

Introduction:

- I want to review so that the continuity of these messages is not lost over the weeks.
 - First message: The macro: The 'BIG BOOM' fireworks that fill the sky!
 - He commands us to love Him and each other - do the two and you fulfill the Book
 - Love is what we owe all people - owe no man nothing except the debt of love.
 - Faith expresses itself through love - love stirs us to action
 - The true mark of a christian is love - by this all men know you are My disciples.
 - Love is what we should always aim for.
 - Second Message: Removing What Hinders Love - Angels that gather, Matthew 13.
 - *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:15-17*
 - Third Message: Defining Love - Agape is that love that pursues another's good often sacrificial ways. Remember this definition we will see it over and over.
- Our text this morning is: Luke 10:25-37. Parable of the Good Samaritan. "Good Samaritan" is an abbreviated way of describing a person who goes out of their way to help someone else, especially as the rest of the world walks by. I believe from this parable...
 - 1. Luke is attempting to show us how much of the lawyer resides in all of us. It must be removed.
 - 2. Luke is showing us how to put love into operation.
- Another aspect of this teaching is what is on the front end and on the back end of this story.
 - On the front side we have the 70 going out and doing great works and returning rejoicing that demons are subject to them. They were 'doing the stuff' and full of zeal.
 - On the back side we have Martha who is a real servant do a great work but with a wrong heart.
 - The story of the Samaritan is in the middle, I believe, because Luke wants us to understand the importance of a loving heart in the midst of all the mighty acts of gifts displayed to the hidden acts of service unnoticed. It is that 1 Cor. 13 thing. If you work miracles but have not love what good are you. If you serve like crazy but do not love what good are you?
- Today: The tested teacher, the turned tables, and the lessons learned

I. The Tested Teacher Luke 10:25-28

- A. Luke begins with a certain lawyer (Religious scholar). He uses the lawyer to get our attention. I believe Luke uses this lawyer to show us how much of the 'lawyer' we have in us. Lawyers are skilled critical thinkers. Skilled in asking questions. To steer the jury.

1. He is out to test Jesus or examine Him. The majority of folks like that just like to argue or hope to avoid the truth.
 2. The scholar fires the first shot: *"Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?"* (Luke 10:25, NLT) We all know that a good lawyer, worth his salt, would have already thought through several of his opponents arguments and will have ready a calculated counter answer to make the defendant look bad.
 3. If he can't achieve this he will be unable to remain as he was. So many people live in that realm: The truth has pricked our hearts but we create a myriad questions designed for one purpose: to keep us from having to change.
- B. The lawyers first question to Jesus is a great one, *"Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?"* After all, it deals with the very meaning of our life.
1. Jesus responds to his question with a question: "Jesus replied, *"What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?"*" (Luke 10:26, NLT) He rattles off the answer: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.*"
 2. As the lawyer is speaking the word of God and looking into the eyes of Jesus the word suddenly comes alive!
 - a) He understands and his conscience is pierced that much deeper. Jesus just answers, *"do this and you will live."*
 - b) This really was the answer to his question. Jesus is telling the man, "don't start by thinking about love, start by practicing it."
- C. This leads the man to the second question: *"The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*" (Luke 10:29, NLT)
1. He seeks to clear his name by defining who his neighbor is.
 2. He is now faced with truth and so he poses problems and raises questions in order to get to an area not so 'prickly.'
 3. How can I love when I do not know who I am supposed to love? As long as we keep coming up with questions we do not have to act.

II. The Tables Turn

- A. Jesus turns the tables! The lawyer had the right questions but the wrong application. So Jesus goes to work on him. Remember! God is removing in us everything that hinders love.
1. This is what he is doing with the lawyer and this is what He is doing with us right now!
 2. Jesus changes the question: The story starts with *"Who is my neighbor"* (in verse 29), and ends with Jesus' question in verse 36, *"Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor?"*

- B. Jesus starts with a story. Read it. The main characters:
1. Jewish man on a journey. This man is beaten, robbed and left for dead by thieves.
 2. Two religious people. Priest and Levite. Why religious people? Because Jesus is warning all of us that there are far too many people who are caught up in the mechanics of religious activity and are not seeing people in distress; they have no heart to respond with compassion, and no effort to bring the relief of the gospel? They walk by the man.
 3. The Samaritan, whom Jews hated and despised. This man binds up the Jewish man's wounds, puts him on his donkey takes him to a hotel and pays his bills for a minimum of two days.
 4. ***Jesus tells a story that changes the question from What kind of person is my neighbor? to What kind of person am I?
 5. He changes the question from "What kind of people do I want to love?" to "How can I become the kind of person whose compassion disregards who I want to love and love the people God places in front of me?"
- C. The truth is coming quickly to the lawyer! Jesus asks: *"Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?"* Jesus asked." (Luke 10:36, NLT) Trembling the lawyer answers: *"The one who showed mercy."*
1. IF we are going to break out of the lawyer syndrome we must be able to be critical of our own understanding of who our neighbor is. If we can't then we are like the priest of our parable and we already have other obligations to other people so someone else must help this one.
 2. The priest, when he is just about ready to help has this tormenting thought: Who is my neighbor? He then thinks through all these reasons why this man could not possibly be his neighbor—and by his reasons he ducks the issue.
 3. Seeing is the first step in love. Love always seizes the eye first and then the hand. Mt. 25:44 *"Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or naked?"*
 4. The priest and Levite represent people who should have this love thing down, after all they know God and they know the Word.

III. The Lesson Learned

- A. The Samaritan identified with the needs of the stranger in front of him and had compassion on him. IE. Jesus always ministered to the one in front of Him.
- B. The Samaritan defined neighbor as anyone who is close by and in need. Greek for neighbor is one who is close by or at hand. They are therefore within your reach.
- C. The neighbor we're called to love is often not one we choose but one God chooses for us.
 1. Begins right in your own home.

Conclusion:

- Agape love means having a heart which is disposed to seek another person's good and often sacrificially. *"You shall seek the good of your neighbor, just as you naturally seek your own good; or nourish and cherish your needy neighbor just as you by nature nourish and cherish yourself."* J Piper.
- "The real point is not to define the neighbor but to be a neighbor." Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 873). W.B. Eerdmans.
- Jesus is telling the man, "don't start by thinking about love, start by practicing it."
- Take every opportunity to love and serve the person at hand, and you will prove to be the kind of person that God wants you to be.