

Despite Our Differences

Introduction:

I. The Discussion of Religious Duties

- a. *(25) And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? (26) He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? (27) And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. (28) And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.*
- i. This lawyer asked the all-important question of inheriting eternal life. Often, when we read this we think about the sweet by and by, but eternal life begins the moment we accept Christ. Jesus said, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly” (KJV Joh 10:10). Eternal life is more than quantity, but also focuses on quality.
 - ii. This lawyer possessed the head knowledge, but this knowledge didn’t translate through his heart to his hands.
 - iii. In verse 28, Jesus is not negating salvation by faith alone or promoting a salvation of works. He knew the unregenerate man could not fulfill all the requirements of the Law of God.

II. The Defense of Dissension

- a. *(29) But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?*
- i. This verse is the pivotal verse of the passage. The lawyer did not equivocate on loving God but has a problem with loving his neighbor as himself. This lawyer’s attitude reminds me of the Apostle John’s statement, “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (KJV 1Jn 4:20).
 - ii. By his statement, the lawyer’s heart is manifested. As long as, his neighbors fit nicely in his predetermined boxes he was okay with loving his neighbor. This is why Jesus makes the hero of his story a Samaritan. It is no secret Jewish, and Samaritan relations were strained at best. The two groups were divided by cultural, religious, and racial lines. Both possessed a deep seeded hatred for the other. Each had suffered attacks and oppression from one another. Does this sound familiar?

III. The Definition of Neighbors

- a. *(30) And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*
 - i. Although some argue, more than likely he was a Jew, because he was “coming down from Jerusalem.” The victim in Jesus’ parable was never identified as Jewish or Samaritan. I believe this is intentional. This man could have represented either party because bad things happen to all people. No matter what camp you’re in, you can be the victim.
 - ii. The key to Jesus’ parable is recognizing the people who encountered the victim and their response to his need.
 1. *(31) And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.*
 - a. The priest in this story represent the religious differences between Jews and Samaritans (See John 4).
 - b. It appears the priest merely glanced as he passed by and kept going. He “came down”, so some have inferred he may have been returning from his priestly duties. Others have stated if a priest came in contact with a dead body, he would be deemed unclean. Thus, causing him to be unfit to perform his duties.
 2. *(32) And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.*
 - a. The Levite emphasizes the racial and cultural differences of the two groups.
 - b. The Levite appears to go a bit further than the priest by taking a closer look, but the result was the same.
 3. *(33) But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,*
 - a. The Samaritan was the unlikely protagonist of the parable.
 - b. Although the other had looked at the victim, only the Samaritan saw him because he had compassion on him!
 - i. *(34) And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*
 1. He used all his resources to help this poor victim.
 - ii. *(35) And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.*

1. When he was unable to be personally involved in helping, he made sure to make provision.

IV. The Denouement

- a. (36) *Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?*
 - i. This was a very provocative statement for Jesus to make in this period.
 - ii. (37) *And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.*
1. This command was not only for the lawyer that day but for all that will follow Christ. Is there a group with which you do no associate?

Conclusion:



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