

“Won’t You Be My Neighbor?”

Luke 10:30-37

Feb. 5, 2023

Luke 10:25-29

- 25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying,
 "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
- 26 And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?"
- 27 And 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 answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE."
- 29 But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

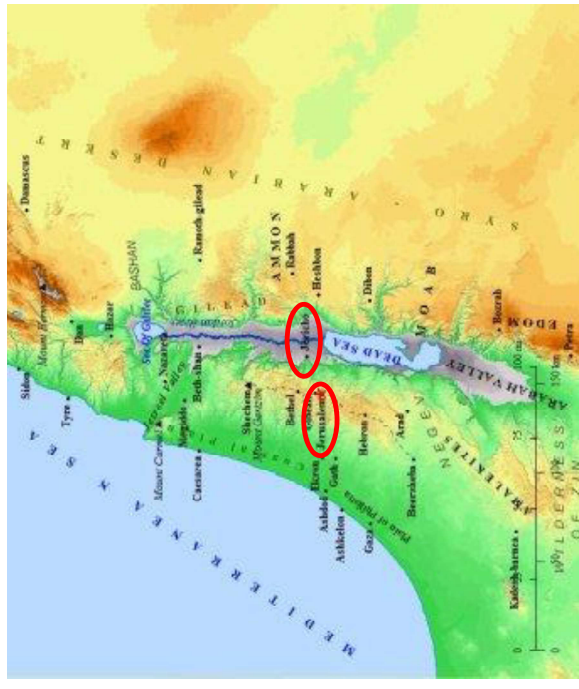
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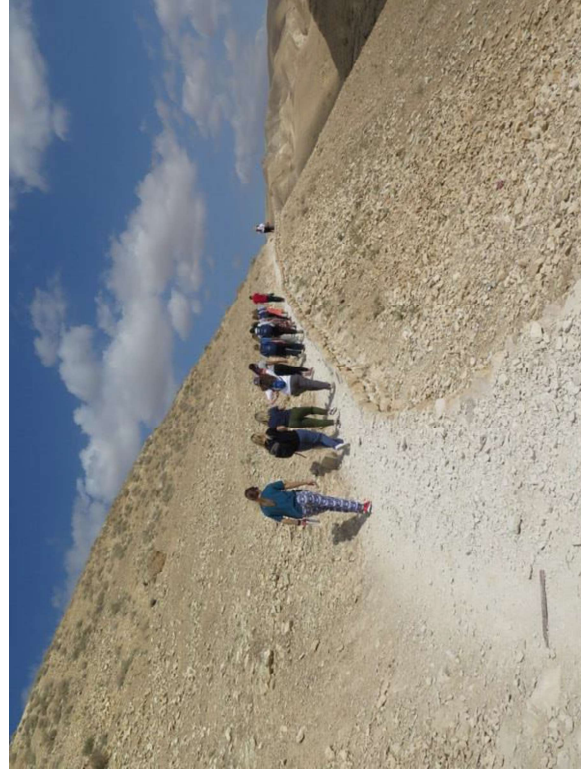
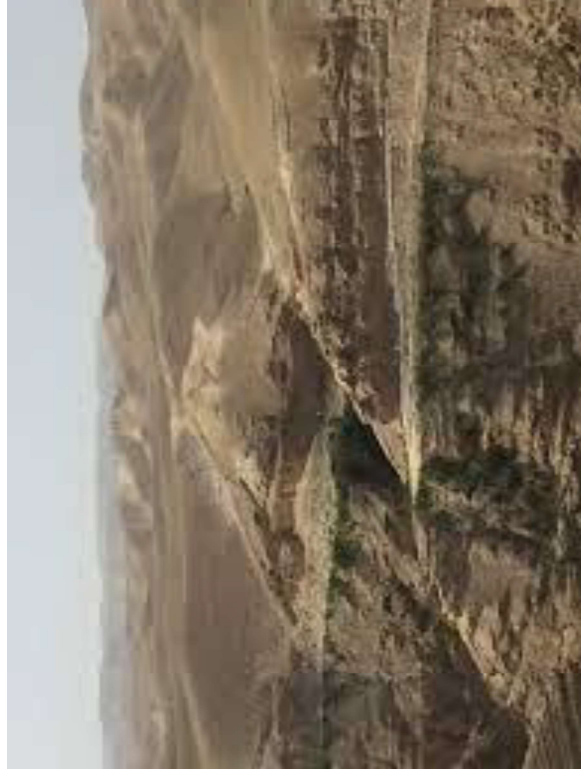
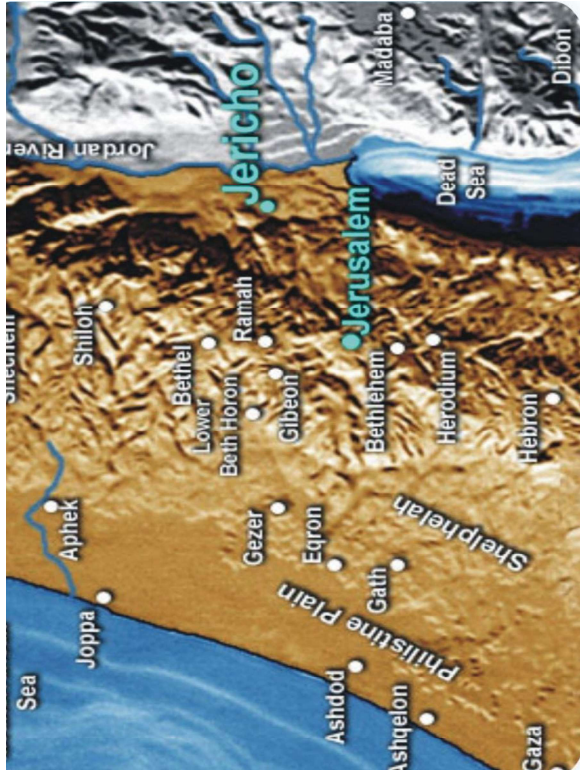
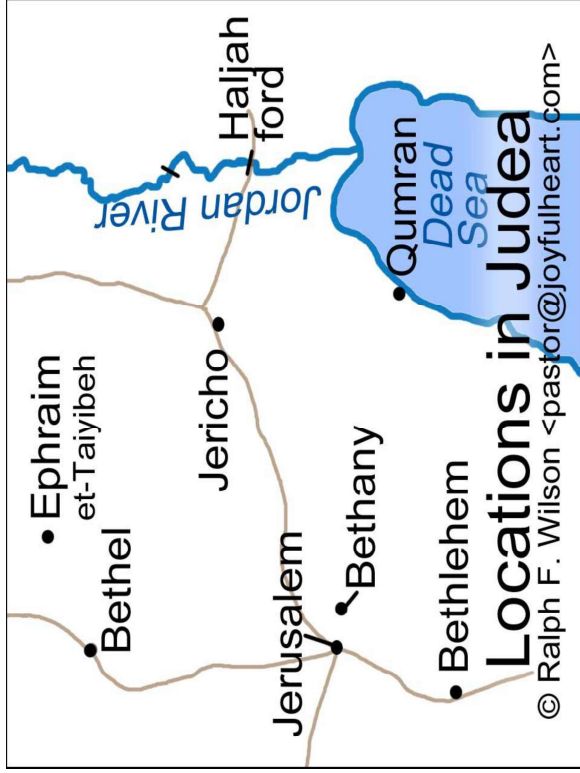
- The flesh always wants to justify itself.
- The lawyer just wanted to make sure he was already “loving his neighbor.”
- So he was looking for the definition of “neighbor” to be those only in his bubble, those he was already loving (Jews, friends, fellow-lawyers, people of similar wealth and social status.)
- He was looking for Jesus to assure him that he was loving his neighbors.
- Jesus is about to burst his bubble and expand his sphere far beyond where he currently is.
- So Jesus engages him in an illustration, a parable.

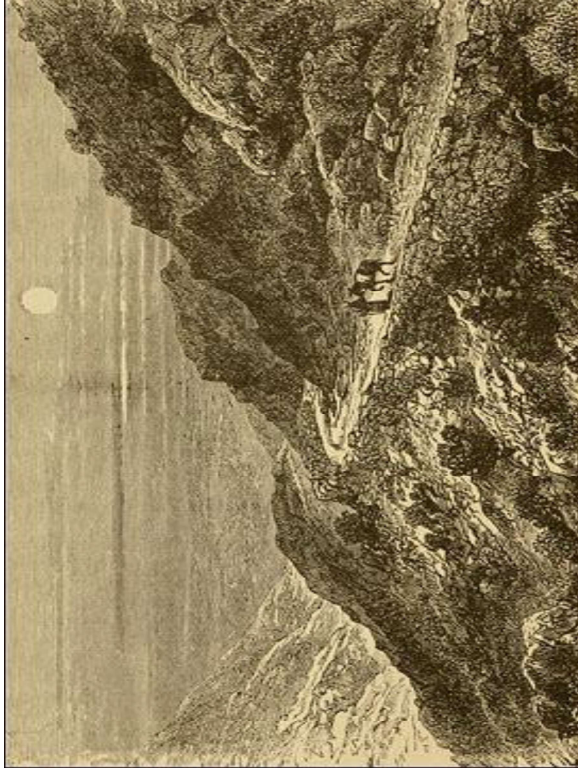
“going down” – Jerusalem to Jericho is 17 miles. Jerusalem is 3,000 feet above sea level, Jericho is 1,000 feet below sea level – that is a 4,000 foot drop. Dangerous terrain. Rocks and caves where robbers could and did hide.

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- 32 "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.
- 33 "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion,
- 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.
- 35 "On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you."
- 36 "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?"
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- Man is attacked and has no place to go – over the cliff or up the mountain.
 - The attacked man lost everything and nearly his own life.
- "half dead"** – ημιθάνησ – entirely exhausted, nearly out of life. The needle on his "life-tank" was nearly on empty.

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- We now will meet 3 men who will be coming down the road.
- So here comes a priest. Here is a man who stood between the people and God, presenting sacrifices and offerings to God for sinners, and teaching people the way of God. Known as the most godly, most righteous, filled with virtue. One whose job it was to help man. Or, in this case, was he someone who was just going through the legalistic motions of religion??
- Probably going home after doing his responsibilities of serving in the temple for a month.
- Surely this "man of God" will stop.
- Surely, if anyone, this priest will show love and compassion and help this victim.
- But he doesn't. He makes a point of going on the other side of the road. At this point we exclaim, What?? Are you kidding me?? What is the matter with this priest??
- But maybe to the lawyer it makes sense.

Here are some seemingly legitimate excuses these men might have offered for passing by on the other side:

- 1) I'm too busy to stop.
- 2) I'm late already.
- 3) I don't know him.
- 4) It may be a trap of some kind.
- 5) I'm not a doctor.
- 6) He's probably already dead.
- 7) Someone else will come along who can help him better than I can.
- 8) I've been serving God all week and I'm tired.
- 9) I tried to help someone like this before and it blew up in my face.
- 10) There could be a court case and I don't want to get involved.
- 11) The family is expecting me. I can't be late.
- 12) I've got a prayer meeting tonight.
- 13) I'm wearing my temple garments. I can't get them dirty.
- 14) I don't have enough money to help him.
- 15) I'm too busy worshipping God.
- 16) When I get to Jericho, I'll call 911 and have them send help.

James 2:14-17

14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,

16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

Gal 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Heb 13:16

16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Matt 5:42

42 "Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

Prov 19:17

17 One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord,

And He will repay him for his good deed.

Matt 25:44-46

44 "Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?'

45 "Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'

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• The 2nd person to come down the road was a Levite. Levites come from the tribe of Levi. They assist the priest in his duties. Another full time religious man.

• Will this Levite help this man? Will he show love and compassion toward this man. No he will not.

• Why? Suffering is a massive inconvenience to our lives.

• Our own suffering disrupts our lives.

• The suffering of others also disrupts our lives.

• These 2 religious men decide that it is not going to disrupt their lives. They have plans. Besides that:

- they have no first aid boxes.

- the sun is going down.

- there are things to do, people to see, places to go.

- it was dangerous to stop.

- they had no defense against robbers.

- they would rather just love themselves.

- the man was nearly dead.

Excuses, Excuses, Excuses!

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• The 3rd person to come along the road was a Samaritan.

"Samaritan" – this story and the word "Samaritan" are commonly used in our society – Samaritan's Hospital, Good Samaritan Law (to protect from liability those who would help others). We often say, "He was a good Samaritan."

• If you lined up the 3 men before this incident, the Samaritan would be the least likely to help.

• Samaritans hated Jews (arrogant know-it alls) and Jews hated Samaritans (heretics).

• Not religious. Not belonging to the clergy.

• This dying man, who likely was a Jew, becomes the Samaritan's neighbor.

• Other 2 men – no compassion. Samaritan is different. What an indictment to Pharisicalism.

• The Samaritan was loving his neighbor as he loved himself.

• **Here is the point:** Whatever you would do for yourself, you should do for your neighbor.

• The thieves saw the man as a victim to exploit.

• The Priest & the Levite saw the man as a nuisance to avoid.

• The Samaritan saw him as a neighbor to help.

• So who is my neighbor . . .

My neighbor is anyone
that I know or who is near to me
that has a legitimate need that I can meet.

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- The Samaritan used what he had:
 - Wine (antiseptic)
 - Oil (to soothe the wounds)
 - Clothes for bandages.
 - Strength and any ability.
 - Money
 - Time
- It is all a great sacrifice.
- He puts him on his donkey and walks beside him.
- Risks his life.
- Brings him to safety.
- Takes care of him through the night at the inn. Inns were not good places to be (brothels, corrupt, shady people).

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"two denarii" – 2 days of wages.

- That would cover a stay at the inn 1-2 months.
- Another risk - the innkeeper could easily overcharge him.
- Helping others involves risk.
- This dying man is a total stranger. It does not matter how he got into that condition, it only matters that he is my neighbor. There are no qualifications.

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Let's summarize -

"Did you ever see a total stranger in need, somebody you didn't know, better yet somebody who was your arch-enemy and you went over, ministered to all his needs, gave him everything he needed, stayed with him, took him somewhere, put him to bed, fed him, stayed all night to make sure that he was recovering appropriately, then paid for his care for up to two months and said if it's more than this, when I come back I'll give you all the rest? Have you ever done that for anybody?"

36 "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?"

- Pretty simple question. It goes right to the heart of the lawyer.
- How is the lawyer going to get out of this one?
- The flesh here is taking a beating. It has been exposed.
- There are no excuses.
- If you want eternal life, you must admit you can't live the life.

37 And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

- This is so painful for the lawyer. He has no "non-neighbors" that he can ignore after this and therefore be justified.
- The whole point of the parable is to bring conviction to the lawyer. It is to drive him to repentance.
- It is conviction that he can't do it. No one can love God and neighbor all of the time.
- **"Go and do the same"** – Did he? No. Could he? No.
- The Law demands 100%. Anything less than that, and there is no eternal life.
- Many people and even commentators miss the context of this parable.
- They get lost in the "good works" of this parable.
- This parable is about how to inherit eternal life. And it is not by good works.
- The road of good works will only condemn you because you can't do enough. Fallen man is incapable.
- The lawyer should have repented immediately of his inability because of his sin.

It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood

A beautiful day for a neighbor

Would you be mine? Could you be mine?

It's a neighborly day in this beautywood

A neighborly day for a beauty

Would you be mine? Could you be mine?

I have always wanted to have a neighbor just like you
I've always wanted to live in a neighborhood with you

So, let's make the most of this beautiful day
Since we're together, we might as well say
Would you be mine? Could you be mine?
Won't you be my neighbor?

Won't you please, won't you please?
Please, won't you be my neighbor?

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Application

1. Inheriting eternal life requires perfection toward God and toward others all of the time.
2. Watch out for the flesh. It will want to justify and redefine perfection. The flesh oozes with pride.
3. This coming week all of us will walk the Jericho road. We will meet someone in need. Neighbors are everywhere.

Do not ask:

- "Who is this person and how did they get in this situation?"
- "Is this a friend or an enemy?"
- "Do I know this person?"
- "What political party do they belong to?"
- "What did they do to deserve this?"
- "Is this person a believer, my color, my background, my language, my country?"
- It does not matter.

Only 1 question - **Will I be this person's neighbor?**

"All the world is my neighborhood and all the hurting are my neighbors. I will do what I can, to help whoever I can, whenever I can, by whatever means are available to me, with God's help."