

Love Your Neighbor As Yourself

Part Three: “Who”

Jared spoke from Luke 10:25-27. The “expert in the law” was not taking the posture of a disciple. His position of standing to question Jesus, as well as his attempt to test him were direct challenges to Jesus’ rabbinic authority. Further on in the story, the expert questioned further, “wanting to justify himself”.

Can we approach God with an improper, or inappropriate posture?

Is our motive in questioning God/Jesus important to consider? How can we evaluate our own motives in our approach to God?

Jared also told the story about his brother in law, Kody and the camel named Fluffy. In this situation, Kody was suddenly and viciously attacked by the skull cracking jaws of Fluffy. Jared and Krsiti have for years continued to rib Kody about his near-death experience. Neither Kody nor his mother appreciate the humor. The purpose of this story is not simply to make fun of Kody and attack camels, but rather to impress on us the value of **perspective** in any story. This is often called the parable of the Good Samaritan. Throughout Jared’s sermon, he asserted that we may well relate more properly to the common Jew in the ditch. We often see ourselves as the hero or protagonist in the story, but in this story Jesus challenges us to **imagine ourselves at our most vulnerable**—half dead beside a road.

The question of the expert was, “who is my neighbor”. Jesus’ answer is, “the person you least expect to come to your aid in your moment of greatest need”. Jared took us to Mathew 5:43-47.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?”

Our obedience to Jesus’ words is not primarily to be like the Samaritan, though that is certainly commanded elsewhere. His command, in this case, is to **love** the Samaritan, or anyone else that is the least likely to help us. Jesus called both tax collectors and Zealots, and prepared a table for them in the presence of each other (see Psalm 23, reinvisioned). In Jesus’ message, we must realize that Jesus doesn’t just prepare a table for us surrounded by our enemies (and protected from them); he prepares a table and **commands us to share it with our enemies**.

How can you love others even if they get on your last nerve, or even seek your downfall? How can you share the table this week?

May God transform each of us daily into people who love our neighbors—all our neighbors—as Jesus does.

