

“The Good Steward - Serving with Christ’s Hands”

Luke 10:25-37

Nov. 15th, 2020

Rev. Billy Song – St. Mark’s Presbyterian Church

If you’re joining us for the first time this morning or if you missed last Sunday, we started a new sermon series on the topic of Stewardship.

Every year in November around this time of the year, in the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, we talk about this topic as a way to encourage our church to be better stewards of our lives, our church and of the world that we live in.

The goal of talking about stewardship isn’t to ask for more money. The goal of stewardship isn’t to pry more dollars out of your hands. The goal of stewardship is to encourage you to use your God given abilities to manage your God given resources, to help accomplish God’s will in your lives.

So - in that sense, your God given abilities, or your God-given resources, might not have to do with money but a certain talent you possess or maybe the resource that God has gifted you with has to do with a certain kind of skill.

One of the resources that I know God has given me a lot of is the gift of time. I love sharing my time in service to God and with the people of God, but perhaps God has gifted to you with a different kind of resource. Well, “stewardship” is about using those God given resources for the purpose of God’s glory to carry out God’s will.

So, last Sunday we started our Stewardship series and for this year’s theme, we’re looking at a parable Jesus told in Luke 10, called “The Parable of the Good Samaritan.” I’ve taken the liberty of changing the title of that parable to match our series, and instead of the Good SAMARITAN, I’m calling it the Good STEWARD, and last Sunday we looked at the first part of the parable where Jesus introduced all the characters.

First, there was an injured man who was beaten and robbed and left on the side of the road. Then there was a priest who came and ignored him and walked on the other side of the road. Then there was a Levite who did the very same thing, but when a Samaritan came upon the injured man, the very first thing that the Samaritan did was to have “pity” or compassion for the man.

That's as far as we got last week and the whole point of the sermon was to say that: *"Stewardship begins with the heart and seeing the situation through the eyes of God."* It means looking at people the way God would see them, which is what the Priest and the Levite were unable to do.

Today we look deeper into the parable and look at the actions of the Samaritan.

Luke 10:25-37

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" Jesus replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind" and "Love your neighbor as yourself." "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." "But the man wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" In reply, Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So to a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave it to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said, "And when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have." Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

(First – a bit of humor)

One Sunday morning, there was a Sunday School Teacher who was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan. After telling the parable and hoping that the moral of the story was communicated to the young children, the teacher then turned to the children and asked: *"If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?"*

Most of the students sat quietly and with nothing to say, but then a thoughtful little boy raised his hand and when the teacher called on him - hoping to hear the moral of the story, the boy replied: *"I think I would throw up!"*

This morning we are looking at the actions of the Good Samaritan, in particular, those that are described in vs 34.

“The Samaritan went to [the injured man] and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.”

That’s as much as we’ll cover today and the point I hope to make by looking at this verse is this: *“Stewardship begins with the heart”* which we talked about last week *“but then from the heart - it moves towards the hands and is best displayed when we are serving others.”*

Who is my neighbor?

Jesus told this parable in response to a question that was asked by an expert in the law. The question was actually two-fold and the 1st question was: *“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”* which the expert of the law basically answered himself. And that was by *Loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength,*” and by *“Loving your neighbor as yourself.”*

These are the 2 greatest commandments - “to love God” and to “love your neighbor”, which in essence captured the 10 commandments.

But wanting to justify himself, the expert in the law asked a 2nd question and the question was: *“Who is my neighbor?”*

“Who is my neighbor?”

On the street where I live, we have neighbors to the left and right of us. We also have neighbors across the street as well as neighbors behind our backyard wall. We’re actually the closest to our neighbors who live to the left of us and that’s because we share the same driveway entrance, and so we see them all the time.

They’re names are Tom and Judy, an older couple, and on any given day - we’ll spend a 5-10 minutes catching up with each other. (Sometimes even more!)

Sometimes we’ll do grocery shopping for each other. We’ll get something from Costco for them, while they’ll get something from the Farmers Market for us. Sometimes Judy will bring over some homemade dessert - other times we’ll bring over a few slices of (extra) birthday cake.

Tom and I have power washed the drive way together. We've even gone out and grabbed dinner together (before the pandemic) and when one of us goes on vacation, we'll check each other's mail and even water each other's lawn.

THAT'S WHAT NEIGHBORS DO FOR ONE ANOTHER.

Now if any of our neighbors were to ask me to do any of those things for them, I'd be happy to oblige - *because that's what neighbors do!*

Especially my next-door neighbors or my neighbors across the street since see each other every day and smile & we wave hello - *because that's what neighbors do!*

But let's just say that if someone at the end of the block - like 9-10 houses away, if they were to ask me to check their mail or water their lawn, I'm not so sure I would be willing to do it. And that's because the people who live that far away or at the end of the block - I might not know their names. (In fact, I probably wouldn't recognize them!)

And so I might say to them: *"Maybe you might want to ask someone else... like someone who lives next door. They'll take care of you – they have to take care of you, but as for me, I don't really know you, we're kind of more like strangers & strangers are not obligated to help."*

That's what the man in our parable (the expert in the law) was sort of hoping to hear Jesus say. He was hoping to hear Jesus set some kind of boundary about who we need to help and who we can ignore.

But when Jesus told the story, He said being a neighbor isn't about living next door, or being nice to only those you share a drive way with, *but about "opening a door"* and showing compassion and letting God's grace go out from your home and heart, and out to the people you meet.

And not only that, but when Jesus told the parable, He also added a neat plot twist! The "neighbor" according to the story wasn't the priest or the Levite, it was the Samaritan who would have been the least likely person to help the injured man.

Let's now take a look at what the Samaritan actually did.

The Samaritan BANDAGED WOUNDS.

Luke 10:34

“The Samaritan went to [the injured man] and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.”

Jesus said in the parable that the Samaritan provided road-side assistance to the injured man who was robbed and beaten, stripped of his clothes and left there half dead. Unlike the priest and the Levite who avoided the injured man, when the Samaritan saw him - he actually got off of his donkey and provided emergency assistance.

The very first thing he did was he bandaged the man’s wounds.

Growing up - I used to think that the Samaritan pulled out one of those small tin boxes with those little small band-aid’s and I used to wonder *“Why did the Samaritan carry around band-aids?”*

Well, he probably didn’t. Most likely, he cut pieces of fabric from his own outer garment and fashioned them to whatever purpose was needed. And with those strips of cloth, he could have made a sling to support a broken arm or made a tourniquet to stop any bleeding.

So instead of just taking of his coat and giving it on the injured man, he repurposed his coat for an even more important need. The Samaritan sacrificed his own comfort, sacrificed his own warmth, so that the injured man could have a fighting chance.

The Samaritan Poured Oil AND WINE.

What was the 2nd thing that the Samaritan did for the injured man? Well, according to the parable, the 2nd thing he did was pour oil and wine. The Samaritan poured “oil and wine” - not for the Samaritan to drink, but rather, he poured those two things on any cuts or open wounds that the injured man may have had.

Again, growing up as a kid and hearing this story in Sunday School, this part of the story was a little bit confusing! *Why would you pour a glass of Merlot or a bottle of Chardonnay on a cut?*

I'm going to expose my ignorance when it comes to things like wine (we don't drink wine at home) and so I don't have a lot of insight as to this part of the parable.

Why would the Samaritan pour some wine on the man or on his injuries and what kind of wine was it? Was it a red wine or was it a white wine because not all kinds of wines pair with every kind of injury?

Red wines go with red meats (at least that's what I'm told) while white wines are supposed to go w fish or chicken. (Are you impressed that I know this? Well don't be because I had to google that.)

So, what kind of wine do you pour on an injury? Red or white? Does anyone know? Well, you'd pour whichever wine had the most alcohol content, because it's the alcohol that would kill off all the germs! I wish my Sunday School teacher really explained that to me - but now you know.

As for the oil that was also poured on, the oil would have acted like a barrier, helping keep out the bacteria and preventing infection. Sort of like how we might use Vaseline, Neosporin or other types of cream to protect a cut.

So, that's what the Samaritan did when he treated the injured man. He quickly attended to his needs and focused on serving the injured man.

He didn't ask questions, like *"What were you doing here in the first place?"*
He didn't lecture the man, or say *"Why were you travelling alone?"*

The Samaritan didn't commission a study about "crime statistics." The Samaritan didn't blame anyone or ask why the Priest / Levite didn't do anything. He just quietly and quickly got to work taking care of the man with whatever resources he had, and then he put his hands to work serving and attending to his needs.

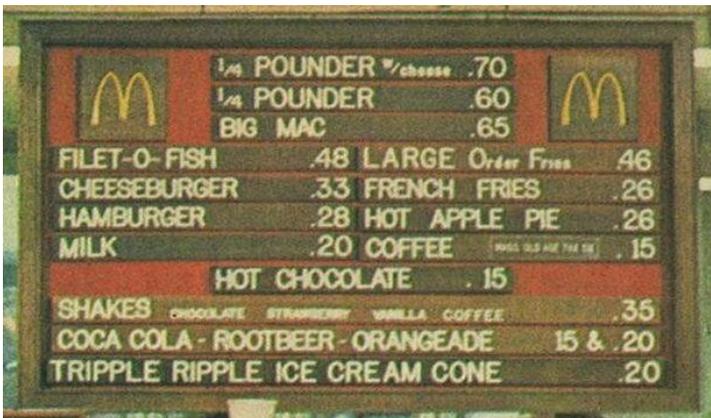
Here's my 1st point. Stewardship begins in the heart and it requires compassion, but then it translates into action and in this case, by serving others with Christ's hands.

I want to show you a picture and I'm sure you'll recognize it right away - It's a picture of the "golden arches" and a sign for McDonalds.



McDonalds has been around for as long as I can remember and there was one right near me by the home I grew up in in the 70's over in North Torrance, and boy, I loved going to McDonalds!

Can I show you an old picture?



Here's a picture of a McDonalds Menu from back in the 1970's

Check out those prices!

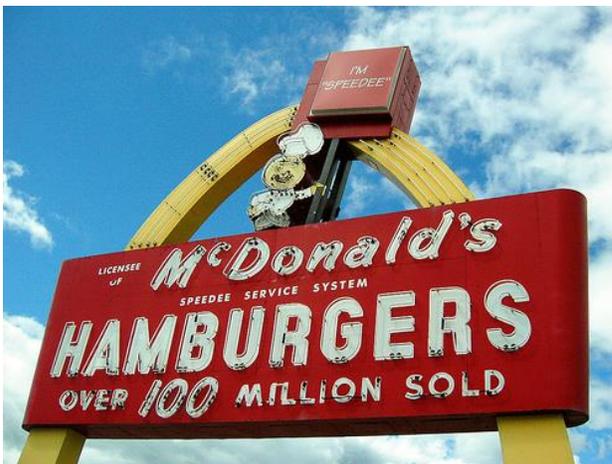
A Hamburger was .28 cents, a Filet-o-fish was .48 cents and a soda was .15 cents, and way at the bottom was a Tripple Ripple Ice Cream Cone for .20 cents!

Why ~ you could feed an entire army for under \$20 bucks (at least back in the 1970's)

Today, the McDonald's franchise is a global industry. They have close to 34,000 restaurants all over there world, 14K are here in the US, 1,100 here in California and annually they do \$21 billion in sales.

Needless to say, McDonalds is a very profitable business, but what I like about McDonalds is something interesting on their sign.

Take a look at these next few pictures that are from oldest to newest and tell me what you notice?





and here's the last one:



What did you notice about the signs? Sure, they look newer and newer, but beneath the name McDonalds, instead of saying how much money they made and instead of talking about how delicious their food is, McDonalds wants you to know **how many people they served.**

The first sign said: they sold over 1 million.

The second sign said: they sold over 100 million,

but then they changed the words to say 19 billion SERVED, then 85 billion SERVED then 247 billion SERVED, then in the last picture they stopped counting and simply put: "Billions and Billions served."

Now, to be completely accurate, I think the sign means they served billions and billions of HAMBURGERS, but I'd like to think they mean they served billions and billion of PEOPLE.

Maybe this should be the slogan of the church! Wouldn't that be refreshing?

Billions and billions of people served in Christ's Name!

Billions and billions of people served with Christ's love!!

(with a side of fellowship & french fries)

Let's go back to our parable.

After the Samaritan provided “road-side” assistance, the passage says that *“he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.”*

Now, normally you would think that the best thing to do would be to take the injured man to a hospital, but back in the 1st century, hospitals didn’t yet exist and no one had health care insurance. So the Samaritan did the next best thing - he took the man to the nearest inn and he himself took care of the man.

And from this one little verse from Luke 10, and from this one little parable that Jesus told more than 2000 yrs ago, the actions of that Samaritan has inspired the creation of Good Samaritan Hospitals with locations all over the United States and even in other countries!

Today, Good Samaritan Hospitals handles almost 75K patients, performs close to 6K surgeries and delivers 2500 babies every single year. The Good Samaritan hospitals are also ranked in the top 25 hospitals in more than 8 different specialties. They have 650 physicians on staff and employ more than 1,600 workers!

I’ll bet that Jesus didn’t know when He told this little parable, that it was going to inspire a whole entire industry! Jesus was just telling a story, and as a result, look what happened. (Not bad for telling a parable!)

So the Samaritan took the injured man to an inn and there he continued to care for him. *“What did the Samaritan actually do?”* Well, Jesus didn’t give us any details and so we’re left to our imagination, but you can imagine wounds needed to be cleaned, dirt needed to be washed off and the man probably needed a bath.

After that, I can imagine the man needed to eat and then after that, the man needed to sleep and rest and recover.

The Samaritan took care of the injured man and probably did all of those things for him, but if you’ve ever been near someone who needed get well, there are some things that you can do for them, but for the most part, after you’ve done all that there’s a lot of waiting around.

A lot of waiting. A lot of watching. A lot of sitting around and just being there in case they need something.

Part of my roll as a pastor is to provide pastoral care to the congregation, and when someone at our church is admitted to a hospital, I try to go and visit them.

Most of the time when I visit a church member who is in the hospital, when the person sees me - they're happy to see me and we'll spend some time talking about what happened, and then I'll read a bible verse and say a prayer.

I try not to stay too long or get in the way of the hospital staff because that's why the person is there, not because they want to see me but because they need medical attention.

Well, not far from St. Mark's, there is a hospital called Torrance Memorial Medical Center, and every year they have a breakfast gathering for the pastors in the area which I try to attend.

What I enjoy about the gathering is the chance to network with other pastors in the area and at every gathering, the chaplain of the hospital gives an encouraging presentation.

At these breakfasts, they also invite one doctor that works for the hospital to come and address the pastors, and one year they invited a doctor that works in the ICU (Intensive Care Unit) As you can imagine that doctor was very busy, and so we all appreciate that he would spend a few minutes with us, and when he spoke, he talked about his work and the kind of things that go on in the ICU.

Knowing that he was talking to a room full of pastors, he then shared about some of the miracles that he saw happen in the ICU, how sometimes he would see a patient, lying there in bed, unconscious, not moving and barely any vital signs, but then the very next day that very same person was awake and sitting up in bed and ready to be discharged.

Then he said, he doesn't know how to explain some of those miracles because medicine can only do so much, but what he often notices is the kind of impact that the spiritual community provides in the healing/recovery of patients.

Sometimes he'll be walking by an ICU room and he'll see a member of the clergy, or a church member, or a loved one sitting there right beside the patient, they might be holding hands, they might be making conversation, even though the patient might be sleeping.

Sometimes he'll hear prayers, other time he'll hear singing and then to the room full of clergy - he said: *"Often times, that's what makes the difference between someone going home the next day, or never going home."*

In Pastoral circles we call that – "The Ministry of Presence."

Sometimes just by showing up, sometimes just by holding a hand, sometimes just by saying a prayer or reading a verse or singing a hymn, make a huge difference in the process of healing.

The Samaritan in our story probably did a lot of sitting around while the injured man was in bed. Maybe he made conversation. Maybe he tried to get the man to talk, and in between meals and in between changing bandages, the Samaritan ministered to the man just by being there.

As you all know, there's not a lot we're allowed to do during this pandemic. We're supposed to avoid large gatherings, we're supposed to stay 6-feet apart and unfortunately, we're not allowed to gather for indoor worship in the sanctuary, and that makes it really hard for a church, but even with these restrictions there are many creative ways to let people know you are there for them.

A Ministry of presence doesn't mean you have to "physically" be right next to them, but there are many other ways to let people know you care.

And that would be my challenge as well as my charge to all of you this week. Be especially mindful of the neighbors who are around you who may not have family near by. Try and remember who sat near you when you were here at church, sitting in the pews. They don't have to be injured - like the man in our parable, perhaps they're lonely maybe they're scared, and you - just by being there and letting them hear your voice will help them get thru the week.

St Mark's go and continue to be stewards!