

**Simple Part 2: Love People | Luke 10:25-37 | Pastor Ryan Welshans**  
**September 8th, 2024 @ Mundelein Nazarene**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Life is complicated, and we want to be a simple church that can handle complex lives.** Jesus' message and the life he's called us all into is meant to be focused on **loving God, loving people, and making disciples.**

I hope you've been engaging with the reading plan available for us to journey together through this series. I want to mention that the reading plan is not a chronological walk through a book of the Bible, **but more of a journey through themes in scripture that relate to our series.**

Last week we looked at the first part of what's called the "The Great Command", which is loving God, and more specifically we saw that **GOD ISN'T MEANT TO BE FIRST IN YOUR LIFE, GOD IS MEANT TO BE YOUR WHOLE LIFE!**

You can experience God and love him in and through every area of your life, God is not in competition with your family, job, or hobbies, he's way outside of whatever list you want to put him on, but Jesus showed us how to do what we're made to do... love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We can develop this loving relationship with God through a lifestyle of surrender in how we worship God, how we're in constant prayer with God, and remain in his story through reading and living scripture to know God better.

We now turn to the second part of that command: love people. Which in all honesty might be the clearest, easiest to apply, totally practical, and not out of reach of anyone on the planet command.

We always talk about loving people, "what the world needs now is love sweet love". **It's a phrase that's just a phrase until we choose to do something about it.**

And it's then, and only that it becomes the most difficult, mind-numbing, life-altering command Jesus could give.

**Luke 10:25-37 (NIV)**

*25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

*26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"*

*27 He answered, "'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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

*28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."*

*29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

*30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his donkey, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'*

*36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"*

*37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."*

*Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."*

Loving God is one thing, making disciples takes training, but loving people, most of us would just say "Hard pass, have you met people lately?"

I mean take a second and just think about how we talk about people, each other, and our own family at times. It's easy for us to watch a clip online or on social media and make a million judgments about someone that we've never spent time with, learned their story, walked in their shoes, lived their struggles, or felt their passions.

I've seen people criticize and make judgments about other people for their lifestyle, their mistakes, and whatnot, but then turn around, and when they have a family member who's just as messed up they make excuses for them.

### **WE LOVE LIKE WE WANT TO**

And so, we got issues. We've got big issues when it comes to loving people, and I think there's a core reason for that. We show love to people the best way we know how to do that or the way we want to.

We love people the way it makes us most comfortable, the way we feel we're wired, and the way it builds us up.

But, there might be needs and ways of loving someone that you don't know how to do, ways that don't come naturally to you, or don't make sense at all. **We've all encountered those people who are very difficult for you to love.**

That's an important note here, there are some people that others have no problem loving, but you might. And vice versa there are some people that you may know how to love and care for, but that others are just totally at a loss.

The point is, that we tend to love selfishly, rather than sacrificially, and that's the extra mile or next step Jesus is calling us to.

In all three of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) there's a conversation that Jesus has with some religious leaders. Luke's recording of that conversation is really interesting because the depth of the conversation goes to places that Matthew and Mark don't.

**Luke 10:25-26 (NIV)**

*25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

*26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"*

Luke tells the story differently than in the other gospels. First, this man asks a different question than the other accounts record. He does ask what the greatest command is, he asks "what he must do to inherit eternal life", and in this account, Jesus doesn't answer the question with an answer, he answers the questions with another question... he puts it back on the guy asking.

**Luke 10:27-28 (NIV)**

*27 He answered, "'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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

*28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."*

This guy knows his stuff, he answers the questions with two important passages of scripture, one is from Deuteronomy 6, which we looked at last, and the second one is from the book of Leviticus, everyone's favorite book of the Bible. These two passages sum up the law and the 10 commandments... how many of us remember those by memory?

1. No other gods but God
2. Don't make idols
3. Don't misuse God's name
4. Remember and observe the Sabbath
5. Honor your parents
6. Don't murder
7. Don't commit adultery
8. Don't steal
9. Don't lie
10. Don't covet

The first four are focused on God and how to honor him, and the last six are about how we treat other people.

So, he's got it down pretty good, and Jesus tells him, "Do this and you'll live". But, the man presses further...

**Luke 10:29 (NIV)**

*29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

Ah... he wants to justify himself. He wants to play games with Jesus, he wants to dissect and use the text for his purposes. He can keep the text at a distance by turning it into something to analyze and debate rather than truly live... He also knows that historically for the Jews "neighbor" was for fellow Israelites or those who had converted and become worshipers of God. Jesus won't let him get away with that, he is going to do what he always does... he's going to tell a story, a story neither man nor we can ignore.

We're going to read this famous story from a different perspective. Just like the man trying to trap Jesus, we're not going to allow this story to stay at arm's length, but we're going to find ourselves in it.

**Luke 10:30 (NIV)**

*30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho,*

Jerusalem to Jericho for us doesn't mean anything, but biblically speaking a lot is going on here.

**Jerusalem was considered a high place of God**, it was 2,500 ft above sea level, and God's people would ascend to Jerusalem, in many of the Psalms it's given this picture of a high heavenly place (Psalms 120-134).

Jericho on the other hand is nearly 800 ft below sea level making it the lowest city on earth. **Biblically, Jericho is associated with being a city of sin**, it's the first city God's people have to take on as they enter into the promised land in that famous story of trumpets going around the city and the walls of Jericho coming down (Joshua 6).

And if you look at a map you would go down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and take the Jericho Road, an 18-mile descent considered extremely dangerous, and even by the 3rd century, St. Jerome would describe it as **"The Bloody Way"**.

So, we have this person headed down a dangerous bloody way from where God is, towards the city of sin. Friends, **that's all of us before Jesus comes into our life**. The natural direction and trend of your life outside of Jesus is headed down a road and direction that is not good.

**Luke 10:30 (NIV)**

*when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.*

Again, this may sound like a strange way to view life, **but without Christ, we're not fully alive**, you may have skin on your body, and breathe in your lungs but spiritually and holistically speaking you are not alive. There is a different new life that we experience in Christ that is unlike anything else, **it's like having new air in our lungs!**

My wife for years would tell me that I snore like crazy. There were many nights I slept on the couch because she was a light sleeper, and couldn't handle my snoring. After a few years (or a decade) I finally listened to her and got a sleep study done. I had to go take this contraption home, hook it up to my body, and record my breathing, then I had to go into a sleep center and do this overnight study. I thought I was doing fine. The doctor called me and says in five hours of sleep I stopped breathing 40 times. I was fine, I was functioning, but for a long time, for a good portion of the night, I wasn't breathing. I had no idea why I woke up so tired in the morning and didn't always feel my best throughout the day. Now, I've changed some of my diet, and I wear a CPAP machine that blows air into my lungs so I can breathe at night, and the difference has been amazing... **I have a new breath in my lungs and I had no idea what I was missing.**

You can be living, but not living to the fullest you were meant to.  
We need help, just like this half-dead man.

**Luke 10:31-32 (NIV)**

*31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.*

Now, we need to give some grace to these two because they wouldn't have been allowed by Jewish law to touch this man, or it would have made him unclean. (Leviticus 7, Numbers 19:13). But notice here friends, are the Priest and Levite going up to Jerusalem? No, there's going down the same road to Jericho.

On one level we can say that these are religious figures who are ignoring the needs of this man, a fellow Jew. **But on a deeper level, these two figures can also represent the harsh reality that religion cannot save you.**

You can't go to church enough, give enough, or behave well enough to be rescued from your half-dead life... doing all those things in hopes that they will rescue you will leave you empty because **religion can just walk on by and never deal with the real healing you need.**

You and I don't need to make it all happen for ourselves through our good religious acts, we need outside help. **We need someone to break into our story, find us on the bloody way road, and save us!** And look who Jesus says in this story is the savior:

**Luke 10:33 (NIV)**

*33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.*

Jews hated Samaritans, considered them half-breeds and false worshippers of God, and this is the person who Jesus chooses to use in the story to rescue the half-dead.

**This Samaritan is an outsider**, hated, this Jew's natural enemy, and he takes pity on this man, he has compassion for him, and he "sees" him!

*"Human beings need recognition as much as they need food and water. No crueler punishment can be devised than to not see someone, to render them unimportant or invisible. "The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them," George Bernard Shaw wrote, "but to be indifferent to them: that's the essence of inhumanity. "To do that is to say: You don't matter. You don't exist."  
- David Brooks, "How To See People"*

This Samaritan sees this man and is moved to action!

Friends, no matter how broken or far down the bloody way you are, **you are seen!**

**The Good Samaritan in every person's story, including yours and mine, is also the Good Shepherd, the Gate, the I AM, the Resurrection, and the life... Jesus Christ.** And he comes into our story, finds us where we are, and has compassion and love for us.

**John 1:9-14 (NLT)**

*9 The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.  
10 He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. 11 He came to his people, and even they rejected him. 12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.*

He came as the rejected savior, the one who the world didn't recognize, and that didn't stop him from loving us and having compassion for you and me. **This is a different kind of savior we find in Jesus. He has found you on the desert, the bloody road of your life, and says "I see you, I got you."**

**Luke 10:34 (NIV)**

*34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his donkey, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*

He not only sees this man, but he cares for this man and heals him with oil (soothing the wounds) and wine (disinfectant). **Oil is also a symbol of anointing in the Holy Spirit, and the wine is a symbol of anointing in the blood of Christ.**

**Christ is our healer!** There are severely broken and sick parts of us that don't need fixing, they need healing, and our lives need the blood of Christ poured out onto us.

*1 Peter 2:24 (NLT)*

*24 He carried our sins*

*in his body on the cross*

*so that we can be dead to sin*

*and live for what is right.*

*By his wounds*

*you are healed.*

**And look, he takes the man to an Inn.** Where do you suppose Christ takes you and me in our healing to be cared for, loved, and nurtured to wholeness? **The Church!**

**We need a healer, but we also need a hospital where the healer can continue to do his work.**

**Jesus → Healer**

**The Church → Hospital**

**The Church should lead people to Christ, yes, but Christ also leads people to the care of the Church.**

Anyone who says "I have Jesus, I don't need the Church" is missing the practical way Christ wants to care for them.

Any Church that isn't willing to take who Christ brings them to care for and nurture should close its doors.

In 1986, Congress enacted the Emergency Medical Treatment & Labor Act (EMTALA), and this law made it so that hospitals had to provide care to people in need of emergency medical treatment regardless of ability to pay or insurance. And it also stipulates that care must be provided if the person is within 250 yards of the facility even if they never actually crossed the threshold or entered the emergency department. Care must be provided if it is needed without question, no matter what.

The Church has its own EMTALA act, we don't care who you are, where you're from, or what you've, the Church is obligated to serve, love, and provide a hand in bringing everyone to the Healer.

*Luke 10:35 (NIV)*

*35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'*

Not only did this Samaritan pay for this Jewish man's debt, but he says he'll pay for any debt after.

Can there be a clearer picture of Christ's work in our lives? He has paid your debt of sin and shame for all time!

Now, Jesus brings this in for the big landing...

**Luke 10:36-37 (NIV)**

*36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"*

*37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."*

*Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."*

Wait, what? Go and do likewise? Is Jesus nuts?

And we read this and think "I can't do what that Samaritan did?"

And if I look at this story as my story of Jesus saving me, I can't do what Jesus did for someone else!

I love people the way I love people...

We're not called to love people like we want to or love people the way the world does.

**WE ARE CALLED TO LOVE PEOPLE IN THE SAME WAY THAT JESUS LOVES US**

**LOVING LIKE JESUS DOESN'T MAKE SENSE**

We need to feel this in our bones! Do you know what Christ has done for you, do you know the compassion, the love, the everything that he gave for you could have everything?

You'll never really be able to love people like Jesus if you've come to grips with what he did for you, and what he does for you every day!

We have a different brand of love than the rest of the world... it's not based on your personality, your preferences, or your feelings. Christian love is sacrificial, it breaks boundaries, it doesn't always make sense, it defies logic... **it looks like Jesus.**

**A PRAYER THAT CHANGES THE WAY YOU LOVE**

When you find yourself being hurt by someone, or being called to show love to someone you don't understand, or who just plain annoys you, pray **"Lord, help me to love them, as you have loved me at my worst."**

Amen.



### **QUESTIONS FOR PERSON REFLECTION OR GROUP DISCUSSION:**

1. What stuck out to you about last week's reading plan, and where you are now in the reading plan?
2. What kind of people do you find it easy to love (outside your family)?
3. What types of personalities and traits in others drive you nuts? Why? How might you love them better?
4. Do you remember a time in your life when things felt like you were going down your own Jericho Road?
5. Do you feel "seen" in your life by others? By God? Read Genesis 16:1-13... thoughts?
6. In what ways has Jesus been your healer?
7. In what ways has the Church been a hospital in your life?
8. How can the Church continue to be a hospital in our community? Through you?
9. Is that prayer at the end of the message helpful?

### **READINGS FOR THIS WEEK**

Mon. September 9 | Leviticus 19:1-18, Luke 10:25-37

Tues. September 10 | Psalm 51, Luke 23:26-43

Wed. September 11 | Mark 8:34-38, 9:35-37, 10:17-45

Thurs. September 12 | John 3:16, 15:1-17, 1 John 4:7-21

Fri. September 13 | 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, Romans 12:9-21, 13:8-10, Galatians 5:13-18

### **WORK CITED**

Neale, David A.. NBBC, Luke 9-24: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition (p. 126). Nazarene Publishing House. Kindle Edition.

The Gospel of Luke (New International Commentary on the New Testament (NICNT)) (pp. 429-430). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. Kindle Edition.

"How To Know A Person" by David Brooks