



Sermon, August 6, 2017
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Coburg and Junction City United Methodist Churches

Sermon Series: Do This and You Will Live “An All-Too-Familiar Story”

Scripture: Luke 10:25-37 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

(The Parable of the Good Samaritan)

²⁵ Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” ²⁷ 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.” ²⁸ And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” ³⁷ He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

For one week in July this summer, I was immersed in the energy, enthusiasm, creativity, and earnest theological questionings of 30 youth and their 12 adult counselors and resource leaders at our United Methodist Camp Magruder, located at Rockaway Beach, just north of Tillamook.

It was a marvelous time of engaging the arts (Music, Art, Drama, Dance) and using them to explore one of Jesus' most enduring and endearing stories: The Good Samaritan. Of course, it needs to be said, Jesus never called it "The Good Samaritan," and the earliest versions of the Gospel of Luke never call it this as well. However, at some point, some Bible publisher decided it would be helpful if the various sections of the Bible

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would have headings to introduce and locate this or that story or teaching. So, the title, "The Good Samaritan" was invented.

We explored in depth various aspects of the conversation between Jesus and a Jewish legal scholar that gives rise to the story Jesus tells. "Who is my neighbor?" It is a question that has echoed down the ages as churches, communities, even nations have tried to determine who it is that is within their circle of obligation, and who is outside. It is a question that is particularly timely for us today in our community, our nation, and our world. In fact, our Bishop, Elaine Stanovsky chose this section of Luke as the theme for this year's Annual Conference as well as the next three: "Do This and You Will Live."

One of the most familiar parables that Jesus told. Perhaps not proper to call it a parable. It is part of a longer conversation that Jesus had with a νομικός, a legal scholar, someone learned in Jewish law. (Next week we will look at the specific question the legal scholar asks.)

The Good Samaritan. The original story never says "the Good Samaritan." The title came later when they started printing Bibles for home use.

Today (at Coburg esp) we will recreate a little bit of the feeling from the camp presentation (you will not be asked to answer questions or to make comments or have conversations any other weeks). Exercise of four characters from the story:

Four choices: Man beaten by the robbers, people who passed by (Priest and Levite), Samaritan, donkey.

Stand in different parts of the room, or raise your hands, based upon who you identify with in the story.

Then move and stand, or raise your hand, according to the person you have the most trouble with in the story.

Then move to stand in the place of, or raise your hand, for the person you understand least but would like to have a conversation with in order to understand why they did what they did.

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If you could have a conversation with this person you understand least, what questions might you ask them? (Share some of the questions that campers asked.)

Conclusion: We do have questions. If we are honest, we find ourselves in different parts of the story. We also recognize that we also operate from a complex set of motives and restrictions on our behavior. Next week: What it means to live.