

Love's True Grit - Part three, love is intentional

February 19, 2023

Glenn Garvin

BIG IDEA - specific love can be divinely directed

scripture focus - **Luke 10:30-37 NLT** "Jesus **replied with a story:**

"A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. "By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. "Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.' "Now **which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man** who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked. The man replied, "**The one** who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same.""

Have you ever had a question you really wanted to ask God, but didn't exactly know how to go about it?

Have you had a question about life or about God, but didn't want to be judged or taken for a fool for asking it?

One of the things that the Church has not done well is let folks ask questions. It seems we get defensive for God when someone asks a question.

The New Testament is full of people asking questions. Even Jesus asks questions!

In his book, *Jesus is the question*, Martin B. Copenhaver, writes,

“Jesus asks many more questions than he is asked. **In the four Gospels Jesus asks 307 different questions. By contrast, he is only asked 183 questions.** More striking still, Jesus directly answers very few of the 183 questions he is asked. Two published studies state that **Jesus directly answers only 3 of the 183 questions he is asked.**”

We have questions, Jesus tells a story

We want facts, Jesus tells a story

We want a clear and direct answer, Jesus tells a story

A very intelligent lawyer asked questions and Jesus asked him to answer both of them on his own.

It's NOT that God doesn't want us to ask questions. He does, however, want us to think a little bit deeper about why we are really asking them!

We ended week one with the Lawyer's Question, “And who is my neighbor?”

Let's see how Jesus doesn't directly answer it.

Luke 10:30-37 NLT “Jesus **replied with a story**: “A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. “By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, ‘Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.’ “Now **which**

of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked. The man replied, "**The one** who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same.""

Jesus tells this very dramatic, yet familiar story. A true story? Possibly.

Question number one: **How do I get the "good life?"** Jesus did not answer his question, he asked him two questions to allow him to discover God's truth on his own.

- 1) "What does the law of Moses say?"
- 2) "How do you read it?"

The Lawyer answered! And did so spectacularly. Jesus even applauded his answer and told him, "**There you go, you've got it, now do it.**" **All is good right? How do I get the good life? Love God, love neighbor. Check.**

Question number two: Who is my neighbor? Whoa - now that's a loaded MOTIVE question,

Jesus could have just dished out a three-point teaching, highlighting all the different aspects of what the word "neighbor" means.

- Giving a Talmud, dictionary meaning,
- A culturally nuanced definition,
- And a list of possible neighbors for the lawyer to get to it. kind of a top ten recommendation list from Rabbi Jesus. **I think the crowd would have been scribbling down notes on what Jesus thought their neighbor list should be.**

But instead, he tells a story. A story that **forever framed the truth about how God sees the word "neighbor" and what it means.**

Also, in my notes, I have the facts that Jesus didn't give, **because we don't really need facts and stats to figure out who is our own neighbor.**

We don't really make decisions based on knowledge, we make most, if not all of our decisions based on our emotional needs.

Jesus' story wasn't about facts, it was about real and tragic circumstances that happened on a dangerous road from Jerusalem down to Jericho with four real people, one of them who would have died if someone had not stopped to help him.

When I tell you that parts of the city of Los Angeles are dangerous, especially at night, you would likely agree but not feel the fear.

When I tell you that Robin and I were driving through the Los Angeles late at night and our daughter had a high fever, so she was crying. And EVERYONE in our minivan had to go the bathroom so badly it was was painful. Then I tell you I had to find somewhere to buy Children's Tylenol AND let my family go pee-pee. NOW you identify with my fear!

If I wanted you to have situational awareness in the city, I would tell you a story, not just tell you statistics!

Jesus tells one of the most famous stories ever recorded!

In my notes you'll find links to two very famous paintings on the Good Samaritan, one by Rembrandt's and the other by Van Gogh. You'll also find a link to amazing "hero" stories.

The Four Characters

First: A Jewish man travels the 17-mile trail from Jerusalem to Jericho, which was so notorious for robberies and murders that a portion of it was called "the red or bloody way," and was protected by a fort and a Roman garrison. Video. It's a hard trek for even experienced hikers. It's beautiful, but there are sheer cliffs and narrow parts that are dangerous even without the thugs waiting to ambush them.

A gang of thieves jump the guy, strip him, beat him, and steal his belongings - leaving him half dead.

Jesus says something interesting before he introduces the next three characters, he says, "by chance..." the greek word meaning, a coincidence or accident. How strange that He would use this word.

Was this coincidence or providence? To us it would seem as if it were by chance, but to God it was not only purposeful, it all happened before our world was even created. The approaching priest is perpetually, always coming along down that road!

Three characters come along: two of them are very religious. One is an outcast, hated by everyone outside his own people group.

1. A Priest
2. A Levite - assistant to the priests
3. A Samaritan - see notes

The two religious guys we're probably not considered to be doing anything wrong by going around the injured man. In fact, it would be expected that the religious guys had good reasons for not stopping to help.

The lawyer, knowing the strict requirements of the law, would have understood that the religious guys COULD NOT have helped if the man was possibly dead. For them to find out IF he was dead, they would have to physically touch him and that would defile them, making them dirty before God and requiring them to isolate themselves for seven days and go through extensive ritual cleansing.

In today's post pandemic era, we would all be thinking, "oh yeah, you should think twice before helping someone outside your "pod" because you could get covid and kill your grandparents with it!"

I'm just saying, the lawyer and possibly the crowd knew this as Jesus is telling the story. They are letting the two religious guys **off the "neighbor" hook** before Jesus even finishes his point!

There was no **GASP**, when the two men passed up the bleeding Jew!

Then, Jesus being Jesus, just had to introduce the third man, the only one who would be considered WORSE than the degenerate thugs who beat the traveller!

Jesus said, "Then a despised Samaritan came along." Okay, now the Lawyer is WOKE, now the crowd is agitated and listening to what Jesus says about the new villain in this story.

The NLT translation adds, the "despised" Samaritan, which is wrong, because it is not in the original greek. Although he certainly was despised!

Every ear leaned in as Jesus rolled out the next few sentences!

The Samaritan:

- Saw the man
- Had compassion - no!
- Went over to the man - no!
- Gave first aid to him - No, he didn't,
- And put him on his own ride (his donkey)- Stop, I don't want to hear anymore!
- Took him to the Roman Fort at that time - Ahhh, that's it, now **you've gone and made our enemy the hero of the story!**

Then Jesus put in the kicker...

The Samaritan paid for his entire medical care!

The crowd must have been reeling with emotions..."I think i'm going to be sick!"

Then, and only then did Jesus state the religious lawyer's question right back to him!

"Which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man?"

Burn. Ouch.

Today, when we ask ourselves, “who is my neighborhood?” we have to really think this through.

Our staff is reading through the book, **The Art of Neighboring**, by Dave Runyon and Jay Pathak.

They write, “**We have a metaphoric love for our metaphoric neighbors, and our communities are changed—but only metaphorically, of course. In other words, nothing changes.**” In addition to thinking of our neighbor metaphorically, as did the good Samaritan, **we need to apply Jesus’s teaching to our literal neighbors—real people with real names, phone numbers, and addresses.**

However, we can be intentional with specific neighbors. When we focus too broadly, we miss out on the specific intentionally.

The third letter, “I” in G.R.I.T. stands for INTENTIONAL.
Love that is true is INTENTIONAL.

Takeaway: Jesus tells a story and leaves it up to the lawyer (and us) to not just get the point, but intentionally BE the reflection of God and DO the work necessary.

But if everyone is a neighbor, how do I specifically identify and intentionally love EVERYONE. I am only one person and can only handle loving a few. Who do I love well?

Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit! Watch, listen for what may seem like an interruption or a coincidence, but it may be purposeful and providential!

The neighborhood GRID homework assignment. [The block map.](#)

Story: The hood in the neighborhood - Emily & Jacob’s story about their neighbor.

NOTES

Leviticus 19:18 Hebrew Neighbor

rea: **friend, companion**, fellow. Root word, raah: probably "to associate with."

Luke 10:29 Greek Neighbor

plésion: **near**, neighboring. Root word, pelas, near
So much for technicality, right? This could be anyone!

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 4139: πλησίον - Neighbor

Ah, but for the Jewish mind, a neighbor was a member of the Hebrew race and commonwealth. The Jewish culture was so selectively strong that they 100% believed that they had zero responsibility outside their own race. Thus, a neighbor was a Jewish neighbor.

Christ's idea of a neighbor was different than his upbringing, training and culture. Was it because He was the messiah? Or, did Jesus come to understand what His father, God, had been up to all along? For Christ a neighbor was any other man **irrespective of race or religion with whom we live or whom we chance to meet** (which idea is clearly brought out in the parable).

Vs 31. By Chance, **sugkuria: chance**, a coincidence, accident. what occurs *together* by God's *providential* arrangement of circumstances - all achieving *His eternal purpose* in each scene of life. [4795](#) (*sygkyría*) is used only in Lk 10:31. "**According to [divine] co-incidence** ([4795/sygkyría](#)), a certain priest was going down in that way . . . "

The Art of Neighboring, Dave Runyon and Jay Pathak

Today as we read the parable, we go straight for loving the neighbor on the side of the road. Thus, we make a metaphor of the neighbors—a metaphor that doesn't include the person who lives next door to us. If we don't take Jesus's command literally, then we turn the Great Commandment into nothing more than a metaphor. **We have a metaphoric love for our metaphoric neighbors**, and our communities are changed—but only metaphorically, of course. In other words, nothing changes. So in addition to thinking of our neighbor metaphorically, as did the good Samaritan, **we need to apply Jesus's teaching to our literal neighbors—real people with real names, phone numbers, and addresses.**

Yes, sometimes the term neighbor is used in its broadest sense. We're called to love all people, everywhere. But it's easy to use this metaphorical definition of neighbor—the world—as our only definition. And if that definition is our default, it probably means that by trying to love many, we actually love very few. **Therefore, we should start with our most obvious neighbors—the ones that live nearest to us.**

Our neighbors are both metaphorical and literal/ physical.

- When we take "love thy neighbor" scripture too metaphorically, we forget about the literal (from book).

We don't get to choose our neighbors.

- However, we can be intentional with specific neighbors.
- When we focus too broadly, we miss out on the specific intentionally.
- While we are called to "love others," and others being universal, we can also develop a more intentional relationship with people.

Scriptures

Luke 10:30-37 NLT "Jesus **replied with a story**: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. "By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. "Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.' "Now **which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man** who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked. The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same.""

Questions

Q: Would it help you or frustrate you to have someone ask a question in response to your question?

Q: What do you think about Jesus using a story to communicate truth?

- Q:** What kind of cultural differences, compared to today, do you see from Jesus' story?
- Q:** What do you think the lawyer was trying to avoid?
- Q:** Why would Jesus use a perceived "bad guy" to be the "good guy"?
- Q:** What happens when we over generalize the word "neighbor" to mean everyone?
- Q:** Do you have an "intentional" neighbor story? Please share it.

COMMENTARY REFERENCES

Word Studies in the New Testament

Luke 10:30 (WSNT): Thieves (λησταιζ). See on Matt. 26:55; and Luke 23:39-43. These were not petty stealers, but men of violence, as was shown by their treatment of the traveller. **The road from Jerusalem to Jericho passed through a wilderness (Josh. 16:1), which was so notorious for robberies and murders that a portion of it was called "the red or bloody way," and was protected by a fort and a Roman garrison.**

Luke 10:31 (WSNT): The Talmudists said that there were almost as many priests at Jericho as at Jerusalem. Jericho was known as the bedroom community of the priests.

Luke 10:36 (WSNT): Was neighbor (πλησίον γεγονέναι). **More correctly, has become neighbor.** Jesus throws himself back to the time of the story. So Rev., proved neighbor. **"The neighbor Jews became strangers. The stranger Samaritan became neighbor** to the wounded traveller" (Alford).

Luke 10:37 (WSNT): He that shewed mercy on him. **Rather with him** (μετά): dealt with him as with a brother. **The lawyer avoids the hated word Samaritan.**

The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Luke 10:25-11:13 (NBC): 10:25-11:13

The Bible Knowledge Commentary lists this story under the heading, **"The characteristics of disciples."**

The parable given in reply is most remarkable. We might have expected a parable telling how a Jew should show love to anybody, even to a Samaritan, but in fact Jesus shows how even a Samaritan may be nearer to the kingdom than a pious, but uncharitable, Jew. For, although the lawyer asked, 'Who is my neighbour (i.e. the person whom I should help)?' Jesus suggests that the real question is rather 'Do I behave as a neighbour (i.e. a person who helps others)?' Jesus does not supply information as to whom one should help; failure to keep the commandment springs

not from lack of information but from lack of love. **It was not fresh knowledge that the lawyer needed, but a new heart—in plain English, conversion.**

Levites were descendants of Levi but not of Aaron, and they assisted the priests (Aaron's descendants) in the temple.

The Samaritans were scorned by the Jews because of their mixed Jewish and Gentile ancestry. It is ironic, then, that a Samaritan helped the half-dead man, dressing his wounds, taking him to an inn, and paying his expenses. By asking Which ... was his neighbor? (Luke 10:36) **Jesus was teaching that a person should be a neighbor to anyone he meets in need.** The ultimate Neighbor was Jesus, whose compassion contrasted with the Jewish religious leaders who had no compassion on those who were perishing. Jesus wrapped up His teaching with the command that His followers were to live like that true neighbor (v. 37).

Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible

Jesus differed dramatically from his Jewish contemporaries by **eradicating the limitations on the neighbor to be loved. In contrast to those who would limit love to one's fellow countrymen, Jesus advocated extending the obligation reserved for the neighbor to the enemy as well** (Mt 5:43-48) and in so doing, destroyed the distinction between neighbor and enemy altogether.

Jesus proceeds, however, to **introduce two figures, a priest and a Levite (10:31, 32) who, in an academic discussion, could have argued quite ably on who is the neighbor God calls one to love.** The lawyer would no doubt have anticipated such experts in the Law to act rightly toward the victim. In contrast, the priest and Levite, upon seeing the man in need, respond by "passing by the other side." Unable to determine whether the victim was dead or barely alive (v 30b), and possibly not wanting to risk uncleanness, the **experts of the Law pass by, thus violating the greatest of the commandments just identified by the lawyer** (10:25-28). **Enter a Samaritan, a figure especially despised by the Jews. Viewed as heretics by the Jewish religious authorities, the Samaritans were disqualified in rabbinic circles from being considered a "neighbor" and thus worthy of love.** In fact, previous centuries had witnessed the slaughter of many Samaritans by Jewish rulers, and animosity clearly existed between the two peoples (see Jn 4:9). While the lawyer listening to the parable would have expected the priest and Levite to act justly toward the victim, he must have been surprised that a hated Samaritan would show compassion and thus fulfill the greatest commandment.

The irony of the story is that **one not considered worthy to be called "neighbor" by Jews was precisely the one who showed himself to be "neighbor" to the victim** (10:36, 37).

[Glenn: The lawyer's enemy fulfilled the Law rather than his own cultural, racial and spiritual leaders!]

Faithlife Study Bible

Luke 10:33 (FSB): Samaritans

The people of Samaria were of mixed Israelite and foreign descent, so the Jewish people did not accept them as part of the Jewish community (see note on John 4:9). The hostilities between Jews and Samaritans dated all the way back to the late sixth-century bc. The Samaritans worshiped Yahweh and used a version of the Pentateuch as their Scripture, but they worshipped on Mount Gerizim, not in Jerusalem. Thus the Samaritans were despised by Jews for both ethnic and religious reasons; there was mutual hatred by the Samaritans toward Jews.

INTERNET LINKS

The Road to Jericho -

<https://youtu.be/q6Uz9gldm68>

A 17 mile, difficult desert terrain, descending a half a mile in the Qelt desert and the plains of Jericho.

<https://youtu.be/79UEbInNRYc>

Dealing with the dead

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/281545/jewish/Initial-Care-of-the-Deceased.htm

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corpse_uncleanness

The paintings of the Good Samaritan

When Van Gogh was admitted to the sanitarium in St Remy de Provence, he had become so difficult, so sick that the townspeople of Arles, where he had been living and painting had given him the name "the red-headed madman." After a psychotic break during the visit of fellow artist Paul Gauguin, Van Gogh was all but put out of the town. With the help of a couple of people, he eventually made his way to the sanitarium in St Remy de Provence where he copied and modified Delacroix's painting of The Good Samaritan.

If viewers were to see the two paintings - Rembrandt's and Van Gogh's side by side - the first thing that would strike you is the light in Van Gogh's painting and the darkness in Rembrandt's. Though not sharing the bright colors of his paintings in Arles, Van Gogh's painting of The Good Samaritan, is well lit which means we can make out things more clearly in the painting.

Vincent Van Gogh's painting

<https://www.vincentvangogh.org/the-good-samaritan.jsp>

Verses Rembrandt van Rijn's painting

<https://www.rembrandtpaintings.com/the-good-samaritan.jsp>

Radiolab - How to Be a Hero.

<https://radiolab.org/episodes/how-be-hero>

It's the case of Wesley James Autrey, a construction worker from New York, 50-year-old man, who did jump into the track-bed in a subway station to remove a fellow young man who had fallen onto the track. The gentleman was six foot, 180 pounds. He was inert. And yet Mr. Autrey persisted despite the fact that the train was coming. There would come a point, at least in my estimation, where you would have to say, "I have to get out of here because I'm going to be killed. I'm not suicidal." But Mr. Autrey didn't think that way. He and I part in this manner. What he did was he lay atop the victim between the rails while the train passed over them. In the farthest reaches of my imagination, I can see myself jumping onto a subway track to attempt to rescue. What I can't see myself doing is lying atop the victim while the train passes over me.

Summary of Messages - Love's True Grit:

- **True Love is Genuine:** Love doesn't look for loopholes.
- **True Love is Refining:** Loving others as God loves me.
- **True Love is Intentional:** specific love can be divinely directed
-