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Luke 10:25-37

## INTRODUCTION

1. Image: When I turned around, I saw Robbie talking to a homeless little boy.
2. Need: The many needs around us desensitize us from loving our neighbor
3. Subject: How do we love our neighbor?
4. Text: Luke 10:25-37
5. Preview: There are three things we need to see to love our neighbor.

## BODY

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  - A. Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan to teach the lawyer to see who his neighbor is (10:25-33)
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- II. See that God has put you there to meet the needs of your neighbor
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  - B. Jesus instructs the lawyer to meet the needs of his neighbors (10:36-37)
  - C. Love your neighbor by meeting their needs because Jesus first cared for our spiritual need.

## CONCLUSION

1. Summary: See the needs of your neighbor. See that God has put you there to meet the needs of your neighbor. See that you meet the needs of your neighbor.
2. Closing Image: G. K. Chesterton once quipped, "We make our friends; we make our enemies, but God makes our next-door neighbor. ... We have to love our neighbor because he is there." The nearness of our neighbor is providential, as God never gets the address wrong. God has revealed to you the need of your neighbor for you to see and meet them.

## MANUSCRIPT

Years ago, in college, I had the opportunity to study abroad in China. I remember one time I ate lunch with a friend named Robbie, who was a believer, at McDonalds. I don't remember why we ate McDonalds. But I do remember that we had to eat quickly and return to the bus to get to our next destination. As we left McDonalds, I walked slightly ahead of him. We continued the conversation from lunch as we made our way through the Chinese crowd. I asked a question of Robbie and didn't hear reply. Thinking it was kind of odd, I turned around.

**When I turned around, I saw Robbie talking to a homeless little boy.**

A lot of homeless people populated the streets of China much like Houston. Our program director instructed us not to give out money to the homeless because some of them were swindlers. It would be best for us to walk past them.

Seeing that Robbie had stopped to talk to the boy, I walked toward them. I heard Robbie offering to buy the boy a burger from the nearby McDonalds. But the boy's father stood nearby yelling at his son to just get money from the foreigner. The boy felt torn and decided to return to his dad rather than take up Robbie's offer for a free hamburger. The reason I still recall this story is because I wondered: "Why didn't I see the little boy? Why did Robbie see him? Have all the homeless in China desensitized me from seeing them?"

I think that **the many needs around us desensitize us from loving our neighbor.** We're just overwhelmed by people needing help. It could be the panhandlers that we see on the way to street. It might be the co-workers who need help to meet their deadlines. It could be our classmates struggling with a classes. It could be our friend going through some kind of life issue. A church ministry needs help. Every day, I receive emails form different organizations

asking for financial help. Who do we help? As a mentor once told me: If everything is urgent, then nothing becomes urgent.” In other words, the overwhelming needs around us make us blind to them. It hinders us from loving our neighbor.

**How do we love our neighbors?** How do we care for the people that we see around us whether it be in the workplace, classroom, church, home, or world? With so many needs around us, how do we know who we’re supposed to help? How do we love our neighbors?

To answer this question, we’re going to turn to the well-known parable: The Good Samaritan. Both believers and non-believers love this story. It’s found in the gospel of Luke, chapter 10, beginning with verse 25. Luke, chapter 10, verse 25.

In this parable, we’ll discover that **there are three things that we’ll need to see to love our neighbor**. There are three things we have to train our eyes to be able to catch. Three things that we need to see.

First, we need to **see the needs of our neighbor**. We have to pay attention to what is the need of neighbor. What does our neighbor need help in? We need to see the needs of our neighbor.

In this text, **Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan to teach the lawyer to see who his neighbor is**. Now it’s easy for us in this day to think when we read: “lawyer” a person who shows up to courtroom with suit and tie to prosecute or defend a person. But when Luke uses the word: lawyer it refers to someone well versed in the Old Testament law. And this lawyer has heard of this teacher from Nazareth – some no name town in the northern region of Galilee. Not only is he not from a well-known city, he’s a carpenter with little formal training in

the law. So the lawyer wants to test the mettle of the Galilean rabbi by asking the question in verse 25: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

It's an odd question. After all, the only time you inherit something is when a family member dies. If you're named in the will, then you inherit a person's car, house, or pet dog. The lawyer may have been instead asking: "When everyone is resurrected at the end, how do I make sure that I'm part of the group resurrected? How do I get into the crowd that is saved?" And the lawyer believes that he can do something about it. Note he asks: "What shall I do?"

To this question, Jesus gives the lawyer a pop quiz in verse 26: "*What is written in the Law? How do you read it?*" This is typical of Jesus to answer a question with another question. Since the lawyer knew the law, Jesus decided to ask him instead: "How would you summarize the law?"

Immediately, the lawyer's mind goes to the shemah found in Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 4 thru 6 and replies: "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." Then his mind thinks about Leviticus chapter 19, verse 18: "And love your neighbor as yourself."

And how well did the lawyer do on Jesus's pop quiz. Jesus replies in verse 28: "*You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.*" The lawyer passes with flying colors.

But the lawyer not being quite sure if he loved his neighbor enough that he felt confident about his eternal destiny. He wanted to make sure that he was with those who are saved. So he asks Jesus in verse 29: "*And who is my neighbor?*" This launches into the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Many of you know this story. There is a man who is traveling down to Jericho from Jerusalem. Verse 30 says: *“A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho.”* The journey was about 16-17 miles of treacherous terrain through mountains. At any time, robbers, could spring from a cave and jump a hapless traveler. Unfortunately, for this man he ran into some nasty robbers. Verse 30 continues: *“And he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half-dead.”*

This guy’s breathing became shallow. Blood flowed from his open wounds. The hot sun bore down against his exposed skin. He must have thought: *“If only someone could come by and see me, then I would be saved.”*

Verse 31 says: *“Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.”* If this half-dead man had a list of would be rescuers, then a priest might have been near the top of the list. But when the priest saw him, he might have thought to himself: *“Oh no! There’s a dead person on the road. Now the law says if even my shadow touches him, then I’ll be defiled. I’m already on my way home. If I go to check on him, then I’ll have to explain to people that I’m unclean. That would be shameful considering the fact that I had just finished my week of temple service. It’s probably better if I just avoid the trouble. Besides, I don’t want to go back up to Jerusalem and go back through the rites to cleanse myself. It’s too much work.”* He passes him by. **The priest failed to see the injured may because he saw defilement.**

Now all hope is not all lost because the injured man looks off to the distance and through his blurry vision and sees a Levite. Verse 32 says: *“So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.”* The Levite like the priest worked at the

temple. But since the Levite did not trace his direct lineage to Aaron, he only assisted with temple activities. Think of him as the assistant pastor. He organized the scrolls, inspected the animals, swept the floors, took inventory of temple supplies, and such. When he saw the injured man he might have thought: "Man... I'm already pressed for time. The priest sent me to Jericho to complete a time sensitive task. If I stop to help this guy, then what am I going to tell the priest when I'm finish his assignment late. This would be a terrible interruption. Maybe when I get to Jericho, I'll send some help to this man." He passes by. **The Levite failed to see the injured man because he saw interruption. The priest and Levite fail to see the injured man.** They both pass him by.

At this point of the story, the lawyer must have thought: "The priest and Levite failed in caring for this man. Maybe the next guy will be a lawyer." Imagine his surprise when the next guy that sees the injured man is a Samaritan. A Samaritan!?! It would be an understatement to say how much the Jews hated the Samaritans. For a Jew, to eat with a Samaritan was akin to eating pork. It's like the bad blood that exists today between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East. Or the bad blood that once existed between Chinese and Japanese in World War 2. But the Samaritan doesn't pass the injured man by. Verse 33 says: "*But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.*" The word for compassion has the idea of being hit in the gut. It's interesting how deep emotion is attributed to the stomach. When you feel a deep attraction to someone, you have butterflies in your stomach. When you feel deeply anxious, you feel nauseous. **The Samaritan sees the injured man and feels compassion.**

Did you notice that each of the characters saw and responded differently? The priest saw the injured man and possibly thought: “defilement” and passed by. The Levite saw the injured man and possibly thought: “interruption” and passed by. The Samaritan saw the injured man and felt compassion. Why is that? Why were their responses so different?

**Who you are determines what you see.** Your experiences and belief shape who you are what you see. **Who you are determines what you see.**

Weeks ago, Josephine and I went on an architecture boat tour in Chicago. I have no architecture background. As we sailed down the river, all I saw were buildings. That one is short. That one is tall. That one has a lot of windows. That one has few windows. You can tell I have no eye for the aesthetics. But if you asked our tour guide what he thought about a building, he could tell what era it was built. He could what kind of design philosophy was used: Art Deco, Modern, or Post Modern. He could even name the architect that built the building: Frank Lloyd Wright or Louis Sullivan. As an expert in architecture, the tour guide saw beauty. Me, I saw buildings. It’s true not only of architecture tours, but true of life as well. Doctors see a body differently than one that has no medical training. An auto mechanic sees a car differently than those who have no mechanical aptitude. **Who you are determines what you see.**

Now if we are Christians, those who are called into a relationship with God through faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ, then what should we see? How does being a follower of Christ determine what we see? This brings us to our second point.

**See that God has put you there to meet the needs of your neighbor.** Understand that God has put you there to see a need and to meet it. God will highlight a certain need and put

you in a position to meet it. **See that God has put you there to meet the needs of your neighbor.**

This requires spiritual sight and a spiritual identity. **Prior to this parable, Jesus teaches how God gives spiritual sight to his followers.** God opens the eyes of his followers to see things that they once couldn't see. Their blindness had been lifted. God gives spiritual sight to his followers. What do God's follower's see?

First, **his followers see God's saving work in Christ to rescue them from their sins.** Look with me at verse 21: *"In the same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, for such was your gracious will."* For spiritual truth is hidden from those who seem to have knowledge and insight. Only God can reveal these spiritual truths. And God reveals to those who are simple, children who realize that they need his help to save them from their sin. For this should create within us a great love for God that he would save a sinner like me. If we love the God, it's easy for us to talk about the wonders of God. But God wants us actually to respond by loving our neighbor as ourselves. If we truly love God, then we would love our neighbors.

Second, **his followers see Christ establishing his kingdom.** Verse 23 says: *"Blessed are the eyes that see what you see!"* For Jesus's disciples had the opportunity to see demons cast out and those with illness healed. It's as though the kingdom of darkness has been pushed back. Why should we consider ourselves blessed? We consider ourselves blessed because God has revealed to us his plan to redeem people through the saving work of Christ. For this is



ushering a people not bound by the ethics of this land, but the ethics of a kingdom that will last all eternity under the rule of God. This ethic will be known by a love for God and neighbor.

Third, **his followers see themselves as continuing Christ's work, which includes loving their neighbor.** This is seen in this parable of the Good Samaritan. If you think about the storyline of the bible, then you might recognize how God despite the disobedience of his people sent outcasts to save his people from the effect of their sin. When you think about the time of Judges, God would raise an outcast: Gideon, who came from the smallest tribe of Manasseh, to rescue Israel from the Midianites. Or think about how the God would rescue Israel from the Philistines by raising up a shepherd boy, whom everyone overlooked. This shepherd boy would eventually become Israel's king. Think about how we were lost in our sins. Sin had hold over every aspect of our lives. Like Israel and this injured man on the side of the road, we needed help. We needed someone to rescue us. God would raise up an outcast named Jesus. A boy who would grow up ostracized because everyone know that his mom had him before she married. He lived as fully God and man. Everyone misunderstood him from the religious leaders to his disciples. But he like the Samaritan would see us in need of help and would offer up his life so that we could be delivered from our sins. For Jesus's love of God compelled him to love us his neighbor by saving us from our sin. When we believe in Jesus's saving work, we also became outcasts as well. We adopt a life that is not of this world. We live as sojourners in this land to love our neighbors. This requires us to see that God has put us here to meet the needs of our neighbor.

Does that mean that we need to meet the needs of every single person that we meet? That would be impossible. For one would never have the time and resources to help every single person that he or she meets.

**God reveals the needs of your neighbors for you to see.** In other words, there are certain people that God brings in your life for you to see their needs. There are certain individuals whose needs will stand out to you because God has made it so. Its as though God shines a giant spotlight upon the needs of this individual. God has revealed those needs to you. It doesn't matter who your neighbor might be. Your neighbor could be black, white, Latino, or Asian. They would all be considered your neighbor.

What are we to do when God reveals the needs of your neighbor for you to see? This brings us to our third point.

**See that you meet the needs of your neighbor.** Meet the needs of your neighbor that God has revealed to you. Fulfill the needs of your neighbor. Care for what your neighbor needs. **See that you meet the needs of your neighbor.**

**The Samaritan meets the needs of the injured man.** Not only did the Samaritan feel compassion, but he also did something about it. Many of us may feel touched when we see a need. But that is insufficient. We need to do something. This is what the Samaritan does. Read with me in verse 34: *"He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine."* Think about what the Samaritan used to bandage the injured man's wounds. He probably didn't carry a first aid kit around. He most likely tore strips from robes to serve as bandages. Pouring oil over the wounds would soothe the pain the injured man he might have felt. The wine served as a form of disinfectant. Where would he get the oil and wine from? It would

probably be among the supplies he packed for the journey. It cost him his outfit and some of his travel rations. Verse 34 continues: *“Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.”* It must have taken some work, but the Samaritan somehow placed the injured man on his animal, most likely a donkey, and walked the rest of the way to Jericho to an inn. Verse 35 says: *“And the next day, he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying “Take care of him and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.””* Two denarii were approximately the wages of two days of work. Some commentators believe that the two denarii could have paid for a twenty-four day stay at the inn. Later, the Samaritan would return to pay whatever else needed to be paid for.

From the Samaritans actions, we can observe two things. First, **The Samaritan met the needs of the injured man despite the cost.** The Samaritan gave up materials: cloth, wine, oil, and wages to care for the man. To meet the needs of a neighbor it may cost you something. It may cost you money when you pay for the lunch of someone can't pay. You may not be able to go on vacation to Europe this year because you decide to help a missionary get to the field.

Second, **the Samaritan met the needs of the injured man despite the disruption of schedule.** Think about it. The Samaritan traveled the same road to Jericho. I'm sure that he had a schedule to meet and things he needed to get done. But he stopped to take care of an injured man and allowed a delay in his plan. Loving our neighbor will not always be convenient. We live such busy lives that to stop and help someone will serve as a huge inconvenience. We'd rather sometimes just write a check or send a Venmo rather than get involved. We can't schedule it in our calendars, I'll help anyone with a need from 1:00-3:00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Often times, the needs of our neighbor will arise unexpectedly. Someone may call

you in the middle of dinner asking if you could help pick them up from the side of the road. On the way home from work, you may receive a message that your friend's family member just passed. Loving your neighbor may sometimes mean a disruption of your schedule. Will you allow for God to disrupt your schedule so that you can meet the need of your neighbor?

After telling the parable, there is an epilogue. **Jesus instructs the lawyer to meet the need of his neighbors.** For verse 36 says: *"Which of these three, do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."* Notice the lawyer's answer: "The one who showed him mercy." He couldn't even form on his lips the word: "Samaritan".

What does God call us to do? **Love your neighbor by meeting their needs because Jesus first cared for our spiritual need.** Because Jesus stopped to love us, his neighbor, we are called to go do likewise. Sometimes, the need isn't as clear as simple as we think.

For instance, when the college students and I went on a spring break mission trip here in Houston we learned a very important lesson. To love the homeless, it's not just dropping a few coins into their cup. For their need is not just material, but relational as well. Many homeless find it shameful to ask for money. And we don't realize that what they desire is a person, who will stop, and listen to their story. If you would just stop and listen, then you'll discover that some of these homeless may be former postman or husbands with homes. Yet due to an unfortunate turn of circumstances, they ended up on the street. To love your neighbor as Jesus loved us requires us to not just meet surface level needs but ask God to reveal what is the need that you want me to meet. For sometimes, it's not as easily perceptible as we think and it will require time to discover those needs.

As followers of Christ, we recognize that the greatest need that an unbeliever has is a need for Christ's saving work. To love our neighbor as ourselves requires a willingness to put ourselves in uncomfortable position for their sake by sharing the gospel. If we truly believe that people are going to hell apart from faith in Christ, then the most unloving thing that we can do is not share the gospel with them. It's sad that when we have a heart for a people group thousands of miles away when the person across from us in our neighborhood or our office is equally damned.

How do we love our neighbor? See the needs of your neighbor. See that God has put you there to meet the needs of your neighbor. See that you meet the needs of your neighbor.

G. K. Chesterton once quipped, "We make our friends; we make our enemies, but God makes our next door neighbor. ... We have to love our neighbor because he is there." The nearness of our neighbor is providential, as God never gets the address wrong. God has revealed to you the needs of your neighbor for you to see and meet them.