

Luke 10:25~37

At the very heart of Christ's message, lies the unconditional/unwavering love for *fallen man*... If we know nothing else of God, we know this, that He has a deep, passionate love for ALL MEN. Whether he be Jew or Gentile, whether he be black or white, educated or ignorant, morally pure or immoral... God loves mankind, which He has created. The problem is SIN... Through the fall of Adam and Eve, SIN entered the world, and has ravished the soul of every man, woman boy and girl therein. Sin has taken men captive, leaving men helpless victims to its will. Left in this state, men will die in their sin, and be eternally separated from God!

But that's where Christ comes in... The Cross is the "*Supreme example of Love*"... To correctly understand the cross, is to understand that it declares just how far God would go...to reach sinners! It declares the measure of God's love for fallen man! He went as far as He could go, there was no limit to what He would do for sinners!

I find that most, do not grasp the fullness of what the cross is all about... Beloved, we need to understand something, being that God is Holy, He could not just "*Forgive*" men of their sin. To simply pardon men of wrongdoing would be unjust!

If God is Just, He cannot forgive the wicked!

If God is Holy and Righteous...He cannot simply pardon sinful men!

That would be wrong! How could God "*Forgive*" the sins of a man, while at the same time, not be "*Guilty*" of *overlooking iniquity*?

(Example) In the news recently, they have been covering the story of the man who was accused of sexually molesting that little 7-year-old boy, and then beating him to death, to keep him silent. From what I've heard, that little boy suffered tremendously... They found the man GUILTY on all charges! Evidence clearly showed, that this man was GUILTY!

Now let me ask you... What would you think of the JUDGE...if at sentencing, were to say, "Sir, I understand that you are guilty of the crime you've been charged with. My heart goes out to the family of that little boy. But having said that...I sympathize with the fact, that I know you wished you hadn't done this, and that you wished you could take it all back... Therefore, out of love or sympathy for you, I declare that I will wave the punishment! Sir you are free to go!

We'd be like...**WHAT!** ...You can't do that! ...**I DEMAND JUSTICE!** ...(Right?)

Q: Listen, in the EXACT SAME WAY...how could God "*Pardon a man*" who is guilty, while at the same time, not be "**GUILTY**" of *overlooking iniquity*?

The answer...**The Cross!** Beloved, God the Father sent His own Son into this world, to be an offering for the sins so men! Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin...so that we might become the righteousness of God. Jesus took upon himself, our sin...and underwent the judgment and wrath of God, that we might be pardoned! By doing so, God was JUST in dealing with man's sin...while at the same time, JUSTIFER of men! Having punished sin in Christ, God is Just if allowing sinners to go free!

Is there any question, that God loves sinners? Oh how He loves us! In Given that, the question becomes, is there that same testimony, (God's love toward sinners) coming from the church? Does this "*fallen world,*" filled with "*fallen men,*" know (**by the testimony of God's people**)...that God loves them?

Or is it more so, as is the case here in this story, that fallen men of this world, feel that God hates them and wants nothing to do with them, given the testimony of those who profess to be “*God’s people*.” Here in this passage, we find a man, (identified as a Lawyer) that identifies with the worship of God, and as being one of God’s own. This man prides himself on the knowledge he has of God’s word, God’s commandments. But as we will see, having the mere knowledge of God’s word means nothing! Because given the way he treats his fellow man, he reveals that even though he “*knows much about God’s word*,” his actions reveal he doesn’t have a clue as to who God is!

This entire passage revolves around the question this “*lawyer*” asks, concerning what he must do to inherit eternal life. When you understand the situation, you’ll realize this wasn’t a legitimate question. Luke makes it clear, he asked Jesus this, “*tempting him*.” This man prided himself on his knowledge of God’s word, he considered himself to be an “*expert*” in the matter, and therefore, only asked this question as a “*trap*,” he was trying to “*catch*” Jesus in his words.

No doubt, this was a reaction to what Jesus had just said about such men...

²¹*In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes:*

The reference to the “*wise and prudent*” was a reference to men like this lawyer... In that statement, Jesus was referring to the fact, that God had hid His wisdom from the “*so-called*” wise men, the “*men of understanding*.” And that He had revealed it unto “*babes*,” a reference to the common people, those who had no knowledge of religious things. In short, God hid what He was doing from the “*religious leaders*” and revealed it to the “*outcast*,” the tax-collector, fishermen, farmers, former prostitutes, etc...

Having said that, “*this man*” here, seeing himself as one of the “*wise and prudent*” that Jesus was speaking of, stands up! It is as if to say, “*Is that right? Well, if that be the case, tell me “O wise one,” tell me what I need to do to be a part of God’s eternal kingdom.” Explain to me (an ignorant old man) how I can become a citizen along with these.*

The question was filled with sarcasm... He didn’t ask the question in earnest, in seeking an answer from Jesus. For he was quite confident that he knew the answer! He was simply responding to Jesus’ claim God hiding His wisdom from the wise and prudent! The man was insulted! And in response, he asks Jesus the question. Again, with the intent, that upon hearing His answer, he’d tear into Him, and put Him in His place!

But Jesus “*turns it around*” on him, and asks him a question... **What does the Law say about it? What is your understanding of it, based on your interpretation of the Law?**

(Vs 27) ²⁷*And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.*

(Vs 28) *Jesus affirms his understanding of the law...Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.*

I want to take just a moment to look at the Lawyers answer. It is important that we understand the significance of *these two commandments*. Those two commandments are the “*summation*” of the entire Law! In other words, you can reduce all of the written Law of God, to these two statements. And if you keep these two, you have fulfilled the Law!

In Matthew 22, in a similar event, another Lawyer asked Jesus what the greatest commandment was...

³⁷*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.* ³⁸*This is the first and great commandment.* ³⁹*And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* ⁴⁰*On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

That statement, “**On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets,**” is a very important statement to understand. The term “*Law and Prophets*” referred to the writings of the O.T. The “*Law*” was a reference to the first five books of scripture, the torah, the books of Moses. The “*Prophets*” was a reference to all the writings of the *Holy Prophets*. In other words, all the writings of Moses and the writings of the prophets, *could be summed up in those two commandments*.

In Romans 13, Paul affirms the same truth, and elaborates on it...

⁸*Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loves another hath fulfilled the law. ⁹For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. ¹⁰Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

Love is the fulfilling of the Law... It’s important that we understand what Paul is saying here. He is declaring what “*True obedience*” is! Like this “*lawyer*” in our story, many feel they are obedient to God’s commandments, on the basis they have not transgressed them. (Have not committed adultery, never killed anyone, never stolen anything, etc...) But given what Paul says here, that doesn’t mean you’re obedient. It’s quite possible for a man to keep these commandments in that sense of not physically breaking them, but yet be GUILTY before God because we do not love our fellow man. It is not “*right actions*” that God desires, but rather a “*right heart.*” We only fulfill God’s law, when we LOVE...

The “*man*” in our story realized this, for he became “*convicted*” of the fact, he was lacking in his love...

Notice the Lawyer’s response...²⁹*But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, **who is my neighbor?***

The fact he tried to “*justify*” himself...revealed that his heart was not right. As long as you do what is right, there’s never a sense of needing to justify ourselves. But the reason we try and explain our actions or lack there of, is when we are convicted by our consciences!

That’s what we see happening here... Here’s a man, who KNOWS the TRUTH of God, and what it teaches. He never hesitated in his answer, as to what it said about eternal life. *Love God, with all your heart, soul, mind and strength...and love your neighbor as yourself.* But as soon as he said it, he was “*convicted*” by it! The word of God had “*pricked his heart*” about the way he treated his neighbors, the Samaritans. This holds the “*key*” to the whole passage. The Jews HATED some of their surrounding neighbors, especially the Samaritans! The term “*Gentiles*” was most commonly used to describe Israel’s neighbors, which basically referred to anyone who was not a Jew. In the Jews eyes, there was two kinds of people, the Jews, the children of God, and the Gentiles, the pagans of his world. Included under the heading of “*Gentiles,*” was a particular group of people, known as the *Samaritans*. They were often referred to as “*half-breeds,*” for the fact they were part Jew and part Gentile. They had married outside their race and nationality, and were considered “*traitors.*” The orthodox Jew, despised the Samaritans. They would not so much as walk on their ground, they would go way out of the way, to go around them, on their way to Jericho or Jerusalem.

Upon stating the two commandments that lead to eternal life, this man became convicted... The word of God found its way into this mans heart, and put its finger on the HATRED abiding there. But rather than acknowledge that truth, and repent...he sought to “*Justify*” his HATRED.

“**WHO is my neighbor?**” (In his mind, he starts trying to justify WHY this could not be referring to the Samaritans!) Probably reminding himself of some of the things they were guilty of, and the ways they had treated him! (In his mind, he can’t imagine that this commandment include them.) They don’t deserve to be loved, they are completely unworthy of love...

(Vs 30~35) To explain **WHO** “*my neighbor*” is... Jesus tells a story... (**Review the story**)

This is one of the most well known stories in all of the bible... most commonly referred to as “*The Parable of the Good Samaritan*.” But I’m not so sure that’s the best title for it... It might be better titled, “**The Heartlessness of Religious Men!**” I say that because the parable is aimed at this man’s “*self-justification*” of himself, and the “*feelings*” he has towards his fellow man.

Whatever the REASON was, that both the *Priest* and *Levite* gave, for not helping this poor man, was “*unacceptable*.” They may have justified it in their own minds, but nevertheless, they were not justified! There’s nothing that could justify their actions (or lack thereof) on this poor man. And to beat it all, these men “*Professed*” to be men of God!

They prided themselves on being faithful to the Lord, and His commandments... No doubt, these two men were faithful to attend synagogue. No doubt they were faithful to perform all the requirements of the Temple, in terms of offerings and such. Matter of fact, the two men Jesus mentions here, were the very leaders of it all. Both of these men worked in the Temple! Both performed priestly duties...

But did that make them “*Godly men?*” Given the way they treated those outside the church, they were anything but godly! They were two of the most “*heartless*” men in the world! Why, this one Samaritan, (who had no affiliation with the Temple and worship of God) manifested more “*godliness*” than these two men, and their fellow priest combined, for he showed love to his fallen comrade.

After telling the story, Jesus turns to the “**Lawyer**” and says, “*Now tell me, which one of these men do you think was neighbor unto the man that fell among the thieves?*”

The lawyer answered...³⁷ *He that showed mercy on him.* ”
Jesus said... “*Go thou and do likewise...*”

Beloved, it is a sad day, when the Lord has to point to those “*outside His people*” as an example to follow. “*Go thou and do likewise...*” This story is a good reminder that, regardless of how religious one may be, it means nothing and is in vain, if we do not love!

Some of the meanest, cruelest and most heartless people I have ever met... are religious people, who associate with the worship of God. They see themselves as righteous and faithful, based on their conformance to the moral law of God, yet all the while, they would not so much as extend their hand, to a fallen brother.

I don’t want to “*Spiritualize*” this story too much, because that is something I feel we do way to often. Sometimes we are so “*Spiritual,*” that we don’t do anything “*Physical.*”

Though I don’t want to “*Spiritualize*” the story, I do need to explain the “*Spiritual Truth*” being taught here! That being, the “*injured man*” here in the story, that was overtaken by thieves who robbed him and left him for dead... he is a picture of lost, fallen man. It is a picture of man, who has been ravished by sin, and left lying by the side of the road, dying.

And the point of the story is, of all people, it should be “*God’s people*” who reach out to them in love... Beloved, there are people all around us, who are suffering and dying... the question is, “*Are we reaching out to them in love?*” Or are we simply walking on by?

Listen, we can attend church regularly... give our tithes and offerings... fast and pray... and do many other “*religious things,*” but... if we “*Do not show love to our neighbor*”... than we are no different than the Priest and the Levite in this story. God’s people should manifest their “*love for God*” by showing love and mercy to fallen man! For beloved, if we know anything of our God, it is this, that He truly loves sinners, and is merciful to the hurting and suffering.