

Title: THE GOOD SAMARITAN WITH COMMENTS, LUKE 10:25-37.  
(Chatham, NJ; 07/11/10, AM)

Theme: The Good Samaritan story is significant not only because of the tale it tells but also because of the comments Jesus makes.

Purpose: To clarify Jesus' comments and to draw more insight from them.

Introduction:

1. This story has influenced our vocabulary; we call a person who helps others a Good Samaritan.
2. The story drips with irony; a priest and a Levite refuse to fulfill the commandment while a mixed-race and hated foreigner obeys.
3. We learn that when a person loves his neighbor by his actions, he satisfies the commandment no matter who he is.
4. Analysis of the story this morning would tread familiar ground; instead let's look at it afresh from the comments that Jesus provides.

I. Comment #1: "Do this and you will live!" (28)

A. Discussion of the Law.

1. The Good Samaritan has a prologue.
2. The discussion began with a question about the Law from a lawyer.
3. Actually it began with the issue of eternal life. Does this surprise you?
4. The story is about eternal life!
5. In answer to how to obtain eternal life Jesus turns the question back to the questioner (26).
6. He answers with the greatest commandments: love God and love your neighbor.

B. Is this the end of the discussion or the beginning?

1. Jesus tells him, "Do this and you will live."
2. These two commands sum up the essence of how to obtain eternal life.
3. We've made it so complicated.
4. Here is how Paul simplified it for us: [Romans 13:9-10](#).
5. And so Jesus seems to end the discussion by telling the man that he is on the right path. "You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live."
6. The discussion should have ended here.

II. Comment #2: "Who proved to be a neighbor?" (36)

A. To justify himself (29).

1. The man asked, "Who is my neighbor?" This extends the discussion.
2. Luke comments that his desire in asking the question was to justify himself (rationalize?).
3. In other words, "What are the limits of love?" "Who is the object of compassion?"
4. Maybe the man, deep in his heart, knew the answer but was trying to find wiggle room or a loophole to avoid the burden of caring for others. (Remember that Jesus criticized the scribes for skirting around the command to care for parents.)
5. This question represents what a lot of us do to avoid obeying.

B. The story and the new question.

1. Jesus answers his question with a story: “A man was going from Jerusalem...”
2. Then he asks a different question: see verse 36.
3. He doesn't define the object of compassion (who is my neighbor); he defines the subject of compassion (who behaved like a neighbor).
4. He illustrates the commandment by giving an example of one who obeys—in contrast to those who don't.
5. He answers the question about who is the neighbor but not in the way expected.

III. Comment #3: “Go and do likewise.” (37)

A. The one who showed mercy. (Lawyer's answer)

1. The lawyer had to admit exactly who had demonstrated mercy.
2. Logically he could come to no other conclusion.
3. He doesn't bother to excuse the ones who didn't show mercy since Jesus leaves no room for that.
4. Jesus concludes by telling him to demonstrate the same mercy: “Go and do likewise.”
5. The lawyer's original question is completely disregarded. He is told to act out of love for others without respect to who they are.

B. Observations

1. The Samaritan acted with compassion; he didn't just talk about it (1 John 3:18).
2. It was personal, not some impersonal program (comment on my experience with the Chatham Assistance Board).
3. The lawyer wanted to ration his compassion, and that is exactly what happens when you have bigger and bigger bureaucracies.
4. The Samaritan acted on his own compassionate impulse with complete freedom and with his own resources.

Conclusions:

1. Eternal life consists of obeying the two greatest commandments.
2. True neighbors are those who love others by their actions.
3. If we want to have eternal life we need to behave in the same way as the Good Samaritan.
4. This is the life to which we have been called; this is the witness of the light of Christ in us; this obedience is genuine love of others.
5. Look for opportunities to love your neighbor while on your journey.
6. Join us in the quest to obey God.