



30 And Jesus answering said, *A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31* And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. **32** And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. **33** But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, **34** And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. **35** And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. **36** Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? **37** And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, *Go, and do thou likewise.* (Luke 10:30-37)

The Collect

Third Sunday after Trinity

O LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to hear us; and grant that we, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to pray, may, by thy mighty aid, be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is one of the most often quoted and popular of all the parables with the possible exception of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. It is my favorite of them all. It defines, for the lawyer as well as for us, to whom we should show mercy and of whom we should consider to be our neighbor.

To get to the setting for this parable, we need to examine the reason for our Lord's giving it: **25** And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? **26** He said unto him, *What is written in the law? how readest thou?* **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 neighbour as thyself. 28 And he said unto him, **Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.** 29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? (Luke 10:25-29)*

This "certain lawyer" was an accomplished academic of Holy Scripture. He was presumptuous of his own wisdom, both Holy and worldly. He was most likely of the mold of many modern theologians who love `refined' and `brainy' arguments about "finding themselves" or better still, "how to help others find themselves." Such people love argument for the sake of argument and have little taste for simple truth. His motive was to reveal his own vast knowledge and to cast dispersions on that of a poor and itinerate teacher – Jesus Christ. The lawyer `tempted' Jesus in order to expose what he believed to be uncultured and unrefined learning. Even when he had answered correctly a question posed by Christ, he yet persisted in displaying his prideful, philosophical grasp of the ridiculous – "And who is my neighbor?" Can't you just imagine the arrogance in which this question was posed as the lawyer spoke with a heavy nasally-tempered Oxford accent?

30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Jerusalem is the place of the Temple and the Holy City, but a certain man left the place closest to the worship of God and went DOWN to Jericho. The further we depart from the Will of God, we are placing ourselves under the power of the Prince of the Air. As we learned from Psalm 1, sin is a DIRECTION. Jonah, too, in order to escape the commands of God, ran DOWN to Joppa, went DOWN into a ship, went DOWN into the sides of the ship, was cast DOWN into the sea, went DOWN into the belly of the fish, and then DOWN into the very depths of the sea. When we depart from the presence of God, we are going DOWNHILL! This man was robbed and beaten to within an inch of his life. He was left by the world "half dead." All who are in the world and not in the Kingdom of God are "HALF DEAD!" They live their temporary moments on earth and then depart for the long night of outer darkness. The world will always leave you half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. "By chance" only happens in parables – not in the lives of God's chosen. The priest was also going to Jericho. He had been to the Temple for services and was ritually cleansed. He, too, was going DOWN. The priest is without excuse in failing to help the poor victim because we are expressly told that he saw him. Instead of helping the man, the priest passed by as far as he could get from him (the other side). This is an example of the very person who should be expected to harbor the greatest care for those in need not even lifting an eyebrow to comfort the man. The priest had an overwhelming religious responsibility to see to the hurt man. The Law of Moses even requires compassionate treatment for hurt animals: *Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.* (Deut 22:4) *Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?* (Isaiah 58:7)

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. The Levites were the lowest order of the priesthood having responsibility for the Temple grounds and upkeep. This Levite has also come DOWN from Jerusalem and is, undoubtedly, ritually cleansed from Temple work. He at least SEES the poor victim lying bleeding by the road, and even went to him to look upon him proving that he was aware of the seriousness of the man's predicament. He, too, shamefully went by on the other side

The priest and Levite were both men whose positions were called for under the Law. Their behavior suggests that the law is incapable of compassion and feeling. The Law offers no grace.

33 *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,* When we come to the end of our proverbial rope, it may be time to turn our eyes and hearts to heaven. This 'Good' Samaritan is a type of Christ symbolized in the parable. He is hated by the Jews as are all Samaritans. He is the One least likely to feel an obligation to the poor and sinful man (for He has no sin). The Samaritan is traveling UP to Jerusalem. Just as Christ came into a sinful world for us, the Samaritan goes to where the man was. That is why we are the "salt of the earth." We must deliver our healing balm to the point of need. The Samaritans were despised by the Jews for they felt they were unclean people simply for the blood that coursed through their veins. But this Samaritan had no such feelings of malice toward the Jews. He came to where the man was, he SAW him, and (the most important element of the entire parable) he had COMPASSION on him. Compassion is an emotion that comes from God alone. The hated Samaritan was far more Christ-like than the priests and Levites of the Temple who had credentials to serve God but not the heart.

34 *And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.* Christ CAME to us, He BOUND UP OUR WOUNDS, He has given us the wine and Oil of His Spirit, He has given us a conveyance to safety (the Cross), and He has brought us to a place of care and love. The wine, the oil, the physical sacrifice of allowing the hurt man to ride his own beast while he walked, his personal time devoted, and the care he gave were all Christ-like evidences of compassion. Compassion is an arm of Grace – something the Law could not provide.

35 *And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.* Having carried the assault and robbery victim back down the trail to an Inn, the Samaritan treats this stranger as his own brother – he treats him with expensive oils and wine, he gives of his time and resources. But, when he has done all for the moment of danger, he decides to continue on to his pressing business in Jerusalem. But he does not abandon his assumed charge. He gives the Inn Keeper two pence (two days' pay) to continue to watch after the needs of the injured stranger. Christ has not left us Comfortless has He? When He ascended on High, He sent to us the Comforter to care for us during His sojourn. The Samaritan tells the Inn Keeper to care for the man and, if more money is need, he will recompense on his return. Christ has a CONTINUING care for us.

36 *Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?* The greatest points of Christ's teachings are made with searching questions: "*But whom do you say that I am?*" "*Woman, where are thine accusers?*" "*Lovest thou me more than these?*" "*How readest thou?*" The answer is so obvious that none can escape its admission: Who was neighbor to him that fell among thieves? Was it a priest of his own people? Was it a Levite of his own faith? or was it a perfect stranger of a hated race of people? The lawyer is a Jew and his prejudices will make it very difficult to respond correctly, but his own pride requires an answer.

37 *And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.* The lawyer, beleaguered and defeated by a greater mind than he imagined existed, could not bring himself so much as to utter the word 'Samaritan,' so he responds with a sterile "*He that shewed mercy on him.*" Now the lawyer KNOWS the right answer, but even though we KNOW right, it avails us nothing if we do not ACT

on that right: "*Go thou and do likewise.*" Have you done all that your heart has known to be right?