



Pastor John Underhill

Introduction

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?"

The lawyer is saying, "**How tightly can I draw the boundaries?**" The context of the O.T. passage, Leviticus 19:18, is the nation of Israel. Jews in Jesus' day believed that **a neighbor was another Jew**, someone like them. **Gentiles didn't qualify** as neighbors. **Samaritan's didn't qualify** as neighbors. In fact, for some Jews (strict Pharisees), not even all Jews qualified as neighbors.

He's asking who he's obligated to put his list of neighbors, people that he has an obligation to love and care for when they're in need. How many people does he have to include?

*[30] 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. [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, took him to an inn and took care of him. [35] The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'*

[36] "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" [37] The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." Luke 10:25-37 (NIV)

I. A lawyer questions Jesus (25-29)

II. Jesus responds (30-37)

A. An unfortunate man is beaten three times (30-32)

1. First beating by muggers (30)

[30] 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.

Jerusalem to Jericho is just about 17 miles. The elevation drops over 3000 feet. It is desolate country. You find many ravines that robbers would hide in, waiting for someone to plunder.

2. Second beating by a priest (31)

[31] A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

"Happened to be going down...By chance was traveling" suggests hope--fortune is smiling on this hapless victim at last! Help is on the way. "Lucky for him..."

"You shall not see your countryman's donkey or his ox fallen down on the way, and pay no attention to them; you shall certainly help him to raise them up. Deut 22:4, NASB

If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying helpless under its load, you shall refrain from leaving it to him, you shall surely release it with him. Ex 23:4-5, NASB

The Jewish law was clear—there was an obligation to help your countryman and an obligation to help your enemy as well.

Neighbor Nudge—what reasons might the priest have had for not helping, for remaining uninvolved?

a. Religious demands.

Religious obligations. Couldn't tell whether or not the man was dead. if he was and the priest touched him, he would be rendered ceremonially unclean according to Lev 21. Numbers 19:11

b. He wouldn't have helped me—why should I help him?

c. Fear: the robbers are still around and may return.

Idea: Unless we train ourselves to see, we'll continue to overlook wounded people in our world

Objective: This week see people as God sees them and respond as Jesus would

(May also be fearful that the robbers left the man as a decoy and are waiting to pounce on whoever stops to help.)

d. Someone else will help. He may have thought that if he didn't act, the Levite coming after him certainly would. After all, Levites serve the priests. Let him do this dirty work

Application: "By chance..." If we believe in a sovereign God, there are no chances in life. God designs and engineers your steps so that you can know with confidence and certainty that the people you cross paths with are the very ones God eternally designed you'd meet that day. Begin viewing interruptions as divine encounters.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:8-10, ESV)

I was getting our oil changed on Friday and "happened" to be sitting in the waiting room with a lady who recently lost her husband and moved to Spokane to be closer to a daughter. I had opportunity to share God's love with her and invite her to church. Then God opened up a door to speak with the owners and invite them to services. I'm planning on going back this Friday with our other car and asking God for continued opportunity. There are no "chances!"

Did the priest beat the man up? I think he did. If the man saw the priest coming and thought, "At last, someone to help me!" and then watched the priest cross to the other side and walk away, it would have injured him as much on the inside as the beating and robbery did on the outside. The beaten may might have thought:

1. "Here's a countryman, a fellow Jew. Of course he'll help."
2. "As a religious leader, he'll help me in order to set a good example."
3. "As a religious leader, he knows the law and its requirements to love your neighbor as yourself"

3. Third beating by Levite (32)

[32] So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

The Levites are assistants to the priests, serving the temple. The priests make the sacrifices, the Levites take care of the provisions, the cleaning, and other practical matters related to the services

I think the Levite had one more reason not to help that the priest didn't have. One more reason not to help that the priest gave him. The Levite might have

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 reasoned that if the priest didn't stop to help, neither should he. The priest might know something he doesn't know. The priest is the leader. Certainly he would have stopped if this was the right thing to do.

Thirty eight neighbors stood at their windows as an assailant brutally attacked Catherine G. once, came back again for another attack, and finally came back again for a third attack that left her dead, all in the space of 35 minutes. They heard her screams, but not a single bystander came to her aid. No one yelled out or even called the police until she sprawled lifeless in the parking lot. (HIS, May, 1985, p. 28)

Everyone's responsibility is no one's responsibility. Somebody else will call the police—I don't have to worry about it. **Everyone's responsibility is no one's responsibility.** There's a comfort in disengagement. A safety in anonymity.

Have you ever been at a street corner where the traffic is moving slowly and you look ahead to see what's going on? And there's a crippled car, a man's got the driver's side door open, trying to steer it and push it off the street. He's not making much progress. And there are cars all around with able bodied drivers and passengers, but no one is making a move to help. Until the first door opens and the first person starts to push. Then people from all over start running to help. What do we call that dynamic?

"**The Power of Initiating.**" "**The Power of Priming the Pump.**" Be the first. Take the lead. You go first and others will follow.

Conclusion

I want you to look at your Bibles with me again. And I want you to underline a refrain that's repeated in this paragraph:

[30] 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. [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, took him to an inn and took care of him. [35] The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

Contrast: The priest came, saw, and walked away. The Levite came, saw, and walked away. But the Samaritan came, saw, was moved with compassion, and went to him rather than walking away.

Page 5, Idea: Unless we train ourselves to see, we'll continue to overlook wounded people in our world

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If I really see people in their woundedness, their hurt, their problems, I can't simply walk away. And if I do walk away, have I really seen that person?

Question: did the priest and the Levite see the beaten man?

Person	What they saw	What they did	The wounded man was
Thieves	Opportunity to get rich	Made a decision. Beat him, robbed him, left him	Someone to use and exploit
Priest	A dying, beaten man	Made a decision. Crossed over to the other side, left him	A problem to be avoided
Levite	A dying, beaten man	Made a decision. Crossed over to the other side, left him	A problem to be avoided

Prayer: Father God, help me really see people this week. Not see them as objects, not be blinded by my schedule or my agenda. Open my eyes to the hurts and heartaches they are suffering, and give me the courage to be the first to respond.