



Pastor John Underhill

Introduction

Story of Tracy & Patty Goen

In Nigeria, there's been a conflict for over 1000 years between the Fulani and the Yoruba. The Fulani are nomadic, raise cattle, and number 27 million. They are Muslim, in fact they introduced Islam to Nigeria over 1000 years ago. There are very few Fulani Christians, and those who have converted to Christianity have faced severe persecution and death for their faith in Christ.

On the other hand, the 23 million Yoruba are farmers and predominantly Christian. The Yoruba farmers and the Fulani cattle-herders have competed for generations for the best land for raising crops and grazing cattle.

Into this situation came Tracy and Patty Goen. They're both doctors. Tracy, 44, was an atheist until 1994 when he went to a Promise Keepers event and trusted Christ. Soon the Goens sensed God calling them to serve in Africa. Tracy went to Kenya for a short term mission trip. Soon after that they heard about the 60 bed Egbe hospital. The only doctor had died from sickle cell disease, and the hospital was about to shut down. In 1999 they were accepted with SIM and moved to Egbe Hospital.

At Egbe, most of the staff were Yoruba and they served mostly Yoruba patients. One day a Fulani man with a gangrenous foot came for treatment. The traditional Fulani treatment was to pack the foot in cow dung. Tracy asked the Yoruba nurses to clean his foot. He came back hours later and the foot was still filthy. One of the nurses said, "You don't understand. I found my grandfather chopped into little pieces by a Fulani. How can you ask me to take care of a Fulani?" "This is what Christ would do" Tracy replied, and then cleaned the man's foot himself.

One day a 9-year-old Fulani boy, Jebel, came to the hospital, deathly ill, vomiting blood. A viper had bitten him and he was ready to die. The boy's grandfather, Isa, said that if the boy survived, Tracy and a Christian pastor could come and visit them. Jebel soon made a miraculous recovery. Tracy and the pastor later visited with the grandfather and shared the Gospel. The grandfather told them, "I know this man Jesus, I have seen him in my dreams."

Another time a pregnant 14 year old girl who had been in labor for 72 hours was brought to the hospital. She gave birth to a still born baby, and she appeared to be brain dead. But the parents said, "We hear this is a Christian hospital, and there's power in the name of Jesus. We want you to pray she'll be healed."

Tracy said, "I had seen medical miracles, but I had never seen anyone recover from anything like this." They prayed, and the very next morning the girl roused and recovered.

Word spread and the Fulani began showing up at the Egbe hospital. Another time Tracy found a Fulani teenager whose right arm was almost severed. They rushed him into surgery and five hours later saved his arm and his life. Only later did they learn that he was the son of the new Fulani king, who gave his permission for Tracy to share Christ's love with the Fulani. Tracy started showing the Jesus film, and the word got out that Christ spoke the Fulani language.

Today the Yoruba are reaching out in love to the Fulani. They have given them acreage so the Fulani can build their first school. And last year, the Fulani king invited Tracy to a ceremony where he publicly recited 50 of Tracy's good deeds to the Fulani. Then he made him a Fulani king. The Fulani royalty spent the rest of the day debating on the proper Fulani name to give the Goen's 4-year-old daughter, Katie. They finally settled on Morri, "Born in a family of peace."

How do we share the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ in a world that regards us with suspicion? In a world that looks at us with skepticism? In a world that distrusts, even hates Christians? Jesus' words in Matthew 5:16 point the way:

Theme & memory Verse: *Let your light shine before men in such a way that **they** may see **your good works** and glorify your Father who is in heaven.* Matthew 5:16

Jesus is the model and motivation for doing good.

And no doubt you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the Devil, for God was with him. Acts 10:38 (NLT)

Jesus' lifestyle was characterized by doing good...and doing good must also characterize the lifestyle of his disciples

Doing good is the best answer to unfounded accusations

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. 1 Peter 2:12 (NIV)

It is difficult for people to disagree with the validity of our Christian faith when we prove the truth of what we say by our lives of sacrificial service

This is nothing new. In the early church Christians were the ones who rescued babies that had been left to die in Rome. When plagues swept through cities in the dark ages, it was the Christians who would go to the sick and feed them. It was the Christians who would gather the dead and bury them. If you read church history, you'll find that Christians have always been involved in doing good in the name of Christ as a way of opening doors to the gospel of Christ.

Review of Good Samaritan

I. Too often we look for ways to evade our duty to love our neighbors (25-29)

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?"

II. God provides us with unexpected opportunities to help those in need (30-35)

A. An unfortunate man is beaten and twice ignored (30-32)

[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.

- 1. I'm too busy. With all my responsibilities and demands, I don't have time to stop and get involved!**
- 2. Why should I care? I doubt he would have stopped to help me if I was beaten, so why should I help him?**
- 3. He's a lost cause. Why waste time and money on what can't be helped? He's probably going to die soon anyway.**
- 4. It's too risky. The robbers are probably still around—in fact, he may not really be hurt at all; maybe he's just their bait!**
- 5. Let someone else help. I'm sure that someone who has more time and better skills will stop to help.**

Transition:

In 975 B.C. the nation of Assyria invaded the 10 northern tribes of Israel, defeated them, deported scores of thousands of the people, and replaced them with conquered peoples from other nations. These conquered peoples intermarried with the Jews who had been

left behind. These conquered peoples brought their traditions, their cultures, their gods, their religious practices. And what resulted was a mixture of Old Testament Jewish religion and foreign religious worship. **Syncretism.** Worship of God, and worship of false gods mixed together. The resulting nation was no longer called Israel, but Samaria.

B. Jewish/Samaritan relations in the New Testament

The Jews in the two southern tribes (Judah) rejected the nation of Samaria and the people of Samaria. Because they had intermarried with gentiles. Because they had intermixed worship of Yahweh with worship of foreign gods. The “pure Jews” in the south wouldn’t let the half-breed Jews from the north worship in the temple in Jerusalem. So the Samaritans make their own place to worship God, on Mt. Gerazim. The pure Jews in the south wouldn’t talk with the Samaritans, wouldn’t do business with them, wouldn’t eat with them, wouldn’t associate with them at all.

In fact, one Jewish rabbi taught that a Jew could never use an eating utensil that had been used by a Samaritan because the Samaritans are inherently unclean and it would make any Jew who used it unclean as well. Samaritans were not allowed to testify in a Jewish court of law. Some Pharisees thanked God each day that they weren’t Samaritans.

So you can imagine how much of a surprise it must have been, one hot, dusty afternoon around noon, for a Samaritan woman to have Jesus speak to her, and ask her to give him a drink of water.

1. A Samaritan woman surprised by Jesus’ request

The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. (John 4:9, NIV)

2. The worst racial slur: to be called a Samaritan

The Jews then said, “That clinches it. We were right all along when we called you a Samaritan and said you were crazy—demon-possessed!” John 8:48, The Message

3. James and John want to destroy a Samaritan village

And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” (Luke 9:52-55, NIV)

4. Yet Jesus singled out Samaritans for praise

While He was on the way to Jerusalem, He was passing between Samaria and Galilee. As He entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him (Luke 17:11-12, NASB)

Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. (Luke 17:15-16, NASB)

For us today, we tend to associate the word “Samaritan” with the adjective “good.” We know this story fairly well. In fact, in legal circles, there’s what’s known as “Good Samaritan” laws that hold you harmless if you stop to render assistance to an accident victim.

But if you were living in Israel in Jesus’ day, and did a word association game with the word “Samaritan,” you wouldn’t hear the adjective “good.” Wicked, evil, abhorrent; but not good.

We don’t realize what an utterly radical thing this was, for Jesus to make the hero of the story a Samaritan. It would be like living in a protestant neighborhood in **Belfast** and speaking about the “Good Catholic” who stopped to help after two protestant ministers walked by on the other side.

It would be like living in a Christian village in **Sudan** and telling about the “Good Muslim” who stopped to offer his help after two Christian leaders walked away.

It would be like living in the **rural American south** of the 1960’s and hearing Jesus talk about the “Good Colored Man” who stopped to offer assistance to a white landowner who had driven off the road on his way to church.

If we were to take this story, transport it across 2000 years and thousands of miles, and have it happening here in Spokane, instead of talking about the “Good Samaritan,” who would Jesus be talking about? What classes of people do we tend to marginalize and despise? The good gypsy? The good ACLU lawyer? The good native American? The good Hollywood producer?

C. Unexpected help from an unlikely source: a Samaritan (33-35)

[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.'

1. Neighbor Nudge: what are the ways that the Samaritan helped the wounded man?

1. He touched him
2. He tended to his wounds (tore up his coat?)
3. He let him ride while he walked
4. Stayed up that night caring for the wounded man?

Idea: Deeds of kindness prepare the way for the gospel message
Objective: Look for ways to be a good neighbor by doing good deeds

5. He paid for his room for about a month and insured he received care
6. He guaranteed any further expenses the man incurred
7. He interrupted his plans

2. If we could get inside the Samaritan's head and ask him "Why did you stop to help?" what do you think he'd say?

- The Samaritan didn't see him as a member of a hated class. He saw him as a person, an individual in need of help.
- The Samaritan knew what it meant to be a hurting person in need and have others either ignore you or pass by.
- The Samaritan realized that recognizing a person in need, and recognizing that you possess the resources to help adds up to a call to involvement, a responsibility to help.

3. According to Jesus, what qualities characterize a good neighbor?

I help even when it may require a financial commitment of me **Costly**

I help even when no one may notice **Hidden**

I help even when it may put my comfort or safety on the line **Risky**

I help no matter what the class or race or creed of the person in need

Indiscriminate

I help even when the unexpected need disrupts my plans or schedule

Spontaneous/Inconvenient

I help even though I may not know the full extent of my involvement **Time**

What we say, the moment we step in to help another person, is, "I'm willing to share your pain, I'm willing to share your trouble. That means I'm willing to share my resources, I'm willing to share my time, I'm willing to share in your risky situation. I'm willing to open up my heart to you and get involved in your life."

III. So what will you do? (36-37)

[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)

Original question: Who is my neighbor (how tightly can I draw the boundaries?)

- Someone like me with a need.
- People I have time and energy to get involved with.
- Anyone God brings across my path with a need.
- Those who show good potential for improvement.
- Those I'm most afraid of helping.
- People I judge as worthy of my time and care.

Jesus' implied question: "To whom can I be a neighbor today?" Who are the hurting people God has placed in your life and world? (How broadly should you draw the boundaries?) Recognizing a person in need, and recognizing that you possess the resources to help adds up to a call to involvement, a responsibility to help. Jesus changes the question into, "**What must I do in order to be a loving neighbor?**" My neighbor is anyone God makes me aware of who has a legitimate need that I'm able to help with.

Tomorrow at **lunch**, when the kid no one likes drops his lunch tray and there's a mess all over the cafeteria—what would a good neighbor do?

This week in the **parking lot** when its raining and cold, and you notice that the guy who never smiles, never speaks, always sends the message that he has more important things to do that speak with you—has a dead battery and no jumper cables?

You see your neighbor **struggling to get groceries inside** with two tired pre-schoolers.

There's a family down the block that had a **kitchen fire**; what would a good neighbor do?

What do you think happened as the word of this Samaritan's actions circulated throughout the Jewish community? What do you think the Priest and the Levite thought if they later saw the wounded man after his recovery?

Conclusion

1. In the past, when I've had opportunity to be a good neighbor, what are the main excuses I've given for my lack of involvement?
2. How much time, money, risk, inconvenience, are you willing to invest this week in order to be a good neighbor?
3. My neighbor is anyone God makes me aware of, who has a legitimate need that I'm able to help with.

How much would you be willing to put on the line this coming week?