

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?"

BIBLE TEXT : Luke 10:25-37

LESSON 131 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39)

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Luke 10:25-37

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?

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

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

A Question

People do not always ask questions for information. This man, who asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life, knew the answer even before he asked. He studied and knew the Law. He was trying to tempt Jesus. No doubt he was one of the Pharisees who were scheming to have the authorities take Jesus. They did not like the Lord and His teachings.

By the lawyer's question, he appeared to be interested in what Jesus had to say. His only interest was to trap Jesus. He asked in hope that Jesus would make a statement contrary to the Law. Jesus knew how to deal with this man as well as with every other person who inquires of Him. Jesus' answer was a question: "What *is* written in the law?" The man knew well and quoted the Law, which is written in the Old Testament (**Deuteronomy 6:5** ⁵ And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. **Leviticus 19:18** ¹⁸ Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD). Jesus' answer was also in the Law, which the man knew. "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them" (Leviticus 18:5).

'This Do'

The way to eternal life is the same for all people. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). There is not one way to Heaven for one person, and another way for another person. Jesus said, "I am the door: by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9).

This do! That was the real difficulty in the man's life. He could not do what he should do. He did not do what the Law required of him. Jesus did not come to destroy the Law; instead He came to fulfill it (**Matthew 5:17** ¹⁷ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil).

The Gospel which Jesus preached was not something entirely new, that was not in the Old Testament. Jesus taught a Gospel of love that could bring a change into a person's life. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). The Gospel of Jesus changed the heart, as the Lord told Ezekiel to prophesy: "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 11:19).

Love was lacking in the lives of the Pharisees, the "defenders of the Law." On one occasion Jesus said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matthew 23:23).

Lacking Love

The love of Jesus in the heart is the power which enables one to do the right thing. The lawyer showed that it was lacking

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.

in his life; had he known the love of God he would not have asked the question. He began to justify himself by asking, "Who is my neighbour?" His own words condemned him. A Christian does not make an excuse for himself. To the Pharisees, on one occasion, Jesus said, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts" (Luke 16:15).

Jesus did not give the dictionary-meaning of neighbor, nor did He give a definition that could not be understood. Jesus gave an illustration so simple and plain that the lesson would not soon be forgotten.

Robbed

Jesus answered the question, "Who is my neighbour?" with an illustration. There was a road between Jerusalem and Jericho. A certain man, probably a Jew, traveling along this road, was overtaken by thieves. The man was robbed, and left lying by the road side in a half-dead condition.

Other Travelers

There were other travelers on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. One was a priest who, perhaps, had been performing his priestly duties in the Temple at Jerusalem. No doubt he had carried out the religious ceremonies according to the Law. Maybe he thought that to touch the wounded man would make him unclean. He passed by on the other side without so much as a kind word or an offer to send help. His religion was all on the outside. He did not have the love of God in his heart. "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard" (Proverbs 21:13).

The next passer-by was a Levite, who waited upon the priests in the Temple. He probably thought that he had done his duty before the Lord. His actions showed that he did not have the love of God in his heart. He looked at the wounded man but went on his way. The Law required better treatment of an animal, even one belonging to one's enemy (**Exodus 23:4-5** ⁴ If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. ⁵ If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him).

The Good Samaritan

The next traveler was a Samaritan. With those people the Jews had no dealings (**John 4:9** ⁹ Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans). But in that Samaritan's heart was the love for his fellow man that was lacking in the priest and the Levite. He was not too busy, nor did it hurt his religion, to help one in need. He did not wait for the injured man to come to ask for help. The Samaritan went to the one in need.

In I John 3:18 we read, "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." The Samaritan did that, for he not only looked at the man but he showed kindness in helping him. He bandaged the wounds after pouring in wine and oil, perhaps to cleanse and soothe. Some people would have thought that then they had done a great deed. The Samaritan did not go, even after he had dressed the wounds. He placed the injured man upon his own beast and took him to an inn. We are told that two pence equaled the wages of two days and would be enough for several days' support. The Samaritan provided for the injured man and promised to return to repay the innkeeper if he had spent more.

A Neighbor

Then Jesus asked the lawyer his opinion as to which was the neighbor. How different from the answer the lawyer had expected! He was compelled to commend the one who was hated, although he did not speak the word "Samaritan." Jesus told him likewise to show mercy.

Many who are traveling on life's highway are like the injured man. They have left God's niece of worship and blessing. Sin has robbed them of every good thing. They are lying by the roadside in a wounded condition — half-dead (alive physically although dead spiritually). Is there no one to help them?

Love in the Heart

God's people are looking for opportunities to help others. Children can be helpful in many ways — running errands, caring for younger children, and taking flowers to the sick. In hospitals, on the streets, in jails, and wherever they can, God's people testify and tell of Jesus. They help others, because they have the love of God in their lives. When one is saved, the love of God comes into the heart and life. That experience enables one to do as the Lord commanded: "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." Love in the heart fulfills the Law (**Romans 13:10** ¹⁰ Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law).

Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34, 35). A follower of Jesus has love for his fellow men — that is the way one can recognize a Christian. Some people have a religion like that of the priest and Levite. If one wants to inherit eternal life, he must have more than they had. He must have more than good works, in order to get into Heaven. Most people take very good care of themselves, and think of themselves before anyone else. Those who will inherit eternal life do as they would have others do to them (**Luke 6:31** ³¹ And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise) — even more, they do for others as they would do for themselves. Christianity is being Christlike, with love even for enemies. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did the lawyer question Jesus?
- 2 How could the lawyer inherit eternal life?
- 3 How can a person today inherit eternal life?
- 4 Why did Jesus tell about the Good Samaritan?
- 5 What lesson did Jesus want to teach here?
- 6 Which one of the travelers showed love for his fellow man?
- 7 Who is your neighbor?
- 8 How can you be a neighbor to those with whom you come in contact?