

*Pentecost 5 – Sunday, July 14, 2019*

*By Harry Goff*

***Christ calls us to extend the breadth of our neighborhood and to extend our selves in the service of our neighbor. Give this sentence some thought in regards to our lives today!***

In last week's Gospel lesson, Jesus was on a mission a journey to Jerusalem to give his life for you and me. During his journey he was confronted by three individuals each with a different reason to follow him, but with a reasons to follow later. In each of these instances Jesus' response to the would-be disciples was rather callous and some would say mean.

Today's scripture lesson is very familiar to us, it is one we have heard many times before but today with a thrust towards what is happening to us in real time with the question what is a neighbor or neighborhood ? Let us ponder that.

*As I have stated before and mean with all my heart and soul, It is truly a good and wonderful feeling to know but even greater to love and serve our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. He is the lily of the valley the bright and shining star.*

***Grace to you and peace from God our father the Lord Jesus Christ.***

Today Jesus was tested by a wise lawyer with a simple question, "Teacher, "what must I do to inherit eternal Life?" Jesus' response, "what is written in the law? What do you read there?" The lawyer responded, "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 your self." We are now at the crux of the parable. As yourself!!

Remember where or what was happening with Jesus, he was traveling to Jerusalem on a dangerous road much like I-44, a road I truly detest and have never been comfortable on. There are to many curves, blind spots, hilly and lends itself to accidents. Enough of 44, on to Jerusalem. The road to Jerusalem lends itself to danger, bad people and bad things. Many dangers, Just today in our fair city we had a in plain sight shooting from one car into another of course no one was caught. Even worse we loss a 16 year old to a senseless killing. We ask where does

it stop or when does it stop? There lies the danger on the road to Jerusalem for Jesus and other travelers.

Our brothers and sisters from south of us in quest of a better and safer life in the good old USA travel in groups to avoid being preyed upon and abused by thieves and unscrupulous others. They are subject to the same dangers Jesus faced

Some would say and have said that one should never have never travelled this road alone this man should have travelled in a group to avoid danger. He nearly paid for this lack of caution with his life. He was robbed, beaten, stripped and left for dead.

**NOW, Three MEN Passed by.** The first was a priest who you would think is going to help this person but, no bet he passes on the other side. We have to offer up a reason for this; lets try--- he was headed to temple to conduct services, Torah law prohibits priest from touching a dead body ever-----the priest may have feared for his life and safety-----maybe this was trap! Maybe he did not want to get dirty, he did not want to get off his donkey and get the wounded man onto it and lead the donkey to town and then what is he going to do.

In cities large and small don't we pass by those on the sidewalks, some just wandering with no apparent destination reason. I have passed by many right here in St. Louis sitting on the curb asking for a handout and suspecting they are begging for alcohol or drugs or both. I plead guilty. Never thinking that this was not the case. There is more as you well know.

**NOW, A Levite Passed by.** A Levite was a priest's assistant, he was holy man. One would think that being a holy person he would have stopped with out giving it a thought. But guess what, he went right on by like the rest. Cannot touch, do not touch.

**NOW, A SAMARITAN** comes along. We know the story but Jesus flipped the switch, what did he do? Let's follow the order of these people who passed by this man in distress. In order of importance, a Priest, a Levite priest assistant, and a Samaritan. In our thoughts we expect to have some one higher up the social ladder to follow the Levite, but here is where the scrip was flipped.

Jesus went to the bottom of the list to a person despised by the Jews who absolutely had no use for **Samaritans**. Those listening were taken totally by surprise and did not see this coming. The ending of the story they looked for would have had some ordinary person take some extraordinary action. This was a

Samaritan the scum---- an outcast, worthless! Today we see our brothers and sisters from Guatemala and Honduras looked at in that same light. They are being treated as worthless scum not to be touched. The treatment they are receiving, or lack of treatment is a pall on the United States. This is nothing to be proud of, we should be ashamed of the divisiveness and downright hate being displayed by our government or should we say lack of government.

**NOW, THE SAMARITAN** comes along and stops. He too could be attacked. He gets off his donkey helps the man into his own saddle, now he is dirty and bloodstained. He walks in front and leads the animal carrying the injured man. Remember people of importance do not walk they ride, but this Samaritan had been riding unlike servants. He has now assumed the role of servant. Many would be hard pressed to take on this position today, we are too good for that. As we all know the story does not end there, it goes further. He takes the wounded man to the inn (not the holiday) and pays for his room (cash) and promises to return and pay more for his room if necessary. No texting, cell phone calls just I will be back. That would not happen today -- but there are those today who do and will do the same.

A message of this nature is not easy to prepare, is not easy to deliver and not easy to compare to the current times we are living in. Love your neighbor as yourself! I cannot stand here and tell you to help someone with a broken car to stop----and tell you to pay for it, pick up drunks and pay for room service. You would be broke and rundown. Harry Goff cannot or will not tell you to do those things.

Jesus told the lawyer to; “Go and do likewise.”

What did the Samaritan do that we need to do?

***First, he saw*** the man. He did not look the other way, he saw a man in need, he saw his wounded body and he also saw his soul. He helped him.

***Second he was moved with pity. He felt the wounded mans pain***

***Third He did what he could to help*** and that was a lot, picked him up, gave him a ride, paid for his lodging and had the innkeeper take care of him.

**Jesus does not expect any of us to help everybody--- but he expects each of us to help someone----see someone----care about someone----feel some ones pain-- --render assistance----help as we are able----love the other as we love ourselves-----car about the other persons welfare as we care about our own.**

If each of us would do that, what a wonderful world this would be!

*None of us can love everyone, but each of us can love someone. None of us can help everyone but each of us can help someone. And, believe me that's the Gospel truth!!!!*

*AMEN*