



Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Luke 10.25-37 | April 8, 2018

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we begin a new series, *Next Door as it is in Heaven*. We will be looking at passages of scripture that speak to the idea of “neighboring,” and challenge us to think about what it means to be a neighbor, both globally and right next door. Our passage today is a familiar one, but one that would have shocked its original hearers.

II. Connecting with One Another

Think about where you live...what makes a good neighbor? Why? Do you consider yourself a good neighbor? Why or why not?

III. Study the Text

a. Read Luke 10.25-29. What stands out to you? What questions do you have? (Note: you can find parallels to this passage in Matthew 22.34-40 and Mark 12.28-34, but Luke’s is the only one to include the parable that follows.)

b. The expert in the law asks what he must do to inherit eternal life. Inheritance promised to those who belonged to God’s covenant people was this: that they would be a great nation, blessed above all other nations, and rich in land. (See Genesis 12.1-3.) But that inheritance had been continuously pushed to the future. By the time of Jesus it was understood as “eternal life” or life in God’s kingdom.

The expert, prompted by Jesus, gives the correct answer to his own question, quoting from Deuteronomy 6.5 and Leviticus 19.18 (love God, love one’s neighbor, love oneself). What does this answer say to us about “inheriting eternal life”?

In what ways might the way we live now prepare us, or set the trajectory for life in God’s kingdom?

c. Verse 25 makes it clear that the “expert” asks questions in order to test or challenge Jesus. How does Jesus turn the tables on him? How does the man respond to this? (vs. 29) (Note: He is trying to define the limits of required neighborliness.)

d. Jesus responds to the expert’s question in vs. 29 by telling a story. Read Luke 10.30-37. Again, what stands out to you? What questions do you have?

e. Jesus doesn’t define the main character in the story, other than to tell us he was beaten and robbed. No race, religion, region, trade, or status. What did this allow his original hearers to do? What about us?

- f. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was notoriously dangerous, descending 3,300 feet in 17 miles, and offering ideal terrain for bandits to terrorize travelers. This is why many journeyed in groups. A single traveler would have been particularly vulnerable.

Who are the first two people to come across this unfortunate man? What is their status? How might they be expected to respond? Why? Is there any excuse that would justify their action?

(Note: Jesus makes sure to include that the priest and the Levite both “saw” the beaten man, making them accountable.)

- g. By storytelling conventions the audience can expect that in a series of three the third character will break the pattern created by the first two. For the people in Jesus’ audience the expected sequence would be: a priest, a Levite, finally an Israelite, with the Israelite as the hero. What does Jesus do in this story to shatter those expectations?
- h. By depicting a Samaritan as the hero of the story, Jesus demolishes all boundaries. Social position, race, religion, or region count for nothing. Anyone who sees and stops to help is a neighbor.

The expert in the law had asked, “And who is my neighbor?” In vs. 36 Jesus forces him to answer his own question. How does he answer it?

- i. Jesus’ final words are “Go and do likewise” (vs. 37), indicating that the duty of neighborliness is an expression of love of God and love of others. How do you imagine this “expert in the law” received this charge?

IV. Reflect

- a. What does it mean to you to love God with “all your heart...soul...strength and... mind? Which of these four comes easily? Which is more difficult?
- b. Why is loving ourselves a key to loving our neighbors?
- c. What does it mean to “see” others? What kind of people in need (emotional, spiritual, or physical) are easier for you to “see”? Which are difficult? How can you improve your vision and response?
- d. How do you feel called to “go and do likewise”?

V. Pray

- a. Pray for the neighborhood in which God has placed you, and for the specific needs of your neighbors of which you are aware.
- b. Pray for eyes to “see” and a heart to “go and do likewise.”
- c. Ask God to help you love with your whole heart, soul, strength and mind.