

A Samaritan for the Backslider

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Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father and most gracious and holy Lord, how excellent it is to be in the place to worship thee this day. Lord, I pray that thou hast brought thy people here, hast prepared the ground, has laid us low before thee that, Lord, through thy Word, through the revelation of thy Spirit, through the glorious bountiful gifts that thou gives that you would lift up our eyes high upon from this earth to see thee high and lifted up this day. Lord, I ask that you would give me utterance now in this hour, that you would remove all my thoughts, Lord, and that the thoughts that would come forward, the meditations and things to meditate upon would come from thy Spirit and speak to the souls of thy people. Oh, Lord, show us what we are before thee and what we have in thee. Bless this day of worship, Lord, to the praise and glory of thy holy name and may your name be glorified this day and all days we pray. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

This morning I want to speak to those who have been made aware of their sin. I think you would all echo with me one of my favorite sayings to say to my family, to my wife, to my children. This is not heaven. Down here on earth is no heaven. Every day I am reminded of the enemy. I am reminded that the world is at enmity against the Father. The world is at enmity against God and would do any thing with its allurements, would do anything with its enticings to take the child of God, to take his mind, to take his heart, to take his soul away from God.

And then there is Satan. Satan is at war with the Son. Satan has always been at war with the Son. Satan since the very moment being thrown out of heaven has been bent in all of his devices, in all that he can do to throw Christ off of his throne. And the there is the flesh. There is the old man. There is the ... that troublesome part of us that seems to rise and rise again. And it is in these battles, all victorious by the light, all victorious by the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, for not one of them can be defeated by their arch enemy. But yet we struggle, because this isn't heaven.

We have a flesh that remains. We have sin that we are so easily plagued with. We have been talking about our advocate. We have been talking about our all sufficiency being in Christ. And that will be no different today. But when we... when that evil three some

gets the upper hand in our life because of our waywardness, because of our seeking something away from Christ, then darkness comes and we begin to backslide.

By why are these things brought into our lives? Why are these things and for what purpose are they brought? Why is it necessary that we go through this exercise daily sometimes hourly?

This morning I want you to consider a passage of Scripture that I am sure you have considered many times in your life. Especially as a young man I was taught many times from this passage. And it was supposed to teach me how to be good. But this passage really is nothing about how to be good. It is about him.

Will you turn with me in your Bibles to Luke 10? In Luke chapter 10 this morning we will come to the portion of Scripture that is labeled and called the good Samaritan. As I said, in my early days, in my Sunday school days, many years ago, this was always put forth to teach us morality. It was always to put forth to teach us how to be a good Samaritan, how to be good to our brothers and sisters and cousins and people and friends and how to be good. But if that is what you think it is all about you have missed the entire point. As the one who would come to Christ that day missed the entire point. For, see, it wasn't for him. But for the people of God it describes why we backslide. It describes why these things are brought into our life for the glory of God.

We begin today in verse 25 and we begin with the age old question. It is what man always wants to know, isn't it? It is what religious man wants to know today.

“And, behold, a certain lawyer...”¹

A scribe, one who sat and sat under the teaching of the law, sat and studied the Old Testament Scriptures, sat and studied the ordinances, sat and studied the ceremonial law, sat and studied all the jot and the tittle of the law. And he stood up and he tempted. It tells us what here where his heart was when he came to Christ. When he came to Christ, what did he come for? Was he seeking salvation? Was he seeking anything? Was he seeking anything from Christ? No. He came to catch him in a snare, to lay and to tempt him by asking him this question and saying:

“Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”²

And it would be hard today for us to cast any stone at this one, because we busy ourselves do much in this life trying to figure out what I must do. Are you still plagued with that? Do you still wake up in the morning thinking what must I do today to please God? What I must do as I go to work today? What must I do in my family life? What must I do in my studying life? It is a question that plagues natural man. What must I do? What must I do to inherit eternal life? What works must I commit? What works must I bring to the Father as we go about to try to justify ourselves?

¹ Luke 10:25.

² Ibid.

Well, Jesus met him where he wanted to be met and he met him with:

“He said unto him, What is written in the law?”³

You scribe, you one that takes your whole life to study the holiness of the law, you who sits under the law and says, “I can do that.” You who comes to me saying, “How is it that I can justify myself today in your eyes, Jesus.” And Jesus said:

“What is written in the law? how readest thou?”⁴

And the Lord knows that he read it. He read it over and over and over. But yet it seemed to have no effect. Paul tells us that the law is spiritual to the child of God. Paul tells us that the law has its proper purpose in the child of God’s life to reveal what we are, to reveal our need of a Savior.

Jesus said:

“What is written in the law? how readest thou?”⁵

And the proud one says, as he looks down at his phylactery that he has on his arm and his leg and his forehead.

“And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.”⁶

Isn’t that what you said, Lord? Isn’t that what you said all the law hangs on these two things? So to justify myself I must do these two things. I must love the Lord thy God with everything I have and my neighbor as myself.

And Jesus answered him.

“And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right.”⁷

You who is a keeper of the law, you who has tried to obtain eternal life through your own way, you are right. This do. Do it. He meets him where he stood. Notice there is no plea. Notice there is no explanation that Jesus is the way and the truth and the life. And it is a sad thing. It is a sad think when man is left to this do. I have tried that many times. I have tried to do and to live. But the law slays me every time, because if I can’t keep it in every jot and tittle and if I can’t keep it perfectly, then I am cursed by it. I am cursed as

³ Luke 20:26.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Luke 10:27.

⁷ Luke 10:28.

every man who keeps not the law perfectly, who keeps not everything that God has said to do. Do it and thou shalt live.

In Romans 10:5 Paul says:

“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.”⁸

Paul put that in there because he was showing what the end of man is who tries to attain life by the law. And he contrasts that into what life in Christ is, the fulfiller of the law. And, dear ones, it creeps into our every day life, so subtly. You wouldn't believe. You would think that something as holy as God's law would be something that Satan would stay away from. Oh, but he doesn't. He is perfectly happy when we go about bustling and hurrying and trying to keep every jot and tittle, because it will lead... what it leads to us destruction. What it leads to is absolute ... for the child of God it leads to the end of himself, because they are show that they can't do it. And we are going to see that here shortly.

But then we have that question again.

“But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?”⁹

I am always perplexed by these ones who ask or say, “Tell me how to live and I will live it. Tell me what it is that it is pleasing to you and I will do it.” That is what he is saying. In order for me to justify myself, if you tell me who my neighbor is, then I will set forth to love that neighbor. Which one of these is my neighbor? Who is my neighbor? Always asking to justify self.

This hits home to us, because there is parts, times in our days and our lives, in our hours that we spend in this kind of mentality trying to justify ourselves. I see it in my young ones a lot when they are caught doing something. I have tried to justify their actions as kind of a little microcosm of my life. It makes me... the Lord says stop. You know, you can't cast a stone here, because you are the same way.

“But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?”¹⁰

Now that is the backdrop. That is the reason why Jesus now comes and he is going to tell this parable. And remember. This parable is to answer one question. Not who is my neighbor. What shall I do to inherit eternal life? That is where we miss it. If we think this is about man, it is wrong. What shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Verse 30 is one of the most beautiful verses in the entire Word of God.

⁸ Romans 10:5.

⁹ Luke 10:29.

¹⁰ Ibid.

“And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.”¹¹

First we see the circumstances. This is away from Christ. This is a picture of the backslidden child of God. It is pictured for us in Jerusalem who is a high city coming down into Jordan which is a low city, Jericho, sorry, which is a low city. And Jesus has this picture for us and he says, “When you leave communion with me, when you leave what you have in me and you go about to justify yourself or you go about to live outside of me, you will go on this journey of sin and this is where sin will take you.”

“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.”¹²

And this pictures all of God’s children that go backwards, that backslide. But what I don’t want you to miss in 30 and I hope the Holy Spirit impresses to you today he never makes it to Jericho. If it was left up to us, we would run away from Christ as far as we could get. We would run away from any kind of holiness, anything godly, anything of faith. That is what the design of the backslider is. I am going to go from Jerusalem to Jericho. But something stopped him. And we don’t like to look... natural man looks at this and says, “Well, wait a minute. There are two thieves. And the thieves are sin and the thieves are Satan and he leaves him half dead.” And it is true. But there is a reason that God brought this sin into this life. He was dead set on going to Jericho. But he fell among thieves. And when we backslide and we go away and we turn a deaf ear and we seem to follow and wallow in self and we wallow in sin and then Satan and sin comes and then we commune with them and the end of Satan and communing with Satan and community with sin is this, that we end up stripped. We have stripped him of his raiment and wounded him and departed leaving him half dead.

The way of sin is downhill. The way of backsliding is downhill. See, we can try to justify it in our minds as we do all the time. Oh, but really, I am not that bad. No, no, Lord, that is not what I did. That is, no. I am not ... it is really not all that bad.

What we don’t see is God’s hand in bringing Satan. We don’t see God’s hand in bringing his providence. This is Romans 8:28. This is the all things. We like to think of those all things that stand in our path that keep us from harm. We like to think of God’s providence when it keeps us from calamity. We like to dwell on God’s providence when it keeps us from sin. But what about God’s providence here? We are bent on the trip to hell. We are bent on going from Jerusalem to Jericho. But the Lord has another plan. And he sends thieves. And what is it that happens when we join ourselves to the world? We are stripped of our raiment. We are stripped of any kind of armor. We are stripped of any kind of defense that we have against. And we are wounded. And we are wounded because as we saw in the parable of the prodigal Son, when he had wasted all that he had, oh, the world loved him when he had all of they money, but when he didn’t have it anymore, it was feed my pigs. Slop the hogs. The world and Satan, sin and our flesh would chew us up and spit us out. That is the design. That is the bent. That is their will.

¹¹ Luke 10:30.

¹² Ibid.

But I hope you don't miss how the providential care of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost works here. We may not think it is for our good, but we certainly will see that it is, because see that last little part in 30? That is the problem. That is the problem for Satan. That is the problem for our flesh. That is the problem for sin. And that is the problem for the world is they can't kill the child of God.

Oh, they can maim him. They can wound him. But if we be accepted in the beloved, if we be in Christ Jesus although the world and all of these enemies can harm the body, they can't touch the soul that is safe and accepted in him.

See, we are left half dead. We are left half dead in these battles. I told you as we started this is what reminds me that this isn't heaven. Heaven would be void of those enemies. Heaven would be void of this going down. Heaven would be void of being stripped of your raiment and wounded. And my mind is quickly taken to eternity, to a place that I long to be. I long to be away from this downward slope.

Well now we are wounded. Now we have been laid. We have tried to take our trip down to Jericho and we have been laid down on the road and we have been hurt. We have been wounded. We have been stripped. We have wounds and guess what? We can't get up. Who is going to help us? Who is going to save us?

“And by chance there came down a certain priest.”¹³

Certainly the priest will help, right? The priest is a picture of showy religion. The priest is a picture of the moral law. Surely all I have to do is get up and do it, right? Isn't that what the moral law tells us? Isn't that what the one at the front of this or the beginning of this said? What shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Now as I am laying there all maimed and seemingly defeated by the world and Satan is trodding down on me and sin has beset me and laid me just as low as I can go, what is my refuge? Who is going to help me? Who is going to lift me up out of the muck and the mire? This priest. The priest happens to come by, because, see, notice how this works. If you are true to yourself today, if the Holy Spirit would open up your eyes you will see how this works in our lives, because quickly we start to grasp at what can we do? What can we do to pull ourselves out of this?

You know what spiritual depression is. I have told you. We began this speaking to those who have been made aware of their sins. Some of you in here may not have a clue as to what I am saying. May the Holy Ghost show it to you today.

But as this takes place and as we are down trodden, we quickly scramble and we quickly, as maimed as we are, we grasp at things. And there is a certain priest that comes by and the showy religion that tells us to pick ourselves up. And we will try. We will try. But, see, we see what really kind of help this is. And the Lord says:

¹³ Luke 10:31.

“...and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.”¹⁴

Why? Because the law can't save you. The morality of man can't save you. The morality of yourself can't save you.

Well, so I am still laying there and I am still in dire need of help. But that is ok. Here comes another one.

“And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him.”¹⁵

A Levite. Oh, you know, the highly educated, the highest of all the human teaching and human learning. So we have rationalism. We have ritualism and all of these things can do nothing for God's child who is aware of his sin, who has been shown his sin.

What can your knowledge get you at this time as you scramble once again to save yourself from the position that you are in? See, the law can only curse and condemn and leave you to die. And this one who came to Jesus, he tried so much, he tried so hard to show Jesus the error of his way. Oh, no, you must live by this law. Moses told us. The Lord meet him there. You want to live by that? You will die, because the priest and the Levite they passed by on the other side.

Where are we going to get help? Some of you in here, praise be to God, know the answer. Some of you are hanging on every word because you want to know the answer. But the answer comes in the most unlikely thing of man. Our reasoning and our logic tell us and especially to the Jew, that is the reason Christ calls himself a Samaritan.

“But a certain Samaritan...”¹⁶

Don't you understand? We hate the Samaritans? They are the scourge of the earth. Don't you know how low they are? And you are going to tell me that the Levite and the priest won't help this one, but this nasty Samaritan will.

Hold your finger there and turn over to John 8:48. Why does Jesus call himself a Samaritan? John 8:48 tells us.

“Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?”¹⁷

Jesus is labeled a Samaritan. I told you. That is a curse word to the Jews. And they cursed Jesus. And Jesus as he condescends to his people being made flesh, he condescends to his people and, see, the people of God today as they hear this message, as

¹⁴ Luke 10:31.

¹⁵ Luke 10:32.

¹⁶ Luke 10:33.

¹⁷ John 8:48.

the Spirit applies it to their soul, they see the beauty in the Samaritan. They see the beauty of a Samaritan who stopped. But I want to show you something about the Samaritan.

As he journeyed, notice the beauty of the Holy Spirit's language. He came where he was. Has he come where you were? Has he come where you were dead in sins and trespasses? Has he come where you were as you left... were left bleeding by this world, bleeding by your own flesh, bleeding by Satan who wounds you with his fiery darts? Has he come where you were?

This is the gospel. This is Jesus coming to the gospel to our soul. He comes where we are. And not only is it that, it is a beautiful picture of substitution, because he became what we were. He became sin.

As many times as I have slid backwards, he came where I was and he took my place on a cursed tree.

“...and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.”¹⁸

He loved him.

Jeremiah in Lamentations 3:32 says:

“But though he cause grief...”¹⁹

That is God. The causer, the first cause of grief.

“But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.”²⁰

It is the Lord who sent the thieves because this backslider was not going to descend into hell. This backslider was going to be wounded, but all for his good so that he could see salvation in a Samaritan. He came where he was.

“...and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. And he went to him.”²¹

Because as lame as we are as Mephibosheth, we can't go to him. As lame as we are beaten and down trodden in the street, we can't go to him. And do you know what? We won't go to him. No, he went to him. And what does he do? Does he beat him in the head with the law? Does he tell him how he transgressed? Does he tell him how sorrowful and how wicked a sinner he is? He bound up his wounds with repentance. He

¹⁸ Luke 10:33.

¹⁹ Lamentations 3:32.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Luke 10:33-34.

poured in oil and wine, the vivifying grace of his Spirit, the nurturing and life giving of his Spirit. He set him on his own beast.

When I read that I always think of Christ going and getting the lamb, the wandering lamb and putting him around his neck and bringing him back. And he brought him to an inn and took care of him.

I ask you, dear ones. What part do you have in that? What cause did you have in that? What power did you have in that laying in a street half dead? Because we have the earnest of the Spirit in us. Half dead.

But the Lord comes where we are and he comes to us and he bounds up our wounds. Oh, he preaches to us Christ crucified because as we are laying on the street and we are bleeding and we are brought low, then the Spirit shows us the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. And that sin that brought us there is forgiven. It is forgiven as far as the east and the west and it is all taken away in him who came where we were.

He set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn and he took care of him. All provision, all spiritual blessings are in him and through him and by him.

“And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him.”²²

This is the Lord speaking to his ministers. Take care of them through the Word. Nourish them. Take care of them.

“...and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.”²³

See, he paid all the debt. He took it all away. All of those marks that are on the great scoreboard against us are all washed away. All of the debts to grace, all of the debts to love, all of the debts that we have are washed away through the blood of the Lamb.

I am reminded this morning of Paul’s words to Philemon about Onesimus. Put that to my account. Put it to my account. And that is the love of Christ in Paul for Onesimus, the runaway slave.

And the love of Christ to us is that wherever we go in this life and whatever we do in this life, see, that is the ... it is the glorious part, but it is also a sorrowful part. This isn’t heaven. And we are going to go again to those thieves. We are going to go again in our backsliding ways and we are going to be bent and we are going to go to Jericho. But the Lord is going not send those thieves and we don't like those thieves, but those thieves are needful. Those thieves lay us low and show us what we are without a Savior and show us what the wages of sin is and the wages that were paid.

²² Luke 10:35.

²³ Ibid.

“...and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.”²⁴

So now Jesus asked him an impossible question.

“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?”²⁵

He asked a scribe who is a student of the law and he asked him a question. He asked him about a priest, a Levite and a Samaritan. And what answer does he give? He can't even mention his name. He won't even mention the Samaritan. Oh, no.

“And he said, He that shewed mercy on him.”²⁶

So how did Jesus end it?

“Go, and do thou likewise.”²⁷

See, the Word of God is a sword. It is a two edged sword. On one side it cuts the child of God deeply. But it shows us that we are shut up to grace. We are shut up to the grace of God that we can do nothing without him. We can do nothing without our Savior. Oh, but the other side, the other side of the sword shuts him up to works, shuts the door of the ark and says, “Now perish. Perish in your works. Perish in your morality. Perish in your doom.”

Which side speaks to you this morning? I pray it is the side of grace that the Lord speaks to the soul of his people.

I would like to end today in Hebrews. You turn with me over to Hebrews chapter 12.

In Hebrews chapter 12 we will begin this morning in verse 18. Listen to it, dear ones. And may the Holy Spirit speak to your souls.

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)²⁸

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Luke 10:36.

²⁶ Luke 10:37.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Hebrews 12:18-21.

Do you hear the thundering of the law? Do you hear the thundering of Sinai? But listen, dear ones. The apostle writes here ye are not come unto this. Ye are free from Sinai. Ye are free from this bondage. Ye are free from this weight. Ye are free from the tyranny. You are free from the fear. Why?

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.²⁹

Wow, what another side. We have come unto God. We have come unto angels. We have come unto the Judge of all and the spirits of just men made perfect. But most of all in verse 24. And to Jesus, the end of Sinai. And to Jesus, the end of the ceremonial law. And to Jesus, the end of the have to, shall do, what must I do.

“And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”³⁰

Oh, in Christ there is a better covenant. This is what we talked about last time. He has made with me a covenant, ordered in all things, sure in Jesus Christ.

This morning my intention, I hope was the Holy Ghost intention in your life is to show you, again, who through the beauty of his Word, what the child of God has in Christ Jesus, what we have in the finished work of the Son, what we have in our great Samaritan who has banded up our wounds, who has made provision for us more than we ever need, but yet we keep go wandering. We go wandering and wandering after something better. Oh, to be kept in the sheep fold. Oh, to have that leg broken where we don't wander anymore. Praise be to God for ordering his providence to do just that, to keep us in the sheep fold.

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, blessed be thy name. Blessed be thy name above all other names. Lord, I pray this day that you would reveal to us the beauty of thy Son in this passage and exalt his name in our lives. Lord, may he increase and may we decrease. Lord, teach us a life of faith and trust us with a life of faith given through thy Son the author and finisher of it that we may live unto thee and, Lord, keep us by thy power in thy sheepfold, in thy keeping, in thy covenant. Lord, we thank thee that you are our nail in a sure place and that you are our all in all. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

²⁹ Hebrews 12:22-23.

³⁰ Hebrews 12:24.