

“All In”

07-10-16

When we think about our neighbors and the neighborhood we live in, we think about a small geographical area in the middle of the city where we're located. When you think about your neighbors, you focus on a few families on your street, perhaps two or three to the left or right of you and some across the street. You wouldn't normally think of someone two miles down the street as your neighbor.

In the parable from Luke, Jesus defines for us what a neighbor really is. “Neighbor” has no geographical boundaries. Our neighbor is anyone who's in need, or could use our help and resources. Location, religion, culture, skin color, or any other factor doesn't matter. We need to be “All In” helping everybody!

Open to Luke 10. Let's look at the conversation between Jesus and the lawyer who speaks to Him. The lawyer not only wants to know the answer according to Jesus, but he wants to see if Jesus' response is correct. Verse 25, *“And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, **What Must I do to Inherit Eternal Life?**”* Wow! If you wanted to make an impression on Jesus, make sure your question stops the moment!

Even though Scripture only tells what Jesus says and not what He's thinking, I think as Jesus looks at the lawyer He's thinking, **“Good Question, Wrong Focus!** As Jesus responds in answer to the question, what started with human action, moved to spiritual action!

Jesus wanted the lawyer's focus to move away from personal gain! Verses 26-27, *“(Jesus) said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?”* And he answered, *“You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself.”*

Look at Jesus' response in verse 28, *“And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”* Jesus didn't pull any punches or was there a need for any more questions, Jesus just told him, **Correct! Do It!**

In verse 27, did you notice just how much Jesus wants from us as we follow Him? He doesn't just want a half-hearted commitment from us, He wants everything from us. There are four times He tells us exactly what he wants, He want ALL! He wants us “All In”!

But the lawyer still isn't satisfied, so he asks a new question. Verse 29, *“But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”*

To answer that question, look at the story Jesus tells in verses 30-37, *“Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care*

of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

Notice how Jesus changes the lawyer’s question. The lawyer had asked, “*And who is my neighbor?*” By his definition, the neighbors of the story would have been the priest and the Levite, members of his group, not the alien and heretical Samaritan. However at the end of the story, Jesus changes the question by asking, “*Which of these three, do you think was a neighbor?*” that is, “*Who proved to be a neighbor?*”

When you ask, “**Who is My Neighbor**”, the answer is really whoever needs your help! The proof of the Samaritan is that He had compassion, and that’s exactly what you have to do!

The question isn’t, “*Who is my neighbor?*” The question Jesus asks is this? “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” Who am I to be a neighbor to? It isn’t something in them that determines whether or not I will be a neighbor to them, it is something in me! How am I to be a neighbor to others?

The news often has it right when they talk about a Good Samaritan. It’s a person, who does something for someone else – with whom they have no relationship, in a situation where they’re putting themselves in danger or sacrificing time or money with no advantage to themselves.

And doesn’t that sound like Jesus? Think of the people He spent time with and took care of. Tax Collectors, Lepers, Prostitutes, the social outcasts! He saw them as His neighbors who needed help and He looked at them with compassion and took care of them!

We Need to Be Jesus to Everyone! Listen to these words from Philippians 2:3-4, “*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*”

It can’t be about us, it’s got to be about those around us! Jesus came to suffer for the whole world not just for those who were like Him! **Everyone Is Your Neighbor!**

During the past week in Dallas and in other places back East what we have witnessed anger, hatred, and violence. How do we respond to our neighbors? We need to set the example of love and concern for each and every other person. Will this be a risk? Will people respond the same way? In all we do, we need to show love. Love must be our driving force!

Listen to these words from Timothy Keller, “*We instinctively tend to limit for whom we exert ourselves. We do it for people like us, and for people whom we like. Jesus will have none of that. By depicting a Samaritan helping a Jew, Jesus could not have found a more forceful way to say that anyone at all in need - regardless of race, politics, class, and religion - is your neighbor. Not everyone is your brother or sister in faith, but everyone is your neighbor, and you must love your neighbor.*”

The story of the Good Samaritan is about neighbors, and it has all the elements of a movie: violence, crime, racial discrimination, hatred, neglect, unconcern, love, and mercy. Who says the Bible isn't relevant to the modern world?

Every kindness, every act of compassion done in Jesus' name is received as if it's done for Him. So don't be taken by surprise the next time you stumble onto an opportunity to serve the King of kings!

Don't just give a part of yourself, give yourself completely! In everything you do, be "All In!"