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February 8th, 2026

Scripture: Luke 10: 25-37

Sermon Title: Love Of Neighbor

Luke 10:25-37

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

25 An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus.[a] “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 vindicate 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 took off, 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 upon him, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, treating them with oil and wine. 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.” (This is the Word of the Lord)

Prayer...

Introduction:

The Good Samaritan Story is a familiar one for many of us. Normally, I provide a little background on the context of the story, helping us understand the tension that existed between Samaritans and Jews and how Jesus uses this story to show his support of Samaritans. I also remind us that this story is used to critique Jesus' community for being prejudiced against the Samaritans, but also to challenge both the lawyer who questions him and the religious leaders who are following Jesus and testing him. The religious leaders play a role in the story as the ones who walk by the injured man. I trust today that most of you understand at least some of the historical background of this story. So instead of walking us through the story that Jesus told, I want to tell a modern version of this Good Samaritan story. Here we go...

“One day a young man was walking in downtown Newberg. It was late and due to the rain not many people were around. Some of the stores closed up early. The man started to walk across a sidewalk and was unexpectedly hit by a car. The driver of the car chose not to stay at the scene of the injury and drove away. The young man who was injured dragged himself to the side of the road and since it was dark outside and not many cars were around, he found himself leaning up against a building. He fell asleep in pain, dazing in an out throughout the night.

In the morning, he woke up in even more pain and realized that he was not strong enough to get himself to the Newberg Providence Hospital. He hoped someone might stop to help him. As he leaned against the building in the early morning a person approached the injured man but did not really see him because the person who was walking by was glued to their phone. Then Pastor Chris Murphy from Newberg First Presbyterian Church saw the man, but kept

walking on by thinking to himself, I am pretty sure Love Inc. or the Neighborhood Community Drop In Center knows this guy and will take care of him eventually. A third person walked on by and thought about stopping, but figured the injured man was too dangerous and likely strung out on drugs.

Then a young woman from El Salvador saw the man. This young woman was on her way to sell pupusas at her local food truck. She remembered her own experience feeling vulnerable as an immigrant who arrived in Newberg a few years before. She saw the man in pain and had compassion for him.

She called 911 and waited for the ambulance to come. She chose to visit the emergency room in order to check on the man and even offered him a free lunch of pupusas de pollo for him to enjoy from her food truck.

The man thanked her for being his neighbor and thanks to her help he was able to make a full recovery.

Friends, here in Newberg we are invited to be neighbors for each other. As I tell this modern retelling of the story of the Good Samaritan, you will notice my heart for immigrants. If you know my family, we have a special connection to El Salvador because my sister was married to an El Salvadoran man and her two boys are therefore El Salvadoran- Diego and Julio. Concern for the immigrant community is very personal to me. I am grateful that at our church we have a heart for immigrants, so I expect you here this story with compassion and kindness in your heart to me as I tell it.

The reality is that in Jesus' context, his story about the Samaritan put him in danger. The lawyer was wise enough to hear the truth in Jesus' story, but the religious leaders were not happy with Jesus. It was stories like the parable of the Good Samaritan that made many people upset with him. Many wanted to put Jesus in jail for his ideas and to kill him. They eventually succeeded.

The thing about Jesus is he was always supporting the underdog. He always stood up for the oppressed rather than the privileged. He cared about the poor and less about the powerful.

I sometimes wonder what would happen if Jesus came back to earth. Scripture says he will someday return to earth as part of the second coming where there will be the restoration of a new creation. For the sake of the conversation, let's not talk about that right now.

Instead, what I want to imagine is how Jesus might be received if he showed up on earth today like he showed up in Galilee 2,000 years ago. History tells us that Jesus brought a message of love and compassion. He literally embodied compassion to Samaritans and others who were marginalized in his days and according to the gospels Jesus showed love but often received hate back. He was crucified. Yes, he at one point had many followers, but at the time of his crucifixion, even some of his closest disciples deserted him.

What would happen if Jesus showed up today? Would society welcome him and his message to care for the vulnerable or would he be challenged? Would Jesus come as a pastor and create a big church? Maybe. Or maybe, he would come as an immigrant in need of a home. Maybe Jesus would be a Native American asking for land to be returned to him. Maybe Jesus would come as a black man seeking civil rights or he might show up as an Asian person leading a walk for peace.

Maybe Jesus would be born this time not as male but as a female and would grow up and work for protection for young woman who face sexism and other forms of abuse.

I wonder how Jesus might show up if he came to earth today. And how would our community, our nation, our world respond? Too be honest, I am not sure. Some might embrace Jesus, but others I am pretty sure would seek to put him in jail and even kill him.

Would we be a good neighbor to Jesus if he showed up today? Would we welcome Jesus into our church? I hope so.

The Good Samaritan parable was told by Jesus to help answer the question of the lawyer, Who is my neighbor?

The story suggests that our neighbor is everyone and anyone, but it suggests that neighborly love is especially shown when a person is suffering and in need. The focus is on how to be a neighbor and that a neighbor is one who shows mercy to the vulnerable.

This story should convict us all by its challenge, but I also want to take time to give thanks to our congregation. I see neighborly kindness often in our church. Bobbie and Stephanie Stiehler have felt your kindness through the Meal Train support we are providing. Many of you regularly support each other by visiting those in our congregation who are injured or sick. Just this week, I was reminded again that the Rotary Club that uses our Fellowship Hall on Wednesdays and our AA groups that meet three nights a week provide safe places for members of our community to find healing and wholeness.

I also want to give thanks for other churches and groups that show neighborly love. Despite my story, I think that the ministers in our town and our local churches do not normally walk by the injured. They are doing a lot to care for people. Northside Community Church nearby provides meals for houseless and low-income people through its Feed Newberg program. Other churches provide food and clothing. The Community Drop In Center and Love Inc. continue to help the most needy. Habitat for Humanity provides affordable housing. Family Place provides a low-income pre-school. We have groups in Yamhill County like Unidos that help our immigrant community. PFLAG, which meets at the United Methodist church, support the LGBTQ plus community. George Fox University provides service to Newberg on serve day and is a home for students coming from many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Newberg also appreciates local businesses, service clubs, educational leaders within our schools, law enforcement, and firefighters for taking care of our community and helping us thrive.

The Good Samaritan story reminds us to keep loving each other. We are to love our neighbors who are similar to us, but we also love our neighbors who may have different backgrounds and perspectives. We are to follow the

example of Jesus who loved all and who especially prioritized caring for those on the margins.

I have one more story about being a good neighbor in Newberg that touched my heart this week. It was posted on Facebook by our city leadership. Here's what they wrote...

Recently, we had the privilege of making a dream come true. Joel Osche, a community member with Down syndrome, has long dreamed of becoming Mayor of Newberg. You may have seen Joel around town, working or volunteering by picking up trash, clearing storm drains to prevent flooding, and advocating for community safety.

When Joel's friend reached out on his behalf, they described him as someone with "a deep love for Newberg who consistently demonstrates his commitment to the community through his actions." City Recorder Rachel Thomas knew she had to help make Joel's dream a reality and offered to arrange a "Mayor for a Day" experience for him.

While acting as Mayor for a day, Joel's passion for our city shone through. He toured our facilities, met with staff across departments, and learned about the inner workings of city government. Joel also drafted his own Mayoral proclamation encouraging traffic safety measures, including prohibiting cell phone use while driving.

Thank you, Joel, for providing a great example of what dedication to your community looks like! It was a pleasure to make your wish come true."

Isn't that a great story. Friends, let us follow the example of Joel and City recorder Rachel in town by being good neighbors as we follow the example of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN.