Who is my neighbour? - Luke 10:25-37

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Preacher: Brian Vickers

[0:00] 42, Luke 10, verse 25 to 37. And to encourage you all, if you're able to, to come to this evening to the Delaun lecture.

If you hear lecture, don't be put off by thinking, oh, that's something away up here, I couldn't do that. It's very accessible. And we want you to be encouraged in God's words.
So do come tonight as well. So let's read Luke 10, verse 25 to 37. On one occasion, an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus.
Teacher, he asked, what must I do to inherit eternal life? What is written in the law? Jesus replied. How do you read it? He answered. 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 love your neighbor as yourself.
[1:13] You have answered correctly, Jesus replied. Do this and you will live. But he wanted to justify himself. So he asked Jesus, and who is my neighbor?

In reply, Jesus said, a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.
A priest happened to be going down the same road. And when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.
But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was. And when he saw him, he took pity on him.
He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.
[2:21] The next day, he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. Look after him, he said. And when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.

Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?
The expert in the law replied, the one who had mercy on him.
Jesus told him, go and do likewise. Well, before Brian comes, I'm going to pray for you and for us. Let's pray. Father, again, we thank you for your word.
Thank you that we have access to it in our language. Thank you that you have given to us gifted teachers. We thank you for Brian being here this week and speaking here today.
And yet, Father, we are conscious that we have your word. We have people. We need your Holy Spirit. And we pray for his help.
[3:33] That through what we hear, it would be as if you are speaking to us. Changing us. Making us more like Christ.

This is our desire. Amen. Thanks, Brian. It's a privilege for me to be here this morning.
I've had a great week. One of the best, really. And Vincent was asking me what I thought liked the best. I mean, I saw, I know why Americans love Ireland.
My wife is sort of a fanatic when it comes to Ireland. She's never been here. But I understand it all now, after being here for a week. And the best part is the people. And I'm not just saying that. That's really what you remember when you travel.
Pastor Johnny told me not to preach more than an hour and a half. And Ross Campbell said it's okay if it goes two hours, but no more than that.
[4:42] So, I'm ready, I think. Thirteen years ago, about thirteen years ago, my father passed away.

And he had owned an auto shop. Just, you know, they made repairs. And they also had gasoline or petrol out front. And he did that his whole life.

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He had this business something like forty-five years or something like that. And he had done it ever since he started that business or got in on it when he came back from the war. And that's what he did his whole life.
And he built this business up. And one of the amazing things was that at the funeral, there was a big line of people that come and greet you. That's sort of how we do it. And I stood there with my family for two straight hours for the people to come up and greet us.
And what I heard was story after story after story after story from all kinds of people that I didn't know about what my dad had done for them. You know, a lot of people just, you know, condolences.
[5:49] But person after person would come up and tell me a story something like, I can remember several. But one saying, you know, I met your dad thirty years ago. I pulled into his shop or I called and my car was broken down.

He came and picked me up in his own car. Had my car taken to his shop. He gave me his car to use until his car was fixed. And then when I couldn't pay the bill, he gave me time to pay it.
And he would always loan me his car. Because he said, my car broke down all the time. And your dad would just always give me his car. Or people would come up and say, you know, I couldn't pay my bill. And your dad would just sort of cut it in half or just let it go.
And he said, you know, I think I probably never paid him everything. And he never would demand it. Or that he would do repairs for free. Or he'd come around on the weekends after working sort of kind of like eight to eight almost every day.
Especially in the early years. He'd come around on weekends and fix cars for people and work on their houses. It's just one story after another after another after another. And then when we pulled out to drive up to the cemetery, I looked back.
[7:00] And I'm not kidding. I couldn't see the end of the row of cars that were following us to come up. And my dad was, he owned an auto shop. And, you know, and this is, and I just thought, you know, this is a testimony to my dad's life.

And it was a testimony to all the people that he touched. But all the people he touched, he didn't sort of touch them in sort of big, great ways that might have made the news. Or that people would think about.
It was, nobody even knew these stories. I didn't even know these stories. And, but that's the way my dad lived. And that's the way he gave himself for others. If I asked you, what's the most important thing in the Christian life?
What would you say? Now, we've read, Johnny read this text and you probably know the answer, right? So the answer's already there. But if we hadn't read this text today, what might you say? And you don't have to answer out loud, of course. But just be honest with yourself.
What's the most important thing you could do? What's the most important thing in the Christian life? What's the first thing that crosses your mind? Well, probably several different things. And certainly at the top of that would be love God.
[8:05] Well, here's my question for you. Is loving God more important for a Christian than loving your neighbor? Is it more important? Well, I suppose that kind of depends on what we mean by that, right?

Because it isn't more important as long as we're not thinking about them as things that you can separate. What I mean is this. Loving God is not more important than your neighbor if you look at it as these are sort of two things you do.
You love God and you've got that part down. The neighbor part, I'm not really sure what that means. They're sort of two different things. What Jesus is doing in this story is he's bringing them together. He's not separating them.
He's not saying, well, you know, you love God on one sort of part of your day. That's your maybe private life with God and your, I don't know, your Bible reading and devotions and going to church and worshiping.
You do those bits. And then this other part, you love your neighbor. Well, that's not how Jesus actually speaks of it. That's how this guy who comes to speak to Jesus sort of thinks of it.
[9:09] That's sort of two different things. Now, one comes from the other, right? It's our love for God that flows into loving our neighbor, that produces our love for our neighbor. But you can't separate them.

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Because if we think about our Christian walk, our Christian life as simply loving God, then the question becomes, what does that look like? What does that mean in your everyday life?
Does it just mean your sort of private relationship with Jesus? And the other thing is this, what does that look like? What does love for God look like? How does it show itself?
You know, these are sort of the questions that surround this text. So, again, when I say that love for God is not more important than loving your neighbor, what I mean is you can't separate.
That's all I mean. And I think that's what Jesus is doing. Now, like all the parables, you know, Jesus would tell these parables. He would go around, and you can see it in this one, right? And the guy comes, asks him a question.
[10:07] They have this conversation. And then the guy asks one more question. And Jesus doesn't answer the question. He just tells a story. And he does this all the time. Imagine coming up to somebody and asking them a question, and they just start telling a story.

Don't really answer your question, but tell you a story. And he did this over and over and over again, all the time. I'm sure the people who are around him all the time, they would know it's coming. Somebody would come and ask him a question, and one of the disciples would say, here comes a story, I'm sure of it.
And then, sure enough, here comes a story. And sometimes Jesus wouldn't even, you know, really, sometimes he wouldn't even really apply it to people. Just leave them with it.
And that's what Jesus' stories do. Jesus' stories come to us, and we're really familiar with it. So it can be really hard, because we know them really well. Like a story of the Good Samaritan. Virtually every Christian knows the story.
And it's easy to read it, and you think, oh, I know it. And yeah, the Samaritan's a good guy. There's dirty priests, and Levites, bad guys. I really like the Samaritan.
[11:09] Right? We immediately sort of see ourselves in that picture. But what we sometimes forget, because we're so familiar, is these stories are meant to challenge us.

We're not meant to just read this as a story, and then sort of go away thinking, wow, I love that Samaritan. He's a good guy. A priest. I can't stand that guy. That priest and that Levite.
Oh, they're horrible. And that lawyer who's bugging Jesus with all these questions. He's an awful guy. I love that Samaritan. And then we sort of go our way, and maybe don't think about it again.
The parables of Jesus are meant specifically to challenge us. Right? So that we read them, and we put ourselves in the story, not just in the position of the hero. Right?
Not just in the position of the Samaritan, but how do we see ourselves sort of in each of the people in the story? And be really honest with ourselves. Where are we? Where do we stand in relation to all these people?
[12:08] Which person in this story am I most like? And then, what does it mean to love my neighbor? Right? What does that mean? What does the word neighbor even mean?

Right? It's kind of a hard word, I think, sometimes for us, because we think of a neighbor as what? The people who live in the house next door or across the street. Growing up as a kid, there was a children's show. It was hugely popular.
And this guy would sing the song about, Won't you be my neighbor? That's the whole, I can remember it to this day. In fact, when I hear the word neighbor in the Bible, I don't care where I am, what I'm doing, that song comes to mind immediately.
I think about this guy saying, Won't you be, won't you please, won't you please, won't you be my neighbor? And I won't sing it for you. That's what always comes to mind. But I guess right off the bat, what we should say, if you want to know what a neighbor is, it's who's around you.
It's the easiest way to think of it. It's the people around you. And it doesn't necessarily mean, and often doesn't mean, sort of your friends. The people that you sort of take to easily.
[13:11] You know, it can be those people. It doesn't exclude those people. But quite easily, a neighbor is who's around you and who's in need. That's it. Right? But just who's, the people around you.

Just think of it that way. Right? Not sort of whether they're good friends or how well you know them or how long you've known them or whether you're related to them. It's love God and love people. That's going to be the easier way to put it. You know? And in the Old Testament, this was everything, just like the lawyer says. What's the middle of the law? What's the center of the law? What's easy?

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You love God. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. Those are the two things. Now, the Apostle Paul, just like Jesus, can say this. The whole law is summed up like this. Love your neighbor as yourself. And not even mention the first part. And I don't think it's because Paul just sort of forgot the God part. Right? He writes this letter to this church in Galatia and he's sort of dictating it and then he sends it off and later he's like, Oh!
[14:12] I always forget that first part. That first bit. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. I always leave that out. And I left it out this time. I just put the neighbor part in. Well, you know, it's not very likely that the Apostle Paul of all people would forget that first part.

But he can say it. The whole law is summed up like this. Not just say, Love the Lord, but the whole law summed up, Love your neighbor as yourself. There's an example of it.
The two things can't be separated. And Jesus can say the same thing. Love your neighbor as yourself. It's everything in a Christian context. It's everything. And when you say love your neighbor as yourself, as a Christian, it is connected to and only makes sense in Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.
And if you think about and think about Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, it shows itself in your love for the others around you. Otherwise, you're in danger of it just being words.
Or you're just in danger of thinking about my relationship with God as just sort of my own private thing where I'm reading the Bible and praying. Those are good things to do. Don't get me wrong. I'm all for reading the Bible. I'm all for praying.
[15:24] I'm all for going to church. I'm all for worshiping. Those things are essential. But if we only think of our Christian life and our love for God as showing itself in our sort of private life with God, our private walk with God, then we're missing out on the thing that the lawyer here is missing out on.

And we're missing out on the thing that both Jesus and Paul will say, it's everything. Loving those around you the way you love yourself. It's the center of everything. And so you know this story. And Johnny's read it, so I'm not going to reread the whole thing. It's easily three parts. So you have this lawyer. Now, this expert in the law. You might think of him as a scholar. Sometimes the translation will say lawyer, and that sounds like somebody who's in court.
It's not really that. It's somebody who's an expert. That's what he does. His whole life is spent studying the Bible, which of course for them was the Old Testament. Right? And there's all kinds of rumors going around about Jesus.
Everybody wants to know what he's like. Everybody wants to talk to him. And some of the people who knew the Bible the best were particularly interested in talking to him. And sometimes they want to trick him.
[16:28] Sometimes they want to sort of trip him up. And sometimes they're just curious about what he'll say and what he thinks. And so in this story, in this story, this expert in the law comes up and says, Teacher, what do I need to do to have eternal life?

Now, we don't know. I mean, certainly the guy knew from the Bible. So it's probably likely he's like, I wonder what Jesus is going to say if I ask him this question. And Jesus is great.
I don't know. What do you think? That's what he says. Because he knows. Jesus knows this guy's a teacher and a scholar. And the guy says, What do I have to do to inherit eternal life? I don't know. What's the law say? You're the expert. Tell me. Jesus doesn't even answer him. He doesn't say, You tell me. What's it say? So he knows. I think he immediately knows something's up with this guy. This isn't just a simple question. And he knows there's something behind it. I mean, why would an expert in the law have to ask somebody, What do I have to do to inherit eternal life? And so Jesus, and then he answers.
[17:27] And he says, Well, it's love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind. I mean, that's everything, right? It means with your whole being. You don't really have to think about, Well, the mind part is maybe reading and the soul part.

I don't know what the soul part is. The life part is with your life and living. It just means your whole being. Everything about you. Devoted to God. That's all it means. And that's a lot.

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And then he says, And, love your neighbor as yourself. And Jesus says, That's right. You got it. You do that, you'll live.
Now, what I always imagine is that after that, there was a little bit of silence. Like the lawyers, you know, because the lawyer came up, he doesn't get an answer.
Jesus makes him answer. And Jesus says, That's right. You've got it. Just do that. And what I imagine, now I can't prove it, but what I imagine is there's a little, just time of uncomfortable silence with the lawyers maybe looking around.
[18:29] And, you know, Jesus' disciples, they're like, here it comes. Right? They know. And finally, after a little bit, the lawyer says, Well, okay, I've got one more question for you. And Luke tells us what's going on.

Luke says he wants to justify himself. So he says, So, who is my neighbor, by the way? I mean, as long as we're talking about it. What do you think?
Now, that question exposes everything we need to know about this young guy. Because if you ask somebody, Who is my neighbor? What's the question behind the question?
There's a question behind there. The minute you say, So who do I need to love? What are you asking, whether you realize it or not? Who can I kind of skip over?
Right? Tell me the people I really need to love to fulfill this. Because there's no, if you think, if you immediately think it's everybody, there's no reason you would ever ask, So who is my neighbor?
And I don't think it's because he doesn't understand the word neighbor like the way maybe we don't.
[19:29] Right? He's an expert in the law. So I don't think he's saying, What's the word neighbor mean, by the way? I've always wondered about that. I mean, I've been studying the Bible for my whole entire life. I still don't get it. I think what he means is, So who do I need to be loving?

You tell me. And Jesus doesn't tell him. He just tells a story. That's what he does. That's how he replies.
So who is my neighbor? Now just imagine, you have to think about it for a second. Imagine, imagine saying to Jesus, Who is my neighbor? And you're sitting there looking, waiting for an answer. And Jesus says, A man was going down from Jericho.
And as he went along the way, he got mugged and beaten and robbed. Hold on. Wait, did you not hear me? He had to think at some point, maybe he didn't hear my question.
The question is, Who's my neighbor? I mean, I'm sure this is a great story and everything, but who is my neighbor? And so Jesus now, what Jesus will do with this story, I'll just go ahead and give the ending away.
[20:31] What Jesus does with this story is, he changes the guy's question. He basically says, You're asking the wrong question. You don't get it at all. Because to ask that question improves, you don't really understand.

So Jesus changes the question. He will answer it, but it's sort of a long answer to say, Hey man, wrong question. You don't get it. It's not about sorting out who's your neighbor.
And then he tells this story, right? He tells this story. A man went down to Jericho. Now Jericho, this road, this road is a really dangerous road. Usually when people travel on this road, if they had any money or whatever, they would bring guards or people with them.
It's really well known. You can read stories about it. If you travel down from Jerusalem down to Jericho, it's really rocky and lots of places for people to hide.
People got mugged and robbed on it all the time. Really, really dangerous road. Right? So I'm sure there's somebody sitting in the audience thinking, Well, of course, served him right. Shouldn't have been walking down the road in the first place. And so, he's walking down the road.
[21:35] He gets mugged. Jesus goes really quick, right? They beat him to death. They leave him for dead. All right? And remember, the question is, Who is my neighbor? And Jesus says, Well, okay, this guy's going down.

He gets mugged. He gets half, he's left for dead. And then, a priest comes by. Well, if you're listening to the story, and especially if you're that lawyer, the expert in the law, the people probably have friends who are priests.
And besides, what do priests do? What's the job of a priest? A job of a priest in Israel was to do this. Was to maintain and keep the relationship between God and his people by offering sacrifices. Right? He's the sort of go-between between God and the people. He's the one who keeps the relationship smooth and running. His job is to keep God and people sort of reconciled together on a

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regular basis through the sacrifices.
Right? That's why he exists. He only exists to keep up that relationship between God and people. That's what priests do. You're like the big-time hero, right?
[22:35] That's what he does. They can't really sort of function without them. I mean, they can, but they don't want to. And so the priest comes by, and you must be thinking, if you're sitting there, ah, it's going to help him. Nope.

He saw the man, and he walked to the other side of the road. Now, people suggest all kinds of things for this. Maybe the priest was afraid if he's dead and he touches him, you know, he becomes unclean, as though that's a good excuse.
Or he just looks at him and thinks, well, you know, I don't know. Maybe he's just resting. I don't know what he's doing. But it's really clear. He sees him over there and crosses to the other side. Right?
Of all the people who should know the phrase, I desire mercy, not sacrifice, it should have been this guy, the priest.
And what does he do? He sees a person in need. Maybe he knows he's a Samaritan, which makes it even worse. Sorry, sorry. Getting ahead of myself. He sees this guy in need.
[23:34] He crosses the street, keeps right on walking. I mean, well, I mean, what next? Well, next comes a Levite. Now, who are the Levites? The Levites were the people who helped the priests.

That was their job. That was their, you know, they came from Levi and their job was to assist in all the stuff that takes place in the temple. That's what they did. That's why they were alive.
That's what God gave them to do. So you have the priest and then comes a guy next, right behind him, the guy who, his whole life is devoted to helping the priest keep the relationship between the people of Israel and God intact.
That's what they do. That's what they exist for. They exist to keep that relationship, that covenant, intact so that the people can be before God and worship God and that's what they do.
They maintain all the worship. Everything that takes place between God and people. That's what they do. They are, they are the religious elite of the time. Nobody is above them.
[24:36] Right? They are the ones. They are the ones. Nobody has more authority, really. Nobody is, say, more respected. Nobody knows the Bible better. Nobody lives it out.

I mean, they're devoted, full-time ministers. That's basically sort of what they are. Full-time. And yet, they see this guy and they keep right on going. Now, we don't know, we don't know why they kept right on going, but I would say this.
When we read a story like this, we don't want to be too quick just to be like, just to think, oh, awful. These people are awful. What we need to do is think, so what about me?
If I'm walking down, it didn't have to be just this scenario, right? Because what, I mean, why did they stay away from the guy? We don't know. But what's important is, they stayed away.
I mean, maybe it was, they didn't want to, they didn't want to touch him, they were afraid he's dead and maybe that would make them unclean according to the law. I don't know. Maybe they just didn't have time for it. You know, they've got some place to be.
[25:38] They've got some place to go. Something they have to do. I don't really have time for that guy. He's probably going to die anyway. What am I supposed to do? I'm going to keep right on going. We don't know why. Certainly, they had nothing to gain from helping him.

I mean, this guy is not going to be able to give them something, right? They're not going to, they have to completely invest in him. They're not going to get anything back. It's not really a win situation for them and they can just ignore it.
They can just go by as though it's not existing. So we don't know. But we do know this. They just ignored it. They just ignored the need. They didn't look at him. They didn't do what they, they didn't even check on him. And it's easy to look and we should, we should look at that.
Of course, that's the wrong thing to do. But we don't want to be so fast to look at them and say, oh, I can't stand people like that. I think one of the things that the parable challenges us to do is, are we people like that?
And it doesn't have to be because you saw a person half dead and you walked to the other side of the street. Are we people like that? Are we people who slow down and take the time to invest in people who can't give us anything back?

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[26:43] Who have need? And we have some way of fulfilling that need even if it's just to check on them. Even if it's just to take time out of our own day, out of our own schedule.

So we need to ask ourselves that question. And I think that's what Jesus is pressing the lawyer to do, by the way. Because he's an expert in the law. He could have said, Jesus could have added another person.
A priest, a Levite, and then a scholar of the law comes. They would have all been like friends hanging out together. This was his crowd. When this guy went and hung around with his friends at night or wherever, whenever, it would have been people like priests and Levites.
That's who he knew. He knew them. It was his people, his crowd, his peer group or whatever. And Jesus says, look, they walked right by.
The people who should know best of all what they should do. The people who know the most about the Bible. The people who know the most about Israel. The people who know most about what pleases God.
[27:43] The people whose job it is to maintain the relationship between God and people. Turns out they're all talk. They do their jobs.

They get on with it. But it turns out they don't care about people. And you can see it. And then that raises another question. What does that say about their love for God? And then comes the most unlikely character of all.
Sort of a half-cousin. Right? A Samaritan. Now I won't get into a big history lesson about the Samaritans. It's just, I'll say this. The Samaritans lived up north in Samaria.
And they were kind of half-Jewish. They had their own sacrifices. They had their own temple. They had their own priests. And there was no love lost between the Samaritans and the Jews.
They didn't like each other. They were kind of close. And you know how it is with people you're kind of related to or you're related to. You just have, it's sometimes the hardest to get along with them of anybody. Right?
[28:42] Sometimes it's harder to get along with your family than your enemies sometimes. You know what, well maybe I'm just speaking personally. I don't know. And I don't mean my immediate family don't start thinking about my marriage or something like that.

So, they just don't like each other. And a Jew can't come in contact with the Samaritan without becoming unclean. And they really just didn't like them.
He's the most, so I'm sure the Jewish audience and the lawyers thinking, oh, so he's going to kick the guy in the head. Right? He's going to kick him while he's down. The priest didn't do anything he should have. The Levite didn't do anything he should have.
The Samaritan's going to finish him off. Certainly. Right? He's going to just go kick him while he's down. There's no chance. There's no chance in the first century a Jewish person is telling this story and the Samaritan's going to be the hero.
No chance. None. Zero. Nobody listening to the story is expecting what happens next. He's just a Samaritan. And what does the Samaritan do?
[29:40] Well, I'm not going to retrace all the steps of what he does, but you can say it like this. He invests in this person with needs. He goes to him.

He cares for him. And he goes, he doesn't just sort of throw some money at him. He invests his life in the life of this guy. That's what he does.
He gives him his time and whatever resources he has. He gives it to him. Why? Because of what he's going to get back? No. I think that's the key. That's one of the keys of this story.
The Samaritan has nothing to gain for this person has nothing to offer him. He's not going to get anything back from it. Right? I mean, you know, unless we start building story upon story and think, well, maybe the guy's rich and later he'll give him some money.
You know, it's like some kind of fairy tale or something. Turns out this guy's the king of something. It's not like that at all. It's just some guy who's beat up beside the road and can't help himself. And the Samaritan comes, the most unlikely person, not a hero, and he gives what he has to take care of this person.
[30:48] And then Jesus has a simple question. Which do you think was the neighbor to the one who fell? It's not, who is my neighbor?

Jesus turns the question, do you get it? Jesus turns the question to, so who was the neighbor? Not who is your neighbor, I'm going to tell you. Who was the neighbor? And so what he's saying to the

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guy is this.
The question is not, who is my neighbor? The question is, who are you to the people around you? You, who are so quick to say, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.
And then Jesus tells the story about a guy, two guys who should have known better, who did not love their neighbor. Yet, by their very lives, they're associated as people who love God.
Priests and Levites. And then Jesus just says, I mean, the guy says the right thing at the end. The expert in the law says, Jesus says, who is the neighbor?
[31:52] And the guy says, the one who had mercy. And Jesus says, so go do that. Right? And he never directly answers his question. In fact, he does answer his question to say, oh, by the way, who's your neighbor?

Look around you. That's the answer. Who am I supposed to love? Look around you. That's it. That's what he's supposed to be concerned with because his love for God is going to be shown in how he loves others.
Because our love for others is the most sort of tangible or clearest example or clearest revelation, if you will.
Maybe that's not the best word of how we love God. Our love for God has to show itself, not just be something we say. Right? And this is how Jesus, I think, is challenging us.
This is how he's challenging us through this parable because imagine this. What if God had said, all right, I'm going to save the world and here's what I'm going to do.
[33:01] I'm going to go down. I mean, as though, you know, you have to bear with me. And I'm going to spend time with those people who are most like me. All right? I want to find the people who are kind of like me.

The people who have something to offer me back in my friendship with them. The people who I'm just drawn to because they have the same interests as me. They're into the same stuff I'm into. Right? They have the same kind of history as me. They come from the same sort of background as me. We just have a lot in common. And, you know, at the very least, they're going to love me back immediately.
And we're just going to get along. I'm going to go help those people. Well, heaven would be empty of anybody from all of creation if God selected first.
Now, who is going to be my neighbor? And I'm going to base it on the people who are most like me. Right? So I think Jesus, of course, in this story is pointing to his own love for us.
[34:04] That he comes for us. We have nothing. He comes for us not because we have something to give back to him. Not because, not because we're going to sort of chip in on that relationship and make it, you know, sort of fulfill Jesus' sort of personal being by adding something to him.

He comes and gives us everything we need when we are like the guy in the picture who have been left for dead. And that's the picture he leaves with this lawyer. And so, that's how I think we need to read this story in just this way.
Just the way Jesus challenges this lawyer. To think, so, who is my neighbor? Well, who's around me?
Now, you can apply this in really easy ways. And I think the best way to ever apply any kind of Bible story is to start small. Don't immediately think about, alright, I'm going to leave my job tomorrow. I'm going to pack up. I'm going to move to the furthest place away I can possibly go. And I'm going to start preaching, like, by Wednesday. Alright, we tend to, I do.
[35:08] I tend to think that way and forget about all the things that are happening right around me. Well, the thing you do about the way you carry this out is you just look around you.

And in the simplest, easiest, not easy, sometimes it's not easy actually, but in the simplest ways of helping anybody in need, anybody who can use your time, right, anybody who can use what you have, your life, just a piece of your life that you can give to somebody else without hope of return, that shows our love for God.
Because then we're loving people like the way God loves us. And it can be really simple. You can just have a few extra minutes in your day that you can give to somebody who you know needs the time.

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Or when somebody asks us, hey, could you do this for me? Could you help me out on Thursday? Here's, here's, I'll just, here's my, my sort of response is when somebody says, hey, do you think, and I know they're going to ask me for a favor.
And I start immediately thinking, oh, this week I've got to do this, I've got to do this, I've got to, so I'm already thinking of all the things, I don't even know what they're going to ask me for yet, and I'm already thinking of all the things that are going to keep me from being able to help them because these are things I need to do.
[36:22] Now, I'm not saying if you think that you should start, you know, beating yourself up, but we have to think beyond those things and think, okay, so what can I do? And just easy things, that sounds like not much, right?

It sounds like not much, but as we do those things, we start to change because we're applying the love of God to the world, to those around us, in the simplest of ways.
It might be ways, and you might even be called to do that to somebody who's never going to say thank you, who maybe will just ask you again and again and again and never seem to care that you're doing it because they can't give back or maybe don't want to or any number of things.
All I'm saying is this, Jesus is calling us not just to be hearers of his word, but doers. And he gives us opportunities all the time to do it.
So I don't want you to go away from here today just simply feeling guilty about all the things that you maybe could have done that you didn't do. And I'm going to try not to leave here feeling that way too.
[37:26] What we need to do is think, okay, right, God is speaking to me in his word, we're going out from here, there's any number of people I can spend time with, I can give my time with because, you know, if you don't have, you don't have to have a lot of money, the most precious thing you can give to anybody really is just your time to any degree, even when you don't have any time to give.

And even if that time is not going to be super pleasant for you because of the person you're with at the moment, you can still give it to them. Right? And that's how we show the love of God.
By thinking, so who is, which one is it going to be? But think, oh, God's made it really easy for me. Who is my neighbor? All I've got to do is look around.
And there's some way, somehow, that you can invest in the lives of others and show people, and show people everywhere, our love. And what are we showing?
Not our love, but what? God's love. That's what we're doing. You see, Jesus is pushing this expert in the law, this scholar, he's pressing him to be more than words, more than just knowing all the right answers, but to be somebody who is not just a hearer, but a doer.
[38:42] And then he says, go and do what you're hearing. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for the time we have in your word.

Thank you for how you speak to us in stories and ways that we can clearly hear and see that can become part of who we are. Lord, help us not to just go away from this, just reading it or hearing it again for the who knows how many times, but be changed by it, to be challenged by it.
Lord, and we all feel our, we all feel how we've come up short so we confess, Lord, that we haven't lived this way the way we should and we confess and we come to you believing that you forgive us, that you don't hold it against us, and that however much we haven't done in the past is in no way keeping us from being empowered by you this week, today, tomorrow, whenever, to love those around us and share the love of Jesus with the world and show our love for the God who loved us. Amen.

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