



# the Source

*Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...*

Let me say a good word for our lawyer here! As I keep rehearsing today's scripture, he becomes a more real, sympathetic person, not just a foil for Jesus' parable.

Start with the beginning of the encounter. He comes to *test Jesus*, to check him out. What kind of person is this wandering teacher, anyway? Too often we read this as *to trap Jesus* – then we remember Paul's admonition to closely examine teachers who come to the various churches he started. Is Jesus trustworthy; is he wise? How do you find out? You seek him out and ask questions.

The test question is a Pharisee's question: "*what leads to eternal life?*" Sadducees did not even believe in that concept! Jesus answers in good rabbinic form, with another question: "*What does your law say?*" And when the lawyer gives the proper summary ("*love God, love your neighbor*") Jesus responds, "*You have just answered your own question. Do this and you will live.*"

But if this is all, did the lawyer waste his time? Wishing to justify himself (how human!) he asks another question. Yes, surely he didn't want to appear foolish, but as a legal expert, he also certainly expects clarification; cross-examination should be expected in any such moment. And so "*Who is my neighbor?*"

We remember this encounter today for the parable which follows — the Good Samaritan. Again, the lawyer gives the right answer to Jesus' query—"*the one who cared enough to act*" —and once again Jesus presses the point... "*Do this, and live.*"

Perhaps the real lesson we need to hear is the one phrase Jesus repeated: "*Do this to live!*" Until we do this...love God and love our neighbors"...we only have a nice story. What will we do with it? Will we do this...care for one another in our community?

*Dr. John Clifford, Retired Clergy-in-Residence*

**Consider  
the Source  
Luke 10:25-37**

## A Family Affair

Read Luke 10:25-37 together. This parable is commonly known as *The Good Samaritan*. Historically, Samaritans were hated by Jews because they married non-Jews and did not strictly observe the Jewish law. However, in this parable, the Samaritan stopped to help an injured Jew, even though he knew the injured man would likely hate and reject him. He bandaged his wounds, took him to safety, then paid for his food and lodging while he recovered. The Good Samaritan was unconcerned about their differences. He stopped to help, simply because there was a person in need. The love and mercy shown by the Samaritan reminds us of God's love for every person.

For our Seuss connection this week, let's reflect on Dr. Seuss's story about sneetches. There were star bellied sneetches who did not want to interact with the plain bellied sneetches. After Sylvester McMonkey McBean arrived with his amazing machine, the star bellied and plain bellied sneetches were all mixed up and they couldn't identify who appeared different on the outside in the beginning. They learned that all sneetches are important.

Both the sneetches and the Good Samaritan invite us to think about neighbors. Anyone can be our neighbor. They do not have to live nearby or be in our particular group. Discuss ways you can reach out to neighbors, near and far.

*Dear God, thank you for your love. Help us to show your love to all neighbors even those who are very different from us. Amen.*

— Jennifer Hall, Director of Children's Ministry

## Monday: Luke 10:25

As last week's sermon reminded us, we are constantly judging things. How do we evaluate and pass judgments? By "testing" things – and people – and God!

- *How do we try to test God? Do we set out hurdles for God to jump before we believe? Remember how Israel kept asking for more proof of God's care while on the Exodus? Do we expect God to answer our prayers exactly as we make them before we will trust God?*

## Tuesday: Luke 10:26-28

What does God's law say? Israel had already had a long history of thinking about how God's covenant was to be kept. From the Ten Commandments, and the Shema (Deut. 6:4: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord alone is God...") to the rabbis of Jesus' day, this was a constant concern.

- *If you had to respond to Jesus, how would you have answered the question, "What does God (the law) say?" Can you give a quick summary of your faith?*

## Wednesday: Luke 10:29

The lawyer does what good lawyers do: he cross-examines Jesus. "Who is my neighbor?" For good Pharisees, the tribe is closely defined, and rigidly defended. What are the boundaries we need to observe?

- *We tend to establish "neighborhoods" and "neighborhood watches." What are the barriers we raise in our lives to keep "strangers" ("those we don't know!") at arm's length?*

## Thursday: Luke 10:31-34

In Jesus' parable, several people have a chance to help. The priest and Levite find excuses in their positions and their jobs to pass by. At one level these are legitimate; but clearly Jesus doesn't think so.

- *When and how do we move beyond "what's proper" to "what's right?"*

## Friday: Luke 10:36

Jesus ends with a question: "Who do you think was the neighbor?" The lawyer can answer easily. And so can we! Then Jesus repeats his earlier response: "so do it!"

- *How then do we go into life "showing mercy" to those who live around us?*

- *How will you be a "Good Samaritan" this week?*

