

**LUKE**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Luke chapter 10 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Remember from our last study, in Luke 9:51, Luke tells us, **“Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.”**

So, Jesus is moving from the area of Galilee and heading southward towards Jerusalem to finish the work the Father sent Him to do. To pay in full the penalty for our sins so we could once again fellowship with God the Father.

Thus, He has set His face to go there and complete the task that is before Him. So as He is moving down from the Galilee area, He goes through Samaria and will spend a majority of His time in the area of Perea, mostly Gentile territory, but as we will see, when Jesus sends out His disciples I believe they go both to Jewish and Gentile cities with the Good News, the Kingdom of God has come!

With that said, let’s begin reading in Luke chapter 10 starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through the Word of God.

**LUKE 10****VERSES 1-3**

Chapter 10 opens up with the words, **“After these things . . .”** We are not told how long after the events of chapter 9 but sometime after those things the Lord sent out seventy others to the cities that He would go to.

They, in a sense, were like ambassadors and they were preparing the people for Jesus. Also, we need to keep in mind that Jesus traveled with more than just 12 people. He had a large group of disciples following Him and here He sends out 35 teams of 2 people, 70 in all, to go into the towns and villages and prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, as I have said.

One writer put it like this in regards to why the number seventy. He wrote, “I find the number seventy interesting, for, based on Genesis 10, the Jews held that all of the nations of the world were seventy in number. Thus, in appointing seventy disciples, it was as if Jesus was saying, “Go into all the world - into every nation, region, country, and culture - and preach the Gospel.” (Jon Courson)

Now as we look at verse 2 we see Jesus speak of needing more laborers because the harvest is ready to be gathered up. Even back then there was the admonishing to pray for laborers to go out into the highways and byways and compel people to come into the Kingdom of God and we should be doing that today as well!

Too often people complain about the work not getting done and the reality is, they can be part of that solution! It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 5:20-6:2, “**Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: ‘In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.’ Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**” Be involved with this harvest of souls before the Lord returns!

Now imagine Jesus telling you this, ***“I want you to go out into these cities that I am going to be in shortly and understand, you are like sheep and you are going to be going into a den of wolves! Go your way!”***

***“Lord, don’t you want someone else to go?”*** I mean, when you think about it that is not a good pep talk. But Jesus wants them to be aware of the danger they will be in so that they don’t take this mission to lightly. And I believe the same is true for us, we should be aware of the battle we are in, the dangers we will face!

The other thing we need to remember is that even though they want to tear us to pieces many times, fight against us, we are to go out with tender hearts and minister to the people. Thus, be careful but don’t let their actions, their words affect your speech, the things you say or the things that you do. May you truly be an ambassador for Christ representing Him!

Now as we read on notice how Jesus sends them out.

#### VERSES 4-8

Now look at the progression here. Back in Luke 10:2 Jesus told these men to ***PRAY!*** Then, in Luke 10:3 Jesus told these men to ***GO!*** And now, in these verses that we just read, Jesus told these men ***HOW TO GO!***

He gave to them specific instructions in how they were to carry out this work that He was sending them on. I think that is important for us to learn as well. It is not my will but His will that I need to listen and obey. God has a plan for our life, may we be open to what He is showing us and then walk accordingly!

Now keep in mind that this was not a long journey and thus they were not to take with them things that would get in the way of their mission. They were to stay focused on the task before them.

Even the long greetings were to be avoided for it would take time away from the work. You see, this mission was one of trusting in the Lord to provide for them, to be open to the Lord and sensitive to His voice.

Now in Luke 10:5-6 we are told, **“But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you.”**

Keep in mind they did not have Motel 6’s that you could go to and stay. Yes they had inns but if they were even available, they were no place for a man of God to rest because these inns were often houses of prostitution!

So as they would be welcomed in these homes they would bring a blessing of peace but if they were rejected, if they were not allowed to stay there, then there was no blessing!

Also, as they traveled they were to be satisfied with what they received and not go house-to-house to find the best deal for themselves. What a great lesson for us, to be satisfied in what the Lord has given to us.

Years ago we had one gentlemen who was going to do worship for us and he was going to stay at a home from someone in the church, but not my house. My house was crazy, especially back then with me working outside the church.

And he was upset because he felt that he had more in common with the pastor, with me, than with I guess the common person, you! He has not been back.

It is as Paul warned Timothy, **“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”** I Timothy 6:6-12.

First of all money is not evil but the love of money is! It causes us to do all kinds of things to maintain it and acquire it. Paul makes this really very simple, **“Now godliness with contentment is great gain.”**

In other words, live a life that is pleasing to God, walk in His ways and be content with what God has given you and you will do well. If you don't, then watch out because evil will be manifested in your life!

These men were to go out and do the work of God, not complain who is with them or who is not with them. They were to do the work of God with joy and not lose the focus. God specifically called them and thus, they went!

But what were they to do? Again, we don't have to guess because Luke tells us.

VERSE 9

Did you notice that Jesus did not give them a manual of some 500 pages on how to do this ministry! He gave them two things that they were to do. First of all they were to heal the sick, which authenticated their ministry and pointed to the coming Messiah.

Secondly, they were to prepare the people to meet their King, the Messiah. You see, the Kingdom of God has come. How do we do that? By giving to the people the Gospel message. By letting them know that they need to repent of their sins, they need to turn away from the path they were on and turn back to God. And within that there is healing, not only spiritual, but I also believe there is physical and emotional healing that the Lord gives to us.

In regards to this idea that the Kingdom of God has come, one writer had this to say,

According to Pate, this ancient Greek word *engiken* can mean “arrived” in the sense of already present, or it can mean “drawn near” in the sense of about to appear. It may be that the remarkable display of God’s power in the work of the seventy was meant to prepare people for the ultimate revelation of God’s power and kingdom in the soon death and resurrection of Jesus.

- David Guzik

Jesus also warned them that not all will receive the message. Some cities will reject it and then what were they to do? Let’s read on and see.

VERSES 10-16

As they brought the Good News, the Kingdom of God is at hand, and cities rejected the message, they were to publicly say, **“The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.”**

It was important that those cities knew the *price* of rejecting Jesus and His Kingdom. Now here's the thing. Their rejection of Jesus doesn't change the message, it just keeps them out of the Kingdom.

Today, what we see is that we don't want to offend anyone. We don't want to let people know that they are sinners separated from God. And thus, we make them feel comfortable coming to church by avoiding the issue of sin, and in the end, they will go to Hell! We are not to make people feel comfortable in sin, we are to shine the light of Jesus, the Gospel message upon them that they may come to saving faith.

What if they reject the message we bring, what if they reject Jesus? Please keep in mind that when people reject the message we have they are not rejecting us, but the Lord. We tend to take it personally which then causes us to keep silent about our faith so we won't be rejected. Be careful - sow the seed, speak forth the Gospel message and the Kingdom of God!

And as you look at Luke 10:12-15 you see that judgment is coming and you are accountable for what you have received.

To illustrate that point He speaks of three wicked cities; Sodom, Tyre and Sidon and the judgment they received, and yet their judgment will be less severe than the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.

Why? Because in these cities Jesus spoke forth the truths of God, He did many mighty miracles and yet they still rejected Him. They were accountable for what they received and they will be judged accordingly.

These three cities, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, were located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee and all three of these cities did experience the judgment of God. Today, all that is left of these once thriving cities is its ruins.

And think about Capernaum, that is where Jesus lived for over 2 years. They heard Him teach, they saw the miracles that He did and yet, they did not receive Him! Thus, they will be judged more than those Gentile cities of Sodom, Tyre and Sidon. And let's face it, any judgment is bad, but there are degrees of punishment!

I realize that is a difficult concept, but it is Biblical! There are degrees of punishment in Hell depending on what you did in this life, how much of the truth you were exposed to. I look at America and we have been so blessed for so many years and yet, we will be held to a higher degree of punishment because we had the truth and we ignored the truth. Judgment is coming and the only way out is Jesus!

Now before you think that I am speaking of a works salvation, that is not at all what I am doing. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and not by works! Paul said in Romans 3:19-20, **“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”**

Did you see that? By being good, by doing good things, ***NO FLESH WILL BE JUSTIFIED IN HIS SIGHT!*** I think that is pretty clear.



Not only that but Paul makes this important point in Galatians 2:21, “**I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.**”

Again, that is an important point. If we can be saved by keeping the law, by doing good, then there was no point in God becoming flesh and dwelling amongst us to pay in full the penalty for our sins. We can obtain righteousness by doing good! But we know that is not the case because the Bible tells us regarding our righteousness before God, “**But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.**” Isaiah 64:6.

Thus, people go to Hell because they have rejected Jesus and being in Hell is not a good thing even though there are different degrees of punishment as I have said. We see this spoken of in Revelation chapter 20, the Great White Throne Judgment!

John tells us, “**Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**” Revelation 20:11-15.

Another point here is that we are not told of Jesus doing any miracles in Chorazin, why? John tells us, **“And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.”** John 21:25.

Why did John do this as well as the other writers? First of all, it would take volumes to write all that Jesus had done. And secondly, John tells us **“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”** John 20:30-31. The focus was to bring people to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ!

And then, in Luke 10:16 Jesus says something that is very interesting. He says, **“He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.”**

What does that mean? It speaks of how much Jesus identifies Himself with us. Thus, as we go out and share the Good News and people reject it, like I said before, they are not rejecting us, but Jesus! And that my friends is far worse!

So that is the mission that the Lord sent them on. How did they do? Let's read on and see.

#### VERSES 17-20

We see that these seventy return and they are filled with great joy as they saw the Lord working through them, even delivering those who were demon possessed!

Make no mistake about it, there truly is joy in serving the Lord. And let me also say this. If you are serving the Lord and you are complaining about this and complaining about that, if you don't have that joy, then you need to stop and get refocused.

These seventy stepped out in faith and as they did God blessed them even more than they expected and they are excited, pumped up, sharing with Jesus all that God did through them. It is as Paul said, **“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”** Ephesians 3:20.

In response to what these men said, we see Jesus say something very interesting. He said, **“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”** Luke 10:18. What is that all about?

It is great to be excited in what the Lord is doing but don't lose focus and don't take the credit. What brought Satan down? It was pride, he wanted to exalt himself above God and I think Jesus is warning His men, be careful not to go down that same path as Satan did!

Now in regards to this fall of Satan, the Bible speaks of four falls of Satan. I want to look at these and then I will tell you which one I think Jesus is referring to.

The first fall of Satan is found in Isaiah 14:12-15 where he fell from *glory to profane*. We are told, **“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.”** Again, he fell from *glory to profane!*

The second fall of Satan is related to *Satan having access to heaven*. We are told in Job 1:6-7, **“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ So Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.’”** So at this point Satan still has access to heaven. In fact, the Bible tells us that Satan is the accuser of the brethren. (Revelation 12:10)

But there is coming a day when Satan will fall from heaven and he will be restricted to the earth. We see this in Revelation 12:7-9 where we are told, **“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”** So this second fall of Satan is related to him *having access to heaven!*

The third fall of Satan is that one day *Satan is going to be bound in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years*. We see this in Revelation 20:1-3 where we are told, **“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.”** So this third fall of Satan is that one day *Satan is going to be bound in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years!*

And finally, the fourth fall of Satan and ultimately his final fall is that he is going to be *cast into the Lake of Fire*. We see that spoken of in Revelation 20:10 where John tells us, “**The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**” And thus, the fourth and final fall of Satan is that he is going to be *cast into the Lake of Fire*.

So which one is Jesus speaking of? Many say the first one, from glory to profane, and I agree with that to a point. Let me just throw this out to you. Jesus knows the beginning from the end and thus, He could have seen all four of Satan’s falls in an instant. Whatever way you want to take it, remember that he is a conquered enemy and thus, we can have victory in Jesus, that victory is assured!

But again, I think the first fall is the most important, from *glory to profane* because in that fall the others are seen!

Now what can we take away from all of this? Lucifer, his name before his fall, was the anointed cherub, the worship leader in heaven, the top guy, and yet pride lead to his fall. The warning is clear, don’t let pride cause you to fall, for it can happen to any of us. It is as Solomon said in Proverbs 16:18-19, “**Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.**”

And I think that was the warning to these men and Jesus does expound on what we truly should be rejoicing in and we will deal with that in a minute. But for these men, all the miracles that they did, the warning is clear. Don’t focus on what you have done but focus on the One who has enabled you to do these things! You see, it is the Lord who gets the glory, the honor, the praise and once we take that away from Him, we are in trouble just as Lucifer was! He fell and so will we!

And then in Luke 10:19 Jesus speaks of the authority that He gave to them but then, in Luke 10:20 He tells them, “**Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.**”

Notice the warning here, it is the same as we saw with Satan and his fall. Don’t become prideful in what you have done for the Lord but rejoice in what He has done for you!

Some people come to the wrong conclusion that if they were not serving the Lord nothing would get done. They have missed the point. They can only serve the Lord because He has enabled them to! Thus, don’t rejoice in your power or your ability but rejoice in what God has done, placed your name in the *Book of Life!*

And when you think about it, that is the most important thing in our life and what have we done to obtain eternal life? Nothing because the work has been done for us. All we did was receive that gift of life that is found in Jesus.

Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, “**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.**” Grace is unmerited favor. We did not deserve this gift of life but God has freely given it to us. It is not based upon works!

And in Romans 6:23 we are told, “**For the wages of sin is death, but the [free] gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” If you want to work your way into heaven the only wages you will receive is death – eternal separation from the Lord. But if you receive the free gift of God which is only found in Jesus then you will obtain eternal life! I think that is very clear.

No boasting or bragging in heaven just rejoicing that God saved a wretch like me and you!

VERSES 21-22

As far as I can tell, this is the only time we see Jesus rejoice. I am sure He did that often but the Holy Spirit wants us to see that Jesus, “**rejoiced**” or was thrilled with joy.

What was He rejoicing in? He rejoiced in the Father’s plan to use the simple to show the wisdom of God, the men who had just returned from their mission is an example of that. He rejoiced in the special relationship He had with the Father. And He rejoiced in the fact that He could reveal these things, these truths to others that they might receive it into their lives.

What an example for us, to rejoice in the work that God is doing in people’s lives, as well as our own. But the key here is not to lift people up, not even ourselves, but to praise God for all that He is doing!

Also, that God uses the weak and the foolish things of this world to confound the wise and He delights in doing that. We are told in I Corinthians 1:26-29 of this very thing. Paul wrote, **“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.”**

VERSES 23-24

Think about this for a minute. All the great men of the Old Testament; the prophets, the Kings would have longed to see Jesus' ministry and to minister for Him. Think about men like David, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elisha and Elijah as well as others. They looked ahead to the coming Messiah but now these men have seen the Messiah, they have heard the words of the Messiah!

Peter picks up on this thought in I Peter 1:10-13, as he says, **“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven - things which angels desire to look into. Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”**

The Old Testament prophets, even the angels desire to look into the grace of God that has been bestowed upon us. And for these men of Jesus' day, they walked with Him and as Jesus said, **“blessed are the eyes which see the things you see.”**



But make no mistake about it, we are so blessed in the days we are living in. Paul put it like this in Colossians 1:27, “**To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**” What privileges we have in Christ and so often we see them as nothing! Rejoice in what God has revealed to you and share that with others, Christ in us, the hope of glory! And don’t forget how blessed you are in that you can see the things that you see, the things of God!

### VERSES 25-29

Here we see this expert of the Jewish Mosaic law and rabbinical law who stood up to test Jesus, to put Him on trial. Now some say that he was sincere in wanting to know what to do to obtain or inherit eternal life, he might have been but I don’t believe he was.

We are going to see that he is going to try to justify himself before Jesus, which tells me he already believed he had eternal life outside of Jesus, outside the forgiveness of his sins, and was just trying to catch Jesus in His answer. But, as we have seen in our studies, you don’t catch Jesus, He catches you! And please understand it is not to put us down but for us to see our folly and turn to Him.

Now some see this man as being sincere and he could be, as I have said, but as you again listen to what he says to Jesus it seems like he is trying to justify himself. And as we finish this section up I will give you three points to show you where this man was at.

Also, I don’t believe that this is the same story as we find in Matthew 22:34-40 where a lawyer asked Him which is the greatest commandment in the law. Here, this lawyer is asking what he can do to have eternal life.

So this man asks Jesus, “**Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?**” And Jesus tells him, “**What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?**”

You see, Jesus wants this man to think about his question, and He asks this scholar of the law what the Scriptures say of this issue. He knew the Scriptures very well, and thus, he tells Jesus, “**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.’**”

And Jesus commends him for answering the question correctly. We are to love God with our entire being, the first table of the law. And we are to love our neighbor as ourselves, the second table of the law. His response was good because Jesus commends him on it and then tells him if he can do this he will have eternal life.

Now let me make this clear because it sounds like a salvation by works, but it is not. You see, no man can keep it, that is the problem. Paul, in Galatians tells us “**knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. . . . I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.**” Galatians 2:16, 21.

Also, in Galatians 3:21-26 Paul tells us, **“Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”**

You see, all the law could do is bring us so far, it could only show us that we are sinners separated from God. Thus, salvation comes by grace through faith in Jesus! It is as Paul said in Romans 8:3-4, **“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”** You see, the law is good, we are not and thus we need a Savior, we need Jesus!

Now let’s look at these three mistakes that this man made because people are still making them today.

First of all he said that he had fulfilled the first commandment by *loving God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his strength, and with all his mind!* We don’t do that. Think about how easily distracted we are even when we are worshiping God. All of a sudden you hear a noise, you remember that you have to pay a bill or whatever. And not only that, but even in our daily living we don’t give all our being to Him because these bodies of flesh are distracting us! So he missed that first point, loving God with his entire being!

His second mistake was thinking that he could love his neighbor apart from loving God supremely. Yes, he did say he was loving God but he wasn't. And he struggled with this neighbor, which will be our third point. But if we do say we love God and hate our neighbor then we really don't love God. John makes this point in I John 4:20-21 as he tells us, **"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."**

And that brings us to the third point or mistake that he made. You see, he asked Jesus, **"And who is my neighbor?"** The Jews in Jesus' day did believe that you had to love your neighbor; but it was also taught among them that it was a duty before God to *hate your enemy*. It all depends on who your neighbor is and who your enemy is.

You see, it is not just our friends or those that are easy to love that are our neighbors, but, as Jesus said in Matthew 5:43-48, **"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."**

Now keep in mind that this man, this lawyer or expert in the law, was looking for eternal life and that eternal life was obtained, at least in his mind, by doing good and yet he fell far short of doing good. And that is the point. As we have seen, even our righteousness is like filthy rags before a holy God. We don't get in by the Law or good works but by faith in Jesus!

As we read on see how Jesus answers that question, "**And who is my neighbor?**"

### VERSES 30-35

To answer this lawyer's question about who is my neighbor, Jesus answers with this Parable of the Good Samaritan. And, again, a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning and that is probably the heading you have in your Bibles of this verse. But I don't think this was a parable, I think it is a true story, which will even be harder for this lawyer to swallow!

Let me set the stage for what took place here. First of all you need to understand that the road from Jerusalem to Jericho descends some 3,000 feet in about 17 miles. So physically it was not an easy journey, even downhill.

Secondly, this road was infamous for the crime that took place on it. Gangs of robbers would hang out on this road and descend upon the helpless. In order to try and avoid this from happening, they often would travel in large groups for protection.

But this man was all alone and was beaten up and robbed, left for dead on the road, not thrown in some ditch, but out in the open so everyone passing by could see him.

And now the story gets even more interesting. We see a Priest and a Levite pass by this man and they each avoid him, they do not care for him. Clarke makes this point regarding this group of religious people, “*Priest and Levite* are mentioned here, partly because they were the most frequent travelers on this road, and partly to show that these were the persons who, from the nature of their office, were most obliged to perform works of mercy; and from whom a person in distress had a right to expect immediate succor [aid] and comfort; and their inhuman conduct here was a flat breach of the law.”

So we see both of these religious men see their brother laying there on the road and each passed him by on the other side of the road, they did not even try to help this man. And you may be thinking why they avoided him, why they didn’t help this man. I am sure they had plenty of excuses just like we do. For example,

I have to get home to my family  
 I’m late for work  
 It is too dangerous to stop  
 What can I do to help, he’s probably dead anyway  
 The job is too big for just me to help  
 It’s his own fault, let him find his own help

And the list of excuses can go on-and-on for we have used them ourselves in situations where someone is in need and we just passed by. It is as Spurgeon said, “I never knew a man refuse to help the poor who failed to give at least one admirable excuse.” May we not spend all that time making excuses for why we are not doing something, let’s just do it!

So these two religious men refuse to help and then Jesus brings in another man, a Samaritan, who does come to this man’s aid. That had to be a shocker for this lawyer. You see, the religious people refused to help this man in need, showing the corruption of these religious leaders.

But Jesus takes it a step further and speaks of a Samaritan helping this man in need. A Samaritan was a half-breed according to the Jews, half Gentile and half Jewish, and they were hated by the Jews. And yet, here is this Samaritan seeing a Jew in need and stops to help him, care for his wounds, provide shelter and food for him. And please understand, I don't believe this is a parable, but a true story and I'm sure it just pained these Jewish people to hear it retold again.

Keep in mind that some rabbis taught that a Jew was forbidden to help a Gentile woman who was in distress giving birth; because if they succeeded, all they did was to help one more Gentile come into the world. They often thought that Samaritans were *worse* than other Gentiles were.

Now, according to this lawyer's thinking, the Priest and the Levite were the neighbor to this man who was mugged, and yet that is not how they acted. The Samaritan was the true neighbor for he lived what he believed. Again, shocking and now for the moment of truth, let's read on and see what Jesus asks this lawyer about who is our neighbor!

#### VERSES 36-37

So after this story Jesus asks this lawyer the question of which of these three men was really a neighbor to this man in need. If he answers honestly, he will have to say the Samaritan, and he does and he doesn't. What do I mean by that?

Listen again to what he says to Jesus, "**He who showed mercy on him.**" You see, he hated the Samaritans so much that He couldn't even call him a Samaritan but just identified him as the one who showed more mercy, more than the Priest and Levite who should have shown mercy to this man!

Remember that this man thought he loved God fully and, according to his definition of a neighbor, he thought he was doing good, but found out he was wrong in both cases!

How does this relate to us? Simply, those in need, those in distress we are to care for. Don't avoid them but minister to them in the love of Jesus.

In fact, your neighbor may be one who others consider an enemy to you. It is as one commentator wrote, "The world would be a changed place if every Christian attended to the sorrows that are plain before him." (Maclaren)

I do believe that this is important for us to understand. You see, how many excuses have you come up with for not ministering to others? How you respond shows your commitment to Christ.

Maybe you heard this story of the young man who was courting a girl and wrote her these words, "I would climb the highest mountain for you, swim the deepest river for you, cross the widest sea for you, and cross the burning desert for you!" Sounds great and then he concluded, P.S.: "If it does not rain next Wednesday, I will come to see you."

Sad to say, that is how many Christians respond to those in need. As long as it fits their schedule or whatever, they will help out. It is as Spurgeon said, "Let it never be forgotten that what the law demands of us the gospel really produces in us." Let the Lord not only work in us but through us touching the lives of others, coming to help those in need!

#### VERSES 38-40

John tells us this was the area of Bethany, where Mary, Martha and Lazarus, friends of Jesus lived. That means that they are now less than 2 miles from Jerusalem!



Now as some read this story they get the idea that Mary did nothing more than sit around and listen to Jesus teach. Not at all. Mary worked, she helped out but she also took the time to sit at the feet of Jesus. That is a great balance to have.

Now, on the other end of the spectrum was Martha. Martha worked, and there is nothing wrong in what she was doing. But she took her eyes off of Jesus, the one whom she was serving and in doing so began to look around at what Mary was doing at that time and she became angry that Mary was just sitting around listening to Jesus! Notice the priority, being with Jesus, being in His Word, listening to Him, that was Mary!

Make no mistake about it, there are many Christians who are serving the Lord and they become crabby and irritable in their service to the Lord, just like Martha. And how easy it is to criticize those we feel are not doing what we think they should be doing.

Keep in mind, as we will see, Jesus does not rebuke Mary but He will rebuke Martha for her attitude.

We need to be careful that we don't act like Martha. If God has called us to do something, do it with joy and not complaining at what others are not doing. Have you been there, done that? What can we do to correct that? Let's read on and see what Jesus has to say.

#### VERSES 41-42

As I read this I hear the loving voice of Jesus speaking to Martha, trying to get her to focus on the one thing that is needed – ***SITTING AT THE FEET OF JESUS!*** Her service was not wrong, but she left out that “**one thing.**” Let me share a few verses with you that deal with this “**one thing.**”

In Psalm 27:4 David said, **“One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple.”**

Also, in Luke 18:22 we are told, **“... ‘You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’”**

And in Philippians 3:13-14 Paul tells us, **“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”**

I like how Spurgeon sums this up. He wrote, “The one thing needful evidently is that which Mary chose - that good part which should not be taken away from her. Very clearly this was to sit at Jesus’ feet, and hear his word.” May we not only understand that but apply that to our lives. May we be men and women who take the time to sit at the feet of Jesus to hear from Him, may we be men and women of the Word!

Why is that important? Why is it important to choose the good part? Because it will not be taken away from you but God’s Word will help you to grow and mature in the faith as you apply the truths of God found in the Word of God opened up to you by the Spirit of God to your life!

Now let me say this as well. If you are in ministry, and we all are, and you are angry, frustrated, you are bitter, you are putting others down, then get out, ***STOP SERVING!*** You need to take the time to sit at the feet of Jesus because that ***ONE THING*** is missing in your life.

How do I know that? Because of your words and your actions. It is like Martha's. And if you continue on in that condition you will not help people but you will hurt them. Thus, take that time and sit at the feet of Jesus and be refreshed!

You see, I don't believe that you can serve the Lord unless you take the time to sit at His feet and worship Him, receive from Him! That is so important and again, a good indication of where you are at is how you are serving – complaining or rejoicing!

As I close this evening, let me leave you with these words from Charles R. Erdman. He wrote, "While the Master does appreciate all that we undertake for Him, He knows that our first need is to sit at His feet and learn His will; then in our tasks we shall be calm and peaceful and kindly, and at last our service may attain the perfectness of that of Mary when in a later scene, she poured upon the feet of Jesus the ointment, the perfume of which still fills the world."

May we not stop working, but may we also do what is needed, that ***ONE THING***, spend time at the Lord's feet, learning from Him, it truly is needful!