

Grace, Mercy and Peace to you from Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen!

You all know that English is my fourth Language and we learned the English language for the first time in Australia. Well, I learned more than the English language there. Remember the story I shared once that we were going out and I called a cab thru the phone listed in the yellow page. The guest house, we stayed, was fenced but it has a bell at the gate. The temperature outside was over 100 degree. It was in December of 1991. The summer time in Australia starts on December 1st and ends in the last day of February. It can be very hot over there every day. I was hoping that once the yellow cab driver came to the address I gave, he would ring the bell at the gate and let us know that he has arrived. Fifteen minutes later, I get out to see if the cab was out there. Sure enough, there was a yellow cab out there. I called my family and we boarded the cab. But before we left, I saw the amount on the meter already started at \$7.50. So I asked the driver, “why are you charging us \$7.50 instead of the usual \$1.50 starter where we haven’t gone anywhere yet?” he simply replied that he was waiting for us outside the gate for 10 minutes and in Australia, time is money! I couldn’t argue anymore...I simply said, “Let’s go, just drive us down town man” while mumbling that you should have rang the bell...

While in Australia, I learned a new approach for the Good Samaritan Law as well. Coming from a French speaking country, the French’s law says clearly that “if you are in the presence of someone in danger and you don’t assist, you can be persecuted” but the Australian law is different for the same title of the Good Samaritan Law. The law offers protection to the good Samaritan against any lawsuit directed to them as long as they helped in good faith and they were not impaired by drugs or alcohol. For the French’s system, you can be sued for not helping the needy but for the Australian’s system, once you help you are protected against anything you did to help....

Why am I telling all of these stories? Simply because this gospel text of the day is the most widely known of all the stories Jesus told in the Bible. It is the “Parable of the Good Samaritan”. It is a much-loved story in the New Testament. And even in this day, the secular world uses and recognizes it. The language of the "Good Samaritan" is a part of our culture's working vocabulary.

This text is so interesting especially the ending of it. “**Go and do likewise.**” Jesus told a self-justifying certain lawyer. Go and do like the Samaritan man did. Let’s quickly remind ourselves again of what transpired here. Some guy, some anonymous fellow of indeterminate age, of unspecified ethnicity, and of unknown origins was taking a trip. He could be anybody, and just that is Jesus’ point: he is anybody. The lawyer probably wanted to interrupt Jesus right here. “Hold it, Jesus. What man are we talking about? Can you describe him? Is it anyone I might know? Is he Jewish? A Gentile? Gay or straight? Roman or Greek? Slave or free? *What man?*”

I think even had the lawyer asked this, Jesus would not have answered. “A certain man, some nameless, faceless fellow was taking a trip and got mugged. They beat him half-senseless, took his wallet and then left the guy in his birthday suit, crumpled in the mud of a ditch.” The man is left like roadkill, and two religious figures treat him like roadkill, too, actually walking on the other side of the street to avoid seeing him, much less helping him. Jesus says the third passerby is a Samaritan....hmm and at this point I picture the lawyer clenching his teeth. A *Samaritan*.

The good Samaritan did three things. First, he *sees* the man in need. The priest and the Levite saw him not as a neighbor, but they perceiving him instead to be a burden, and perhaps even a threat.

Second, the Samaritan not only sees the man in need as a neighbor, but he *draws near* to him, coming over to help. The priest and the Levite did not come closer to him. But the Samaritan instead goes to him, and he becomes vulnerable in that closeness. He is in a vulnerable position in trying to help as he recognized that he could be in pain, in misery and in need like this man.

Third, after seeing this man and coming close, the Samaritan has *compassion* on him, tending his wounds, transporting him to the inn, making sure he is taken care of. So to recap what he did. First he saw the man, then he drew near to him and he did something about it.

That sounds like Jesus who sees our vulnerability and our needs, as being compassionate, He became like one of us to embrace us to the point of going to the cross. He took action by identifying with us to the very end, rising again so that death could no longer dominate us.

The first point of this gospel that I want us to remember is the way for Jesus who chose a Samaritan to make his point clear. We know that Jews and Samaritans were not in good terms, and so if even *a Samaritan can act this way, certainly the lawyer who seeks eternal life should be able to do likewise*. This lawyer cannot even name the Samaritan but he just replied to Jesus when asked “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” “The one who showed mercy.”

Remember two weeks ago, we had the text on Luke 9:51-61. Where James and John asked Jesus “Lord do you want us to command a fire to come down from heaven and consume the Samaritan’s village” who did not receive Jesus and his team. But Jesus rebuked them. Well, in our gospel text today, Jesus chose to name the Samaritan man, the ones that James and John wanted them to disappear. Jesus’ chooses a Samaritan to act like he would act in this parable. Jesus chooses an outcast to play his role in this short story. Jesus identifies one as rejected by his audience to demonstrate God’s action in the world. That is the take home for us today. God often shows up where we least expect God to be. Yes, we do not expect God to reveal God’s glory through the disgrace of the cross. We do not expect God to reveal God’s power through vulnerability and suffering. But God shows up in these difficult situations to give us hope that God comes for all of us. God loves us all.

Trinity members, not one of us is beyond God’s mercy, grace, and redemption. I have said this before and I am saying it again today, “no one is beyond the reach of God’s love. No one.”

In our gospel text today, Jesus demonstrated to us what God does: God chooses people no one expects and does amazing things through them. God chooses even a Samaritan. God chooses even our people. God chooses even me and even you. **Go and do likewise.**

Amen