

Title: A DISCIPLE'S CAUTIONARY TALE, LUKE 10:25-37
(Chatham, NJ; 7/10/16, AM) [Pc – Topical]

Theme: Jesus challenges the practice of faith that does not fulfill the second commandment to love our neighbor. The Good Samaritan story cautions the disciple against forgetting that.

Purpose: To challenge the congregation to keep the practice of religious duties but to remember that true religion satisfies the command to love our neighbor.

Introduction:

1. German theologian, Martin Neimoller, in 1934 cautioned against the “unholy schism between yaying and not doing”—saying yes to God but no to obedience.
2. The Parable of the Good Samaritan is a cautionary tale for the disciple because it illustrates this trap that a Christian can fall into.
3. We are prone to substitute religious duties for obedience.
4. This parable reveals three ways the disciple can get off track.

I. We Ask the Wrong Questions

A. The Lawyer's questions, 25-29

1. First, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”
2. A valid, religiously inspired question
3. Jesus has him answer his own question, 26-28
4. Yet, the lawyer “desires to justify himself,” 29
5. Second question: “Who is my neighbor?”
6. Essentially, who are the legitimate objects of my love, or who should I love and by implication, who can I ignore or hate

B. Who was a true neighbor?

1. Jesus turns this question on its head
2. The story does not define who should be the object of our love
3. Jesus defines who behaves like a good neighbor, verse 36
4. To his credit, the lawyer didn't equivocate in his answer, 37 – a neighbor was the one who showed mercy
5. Yet this was not the answer to his original question

C. Our misguided questions and discussions

1. Who is or isn't worthy of our love?
2. Quarrelling over opinions, Romans 14:1
3. The wrong question and the wrong discussion can detract from the real issue
4. We are prone to miss the more important things, Mt. 23:23

II. We Lack Compassion

A. Love fulfills the Law

1. Romans 13:8-10, love does no wrong to a neighbor
2. More to the point in this parable: love does good to a neighbor, and true neighbors show mercy

B. Actions transcend religious sentiment

1. 1 John 4:21 struck me when I was searching: some of my family members could spot the people who when through the motions of being religious without being good people; this passage demonstrates they were right to see this
2. James 2:14-17 demands action along with religious impulses: here is the schism between saying yes to God but no to obedience
3. 1 John 3:16-18 says we must love not just in word or talk but in deed and in truth

4. John speaks of closing our hearts against people in need

III. We substitute religious duties for true obedience

A. The men who ignored their neighbor

1. The priest and the Levite passed by on the other side
2. Their motivation is not explored except by contrast to the Samaritan who "had compassion"
3. Jesus chooses two religious professionals as the hard-hearted ones of the story
4. People who would have executed their religious duties at the Temple failed to execute their duty to love their neighbor

B. Our religious behaviors

1. Acts 2:42 characterized the early church's important functions
2. These things are not unimportant, in fact, they are essential
3. Yet in fulfilling our responsibility to these things, we can sometimes fool ourselves into thinking we have satisfied our duty to God
4. Jesus destroys this notion by reminding us that our real duty is to love our neighbor; love must be demonstrated not merely discussed
5. Fulfilling our religious duties should lead us to obey: blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy

Conclusions:

1. Recently I have seen two examples of people who loved their neighbors; both occurred in Orlando.
2. One survivor, who was injured and looking for help, was helped by a man who said, "I don't know if you are religious but I will pray with you and stay with you to get the help you need."
3. In addition, Chic-Fil-e opened on Sunday to serve the community free food. You may remember that the owner was excoriated several years ago for not condoning homosexual marriage.
4. When you have satisfied our religious duty to worship today, think about how you can "Go and do likewise." (37)