



The 4Cs Kingdom Life: Christ, Connection, Care, Community
Community: “Neighborly” - Luke 10:25-37
Week of November 7, 2021

Opening Questions

- Tell about the people who live around you, in your neighborhood. How well do you know them? What are they like? What are their concerns?
- What do you know about the people who live in the wider Naperville area and in surrounding suburbs? What ethnicities are represented? What are the concerns of these people?

Prayer (from Colossians 1:9-12)

God, as we come together to study your Word, we ask you to fill us with the knowledge of your will. Thank you for the Holy Spirit who is here with us to help us understand how to live a life that pleases you in every way. Show us the good works you have for us to do and strengthen us with power to live as your holy people. We pray in the name of Jesus who redeemed us and brought us into your kingdom. Amen.

Introduction

As Jesus journeys toward Jerusalem at the end of his ministry, he encounters greater opposition from the Pharisees and others who want to trip him up. In one setting, a religious legal expert, wanting to discredit Jesus and his teaching, decides to put Jesus to the test to see if he comes up with the right answer.

The common question of the day was, “How can I obey God?” This expert asks what to do to inherit eternal life. According to Amy-Jill Levine, this is the wrong question. It is asking for the bare minimum, the one action needed in order to gain God’s favor. The question is also misshapen because an inheritance is freely given, not earned. Jesus, as a good Jewish rabbi not inclined to giving straight-forward answers, responds with the question, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?”

When the legal expert replies with “love God” (Deut. 6:5) and “love your neighbor” (Lev. 19:18), Jesus says “do this and you will live.” The lawyer got the right answer, but he didn’t get the right question. His “do” was focused on a single, limited action. Jesus’ “do” is about an on-going relationship, a way of living that brings fullness of life right now.

The legal expert, continuing to believe he’s going to trip Jesus up, just can’t stop asking the wrong questions. “Who is my neighbor?” is a disguise for, “Who is NOT my neighbor? Who am I supposed to love and who is not deserving of my love?”

Jesus answers by telling a story that would have surprised his listeners and turned their understanding upside-down.

Read Luke 10:25-37

Exploring the Text

- A man of this time would be known through his clothes and his speech. We are told in the text that the beaten man is Jewish, but notice that both of these identifiers are removed for the characters in Jesus' story. Why is this important?
- New Testament experts don't necessarily agree on the motivations of the priest and Levite passing by the injured man. Did it have to do with ritual purity and an unwillingness to touch what might be a dead body? Was it fear? Did they simply not want to be inconvenienced? How do issues of fear and inconvenience prevent us from being the neighbor God calls us to be?
- What kind of care did the Samaritan provide for the injured man? Take note of how much touch is involved.
- What do you find most personally challenging about this story?
- If you were to re-tell this story in today's setting and culture, who would be the characters? How would it play out?
- What does it mean to "love your neighbor as yourself?"
- Mercy is compassion displayed through action. What does it look like when we show mercy to others who are not like us?
- Where are we called to show mercy in our world?
- Who are Knox's immediate neighbors? How might our faith community reach out to these people?
- How can Knox reach and serve its larger community?

Closing Prayer

Depending on the needs/desires of your group here are some options:

- Ask one or two group members to close the group in prayer.
- Pray the Lord's prayer together aloud:

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen."

Preparation for next week:

Wear your walking shoes! Make a group plan for getting out together, paying attention to the surrounding community, and gathering back together for de-briefing.

Sources:

- Notes on Luke 10, NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible 2016
 - Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi, Amy-Jill Levine, 2015
 - Poet and Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke, Kenneth E. Bailey, 1983
 - Brad Gray, Walking the Text, "The Teaching Series: Parable of the Good Samaritan", 2020
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