy. God is righteous. God is on his throne.

[3 : 23] God is a God of grace, a God of love, a God of wrath, a God of judgment. I have no problem with God. I love God and everything about him. I love myself.

I love myself. A lot of people go through life and never reach that. They always have ambivalent feelings about themselves. But he's able to love himself as God directed.

But he said, there's an area in my life where there may be a problem. And that is my neighbor. Who is my neighbor?

He has stepped in the confessional booth of Jesus. And he is saying, there's a lot of things I do know, but this one thing I'm not sure of, I don't feel like I'm living up to what God expects in this one area.

So he's confessing. Can I tell you something? Listen, this lawyer is further down the road than a lot of people in today's society because he's been honest enough to recognize there's something not right in my life.

[4 : 31] I think it has to do with my neighbor. I feel this way about some people, but I don't feel that way about everybody. Is that wrong or can I justify myself in that?

And in reply, Jesus said, a 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. A priest happened to be going down the same road. And when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So to a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was. And when he saw him, he took pity on him. 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. The next day, he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper.

[5 : 35] Look after him, he said, And when I return, I will promise you, I will reimburse you for the extra expenses you may have. Then Jesus asked the lawyer, Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?

And the expert in the law replied, The one who had mercy on him. The one who had mercy on him. It was the correct answer. It was not the right answer. Sadly, correct, but not the right answer.

Jesus told him, Go and do likewise. Years ago, divinity schools and seminaries all across the nation started giving some professors this title, Professor of Practical Theology.

Professor of Practical Theology. Always made me wonder, where did the professors of impractical theology teach? And even more so, it made me wonder, when you go and sign up for your fall classes and you saw, of course, an impractical theology, who wanted to sign up for that?

[7 : 00] If theology can't be practical, what use is it? Well, in this dialogue, in this conversation with this lawyer, Jesus demonstrates that he is indeed the master professor of practical theology.

The man asked, What must I do to inherit eternal life? Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and all your strength and all your mind and love your neighbors as yourself. And then, who is my neighbor? Actually, that was a very practical question. The Jews weren't sure who their neighbors were.

Say you lived in the Holy City. Lots of Jews. Lots of people like you. But there were Greeks. Even spoke their language.

Romans, they rule over you. Syrians, all types of other people. And every single day, you brush shoulders with these people. You bought from them. You sold to them. You traded with them. You did business with them.

[8 : 07] Every single day, they were a part of the community in which you live. Now, they were different from you, but every single day, they were a part of you. Are they my neighbor even though they're different? And some Jews were not even sure about other Jews.

I mean, here's one in the Holy City of Jerusalem. He's very, very much intent on keeping the ceremonial law. If he does something that needs to be cleansed, he takes care of it.

But out here in the country, 50 miles away, there's this old farmer or somebody else. He can't do that. He can't run 50 miles to Jerusalem all the time. So he can't keep the ceremonial law.

They're not living up to God's standard. Are they my neighbor? And just like today, Israel's surrounded by enemies. Do we call them neighbors as well?

So the man said, who's my neighbor? And true to form, Jesus doesn't answer the question directly. Instead, he tells a story.

[9 : 13] Now, why doesn't he answer it? Because Jesus knows us. You can speak truth into your child's life.

That mean they're going to adopt it? I can speak truth into your life this morning. You may not remember the four o'clock this afternoon. But if you discover the truth for yourself, if you figure it out for yourself, that tends to stick with you, doesn't it?

That's the truth that makes a difference. That is a part of life. Now, this parable is a part of our lexicon.

It's part of our language. If a person goes about doing good deeds, a really nice person, we refer to them as a good Samaritan. There are counseling centers across the nation, Samaritan centers.

We belong to a, one of the RV groups who are members, the Good Sam Club. It's a guy with a big grin and a little yellow halo around his head.

[10 : 26] He's called the Good Sam, the Good Samaritan. It's part of our language. But to understand this parable and really understand it, we have to take a little geography lesson here. Jerusalem and Jericho are 17 miles apart. Jerusalem is a very, very safe place. It's the holy city. You're safe when you're there.

Jericho is a very, very safe place. It's a desert oasis. But between the two, there are 17 miles. 17 miles.

There's ravines and wadis and treeless mountains. It's a tough, treacherous because there's a lot of bandits. It's a dangerous road to travel. Safe on both ends, but it's dangerous in the middle.

And it is one tough hike. Jerusalem is up here almost at 3,000 feet. Jericho is down here, 840 feet below sea level.

[11 : 38] It is the lowest city on the planet, this planet. We were at the ocean a couple weeks ago. If you go out far enough to get in water that's 840 feet deep, you got to dive down to the bottom of the sea to get to Jericho.

Friend, I don't care who you are, that's a tough hike when you ascend or descend almost 4,000 feet. So that's the story.

And this is the way Jesus deals with it. A man goes down from Jerusalem to Jericho. I don't know whether the man is rich or poor.

I don't know whether he's religious or not. I don't know whether he's prominent or just an average Joe like the rest of us. Jesus is just a man.

He's sort of every man. And then he tells the story. Now what does he want us to take away from this story? I think Jesus is going to demonstrate us to us three philosophies in life.

[12 : 50] Three philosophies in life. The first philosophy was the one that the robbers had. That philosophy was what is yours?

It's mine. They beat the man. They strip the man. And they walk away leaving him half dead. We will take from you what we want.

Now nobody here is going to do that. You're not going to beat somebody up in the parking lot out here and take everything they have and walk off. You're not even going to do that on a dark night here in Pickens. But somebody might say something about somebody else that would steal their reputation diminish them in the eyes of other people.

Somebody might do a business deal where they take advantage of somebody else. Amy Grant began her career in gospel music.

She had a friend a young woman that had been abused and quite honestly the young woman just never got over it. It's amazing the number of people who have been abused for a long time struggle with the rest of their lives.

[14 : 13] Just a fact of life. And so Amy Grant her heart went out to this person so she wrote a song for this young lady and the name of the song was Ask Me.

So she went over to the young lady and she said I want to sing this for you. And she started singing and the woman started listening and she broke down sobbing uncontrollably.

Amy said what's wrong? What's wrong? At last somebody understands me. You understand the pain I've been living with all my life.

Amy Grant said man what an effect it had on her. I need to include this in my concerts. And so the next concert she included the song Ask Me and a strange thing happened.

Down here in the audience somebody stood up and remained standing. Back there somebody stood up. Back there back there down here all over the audience people began standing and they remained standing the whole time.

[15 : 21] They were saying this is my story. I have been through that. I understand the pain. That may have been physical abuse it could have been spousal abuse it could have been sexual abuse it could have been an employer employee abuse abuse but it was somebody saying I'm going to take from you what I want.

And friend we do it in a thousand different ways. That's the first philosophy. The second philosophy was the philosophy of the priest and Levite the religious people.

What is mine is mine. They both passed by on the other side for two reasons. The first is religious people if they came within six feet of a corpse they had to go back uphill to Jerusalem and get cleansed.

If they're near Jericho that's 17 miles and 4,000 feet of climbing. That's no small thing. it's a whole lot easier to pass by on the other side.

And the second reason they passed by was a little bit of hypocrisy because if there had been a lot of other people standing around to see what they did they may not have passed by. They may have acted in a religious manner but the only thing out there were some sheep and goats and they won't go and tell anybody and as long as nobody's going to tell on them they're going to take the easy route and just go by.

[17:06] Do you realize we've institutionalized this type of thinking in our society? It's part of our institutions.

Would you believe that a 15 year old boy completely innocent in Chicago was walking down the street one night. Two gangs got into it and a stray bullet hit him.

He knew he was hurt bad. He started walking immediately to the nearest hospital. He got within 35 feet of the emergency room door and he collapsed right there in the parking lot.

He lay there for 25 minutes he bled out and died. Oh if they'd only known in the hospital that he was there. They did know. They saw him when he walked up.

What did they do? They called an ambulance from somewhere else to come get him but he didn't get there in time. Well why didn't they just go out pick him up and bring him in?

[18:16] Because the hospital had a policy. You can't treat anybody outside the doors of this hospital because we might get sued. There's a liability problem here and we're going to take care of ourselves and our people.

That's most important. What is mine is mine. Have you ever bought something that had a warranty? And so part of it broke and you called the manufacturer.

This happened. I'm sorry that's not covered under warranty. Can I translate that to you? We've had such a problem with that part we're not going to fix it because it's going to cost too much what's mine is mine and everybody here has had that experience right?

Everybody. We've institutionalized it. We do it in a thousand thousand different ways. And then there's that third idea.

philosophy. It's the philosophy exemplified by the Samaritan. His philosophy was what is mine is yours.

[19:36] And here's the kicker to the story. The good guy, the hero of the whole story is the Samaritan. The one person in that whole region of the world that everybody hated.

The Jews hated the Samaritans because they had left the Jewish faith and the ethnic group and married a Gentile. The Gentiles hated the Samaritans because they were associated with the Jews. Those two groups did not get along. How much were the Samaritans hated? If you were a Jew in the marketplace and a Samaritan walked by you, now he didn't touch you, but his shadow fell on you.

His shadow. You were supposed to go to the temple and get cleansed. They were not welcome at the Jewish temple.

Samaritans had to go build their own temple at Mount Zeratham. They resented the Jews so much, the Samaritans did, that just a few years before, some Samaritans snuck into Jerusalem at night to the holy temple and scattered some human bones throughout the temple and defiled it.

[21:04] Oh, you know how that set things off. And here's the kicker. Jesus says, this man, the Samaritan, is the hero of the story.

The hero. Why? Because he comes to the place where the man was and he takes pity on him and he does what is right.

He takes a bottle of wine and pours it into his cuts and wounds to disinfect. He takes oil and pours it over the skin to keep the skin soft and supple.

He probably cuts strips of bandages from his own clothing and binds up these wounds. And then he puts the man on his donkey and takes him to an inn.

He stays with him that night and the next day he leaves two silver coins, not copper coins, two silver coins. He says, this will take care of his expenses.

[22:15] If it doesn't, I'm going to be back this way. I will reimburse you for whatever it takes. And then Jesus asked, who are you in the story?

Who are you? Your pastor will not tell you this. I'm retired and I don't care. Did you know that when we pastors in the pulpit, we can read your minds?

I glanced over there a while ago at Jeff. When I asked that question, I know what Jeff's thinking. Jeff, I'm going to tell him what you were thinking. Jeff was thinking, hmm, well, that's hard to say. If the truth be known, I'm probably a composite of all three. There have been times that I've taken advantage of people.

Jeff, I'm not putting you down. Everybody in this room has done that, including myself. Everybody in this room has done that. And there are times when I passed by on the other side when I could have helped.

[23 : 37] And there are times I've been the Good Samaritan. So I'm a composite of all three and I say, Jeff, you can't be a composite of all three. You've got to be one person in the story.

And Jeff is thinking, well, if the truth be known, it's that middle person then because I've taken advantage and I've been a Good Samaritan, but more often than not, I have probably passed up more opportunities to help than any other thing.

And I would turn to Jeff and I'd say, Jeff, that's not who you are in the story. You're wrong. You're the same person I am and the same person you are.

Every single one of us in this room is the man who was robbed and left in the road to die, everything taken away from him.

Every one of us has been there lying in the middle of the road, dead in our sins, hoping and praying, that a good Samaritan would come by.

[24 : 41] And for many of you, he did. His name was Jesus. What did he do? He saw you. He took pity on you.

He took wine and poured into your wounds. But it wasn't wine from a bottle. It was wine from a cup. A cup that he held up one night and said, this cup is the New Testament, the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for you.

And it not only disinfected, it forgave your sin eternally. me. And then he poured on the oil of the Holy Spirit.

Not only to make the skin soft and supple, but make their heart soft and supple so that when God spoke to you, you could feel what God was saying, where God was leading, and what God was directing.

And then he took you on his own donkey and he took you to a place and he took care of you and he left those silver coins. And it was his way of saying, I'm not only taking care of you now, but if you need anything in the future, I'm there for you.

[25 : 56] Christ was a good Samaritan. But not everybody has that experience. Because some of you have not called in his name yet.

A while ago, I said the lawyer, when he said the man who had mercy on him, that was the correct answer, but not the right answer. The reason it wasn't the right answer, that lawyer could not bring himself to say those despicable words that had come from Jesus' mouth.

He could not say the two words, the Samaritan. He understood what Jesus wanted. His head was there, but his heart wasn't.

He could not say the words. We're in a different position because the word we need to speak is the most beautiful name in any language in the world.

It's the name of Jesus. If you haven't had that experience this morning, you can have it. All you have to do, realize that you're lying there dead in your sins, but there is one that can pull that wine on there and forgive that sin for all eternity.

[27 : 19] There is one that can take that sin and pull all on it, all into your life and make you sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and he'll take care of you now and forever. Forever. And all we have to do is genuinely with all our heart, now listen to me, I'm going to say, believe and trust Jesus Christ.

And why do I say that? Because sometimes our belief don't go very far, but our trust does. Trust is a part of belief.

All you have to do is put your trust in him and call on his name this morning. And everything that was given to that man who was robbed will be given to you today. because he wants to do that. Now this is Father's Day. Father's Day. Fathers, my conviction for many years has been that you are the unsung hero in the family.

You go out every single day, you work hard as you can because you are expected to be the provider in so many ways to put a roof over their heads and food on the table and clothes on their

back and all the other things they need.

[28 : 46] And you never get the acclaim and the applause of mother. Never. Now you say, well, why did your family treat you so bad?

I don't base it on that, friend. I base it on the numbers. Years ago, before we had cell phones, where we make long-distance calls free, you had to pay to make long-distance calls.

You didn't make many because it was expensive. There were three ways to do it. You could call from your home phone and they would charge it to your account. You could make it from a pay phone and they'd say that's \$2.75 for the first three minutes.

Ching, ching, ching, ching, ching. And after about three minutes they'd say that'd be \$1.75 for the next two minutes. Ching, ching, ching, ching. Or the third way, you could call collect. This is Paul Wetz calling for his dad.

Will you accept the charges? Every single year. Not many long-distance calls made because it was expensive.

[29 : 50] But every single year they set records for the number of long-distance calls made. What holiday do you think it was made on? Mother's Day.

Exactly. Dads never did get there. But hold it. Father's Day set a record too.

Did you know that? This is a fact. The most collect long-distance calls every year was made on Father's Day.

Men, you are the unsung heroes in your family. Dad, I want to tell you how much I love and appreciate you when you accept the charges. But guys, you're used to giving.

And you're used to not getting much acclaim. I understand that. That's just a fact of being a dad. But today, you know, they're going to honor and they're going to give you a few nice things.

[30 : 53] But you know what? You're used to giving. You've done it your whole life without any recognition hardly. Give them something else today. A man who's not afraid to say, I was the robber laying in the road dead in my sins.

And Jesus entered my life. And he gave me the Holy Spirit. And sometimes we're going to do this and sometimes we're going to not do that simply because I feel that's where God is leading and I want to be sensitive to his leadership.

And I don't know whether how things are going in your life today, but this I do know. He has paid the innkeeper and he's made a promise that if anything else is needed, he'll take care of that too.

I don't know what the future holds for me, but I know who holds the future and I know I can trust the one who holds the future. Gentlemen, when you show that to your family, when you live that out before them, you have given them the best Father's Day gift you can ever give.

So this morning, whether it be a profession of faith, becoming a part of this church, a step forward in your faith, I'm going to go one step further.

[32 : 22] I remember the time my pastor stood in the pulpit and he said, every young man here, every woman here needs to start praying and asking this one question.

What does God want you to do vocationally the rest of your life? Does he want you to be a teacher, a lawyer, a doctor, a nurse, whatever? Ask him what he wants you to do?

I took up that challenge and I was shocked at what God called me to do. But friend, don't ever make a decision in life, ever, without asking God his direction.

That's part of that oil thing, his leadership. Pastor, would you come? Thank God for the word that Paul's given us today.

If you've never accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, I want you to know he accepts you as you are today. You just come and say, Pastor, I'd love to surrender my life to the Lord Jesus.

[33 : 33] Maybe you've done that privately, but you've never done it publicly. You've never acknowledged that. Jesus, by his commission and by his example, tells us to follow that with baptism. If you've never been baptized as a believer, I encourage you to be obedient.

Follow the Lord. We'll guide you through that. We're not doing it this morning, but we'll guide you in that. Maybe God's leading you to be a part of First Baptist Church. You know this is the place where God would have you to serve.

As soon as we stand and begin to sing, I encourage you to come. We'd love to guide you in what that means and introduce you to the congregation. And maybe it's something else.

Maybe you realize you've passed by folks that needed you to stop. Or maybe you've not acknowledged the one that went to the cross for you, gave his life for you. I don't know what God's telling you, but I'm thankful that Paul shared what God laid on his heart. And I encourage you to be obedient this morning. Lord Jesus, we love you. We thank you for your word.

[34 : 37] Thank you, Lord, for the challenge of it, the personalization of it by the Holy Spirit of God. And I pray this morning, dear Father, that you'll help each one of us to be obedient to follow exactly as you lead right now in these very moments.

In Jesus' precious name, amen. Bens,