

*Let us pray: Heavenly Father, day by day we live our lives in constant disobedience to Your Word. We know that we have sinned and strayed far from You; however, we come before You now, begging and imploring You to forgive our sins. For the sake of Your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, please forgive us our sins. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The portion of Scripture before us today is found in the Gospel according to Saint Luke the tenth chapter beginning at the twenty-third verse and we read in Jesus name' (please rise):

***Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; <sup>24</sup> "for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to***

***see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it." <sup>25</sup> And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" <sup>27</sup> So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and your neighbor as yourself.'" <sup>28</sup> And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." <sup>29</sup> But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" <sup>30</sup> Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> "Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> "Likewise a Levite, when he arrived***

*at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. <sup>34</sup> "So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> "On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' <sup>36</sup> "So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" <sup>37</sup> And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*

Heavenly Father, these are Your words and therefore they are the truth. We pray, Lord, that You would increase our faith through them. Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

It is always interesting to me that when someone asks Jesus how they are to attain or inherit eternal life, Jesus always points them to the Law. He never tells someone who wishes to inherit eternal life that they must believe; rather, they must fulfill the law.

The rich young man was told to keep all the commandments and that he should sell everything and give to the poor. No belief, no faith, just law. And the same is true of the man before us today, no faith, no belief, just law. The man told Christ that in order to inherit he should "Love God and love neighbor." And Jesus replies, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." What? How can Jesus possibly say that we should be doing something to inherit eternal life?

But that is not Jesus' message. To those who seek to justify themselves, to those who wish to earn heaven in their hardened hearts, to those who rely on themselves... they must fulfill the law. For any failure to uphold the entire law and they will see the pits of hell. However, to those who live by faith, to those who believe on Jesus in life and death, to those who are indebted completely to Jesus Christ for their salvation... well those people are to be *Neighbors of God*.

As Jesus Himself tells us in this text many people wanted to see Him. Think about Abraham, David, Jeremiah, Daniel... the list is endless. All those who wanted to see the day of the Redeemer, of the Messiah, is a list of every person living or dead. They all want to know and see their Redeemer, but not all were afforded that opportunity. Those same people also wished to hear the words of Christ, to hear Him speak and teach... but not all were afforded that opportunity.

So as Christ is giving a very comforting message to His disciples, a certain lawyer wanted to test Jesus. Jesus is telling His disciples about the 'miracle' that they are witnessing by just hearing His words... and someone wants to ruin the moment. Is that not how we feel at times? All we want to do is go to church and live our lives as Christians... but some people just have to try and ruin it for us.

I just want to go to school or send my kids to school and have time for them to pray, but some atheist has an issue with it and doesn't want me to pray... why can't he just go to another school? I just want to put up a nativity at my local park, but some jerk always has to ruin it and steal baby Jesus, or call the city about it... why can't they just get a life and go away? I just want to see the Ten Commandments displayed at the courthouse but some knucklehead can't shut

up about it and gets them taken out... why can't he just mind his own business?

And yet, instead of shooing this person away, Christ speaks to him. He asks him some questions about his thoughts and how he sees the world. Christ knows this man's heart, He knows all hearts, but He wants the man to vocalize it. This lawyer wants nothing to do with the Christ, notice that he had to love God and neighbor... not the Christ, but Jesus still made time to talk to him.

I wonder how many of us make time to have an open and serious discussion with those who bother us. To the atheist who wants to stop school prayer, have you ever talked to them or have you just bad-mouthed them to friends? To the 'jerk' who hates the nativity, have you ever bothered to ask 'Why?' or just find out about that person? To the 'knucklehead' have you ever tried reaching

out with the Gospel and not the tenfold "you shall" or "you shall not"?

You see, we fall into this same trap. Instead of taking out our frustration on Christians, we take it out on the 'Samaritans' of our lives. We take our frustrations out on those we 'hate' and couldn't care less if they died and went away. We take our frustrations out those who don't agree with us... and we are not like Christ... we are a lot like the lawyer. And so Christ has a parable for you too.

A man, a sinner, was walking on a trip all alone. He did not have God with him constantly and this time he wanted to take a walk. As he was traveling he was assaulted by those around him. The non-Christians were assaulted by the Christians, the Christians by the non-Christians, the Christians by the world... everyone assaulting everyone because we wouldn't take time to listen and talk.

So, as we travel throughout this life without God, which we do often, we are assaulted by satan... Oh, I know you thought you were going to be the good samaritan, but you're not. You are the one who is laying beaten and bloodied on the road. You are the one who has no protection when you try to go alone. You are the 'good Jew' who doesn't always look for the Christ and at times you test and tempt Him by going alone, without God.

And so as you lie beaten and bloodied, Christians and non-Christians pass you by. They don't have time to stop and help, instead they walk by on the opposite side of the road. They see you from afar, they hear you moaning and groaning, but they walk far away from you. They don't want to help, they don't want to stop, they don't want to deal with you... boy if that doesn't sound like us. So many people on any given day

that we could reach out to and we walk right past them.

But thanks be to God Jesus Christ does not walk past us. In fact, Jesus was sent into this world for the explicit purpose of helping us. Jesus knew that we would walk past others and they would walk past us... but Jesus never does. In His infinite love, Jesus came into this world to walk the road traveled by no one, ever. Jesus walked the perfect road, He lived the perfect life. During His was He was abused and mistreated. As He neared the end of His walk the burden became great... because He was bearing all of your guilt and shame, all of your guilt and all of you. He hung on that cross bearing everything that you are and He died for you.

Three days later Jesus Christ rose from the dead for you. He rose to announce that He has defeated that evil foe, the devil, who has been assaulting and beating you from the

beginning. He rose to announce that hell and sin could not keep Him down. He rose to assure you that now, through faith in Him, you have heaven waiting for you.

Yes, through faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and in all that He has done, we now have heaven waiting. Because of our Good Samaritan, Jesus Christ, who has cared for us, who has taken up our burden, who has cared for our wounds, who has taken us to the inn of God's house, and who has paid for our healing and our stay... Jesus, our Good Samaritan, has done everything for us, and for that we can praise and thank Him continually.

Now through faith, Jesus asks us to treat our neighbors the same way... and who are our neighbors? The atheist who persecutes us and tries to get rid of school prayer, the 'jerk' who doesn't like nativities, the 'knucklehead' who despises the Ten

Commandments, the 'liberal' who doesn't understand politics, the 'conservative' who hates anyone who isn't white and old, the child who only gets into mischief, the elderly person who spends his day saying how horrible things are 'now-a-days,' the Roman catholic who only goes to church once a year, the ELS member who goes to church 'religiously,'... everyone. Everyone is your neighbor and everyone deserves your love and help.

Yes, through faith we can help our fellow man. We will never be the Good Samaritan, for that is only Jesus, but we can be 'decent samaritans.' We can do those good works that God has prepared in advance for us to do and we can do them to His glory. We do not do them to earn heaven for ourselves or others; we do them to show the love of God and the love of Christ to EVERYONE around us.

Dear friends in Christ, when it comes to those who wish to inherit eternal life and who wish to rely on themselves... they do need the law. They need to see that they are not fulfilling the law and that they fail at keeping it at every step of the journey; but we should not write them off. We also need to show them the gospel, the love of Christ, and they need to hear the sweet message of all that Christ has done for you... and for them.

Thanks be to God that though I am often walking alone and very proud of myself, he has humbled me and brought me to my Savior. Thanks be to God that when I am assaulted and left for dead, Jesus has stopped, taken care of me, and paid for all my sins. And thanks be to God that my Good Samaritan has had mercy upon me; me, a *neighbor of God*.

Dear friends, thanks be to God. Amen.