

Hope's Call

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Preacher: James Barnett

[0 : 00] I did the bare minimum required. I just scraped through. You know, picture the builder who builds a project, a house or a work, and only does it well enough to get the job done, to get paid, but they don't build it so that it lasts.

It's the person that goes to work and they clock in on the dot. But they only do enough in the day to not get fired, and then they clock out as soon as they can.

It's the person that's fearful of getting in trouble, so they just obey the letter of the law. It's me, in my first degree, living by the motto, P's get degrees, which says passing is enough.

Doing the bare minimum required. That's definitely been me in the past. Has that been you? It's definitely easier in the moment to just do the minimum that's required out of laziness or something like that, but it's certainly not satisfying.

I regret not working harder on my first degree. I'm sure the builder regrets putting the minimum effort when they have to go back and fix up, you know, when the building falls down or when cracks start appearing.

[1 : 29] It's the tech company that regrets putting out a product too early and then having to recall and fix issues. I wonder if we could use the same description of our lives.

If you're following Jesus, would you say that you are a bare minimum Christian? I go to church. I watch church.

I give some. I have a Bible and I've read parts of it. But serving Jesus, growing in godliness, being part of a community, being radically generous, those things are hard and they're not for me right now.

The challenge that we see from the story of the Good Samaritan today is that we can be tempted to give the bare minimum, to narrow down what following Jesus looks like into a little easy-to-follow box instead of seeing Jesus as Lord of our entire life.

The joy of Christianity is that Jesus has saved people and he calls them to be radical disciples. Not bare minimum disciples.

[2 : 45] The call of hope in Jesus is that our discipleship and giving of ourselves would reflect all that God has done for us. So we're going to see this morning a picture of bare minimum disciples.

Jesus will give us a bad example and then he will give us a good example. We're in the Gospel of Luke this morning in chapter 10. Please have your Bibles open at home.

Be using the St. Paul's app. There are notes in there so that you can take notes along as we go. From Luke chapter 10, where he records an expert in the law getting up and testing Jesus.

He asked in verse 25, Jesus asks him, Well, what's written in the law in the Old Testament?

How do you read it? And the man replies, 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.

- [3 : 51] Jesus said, You've answered correctly. Do this and you will live. It's a pretty straightforward interaction. Love God perfectly. Love your neighbor perfectly.
- And you will get eternal life. Now, I say that kind of sarcastically because, of course, this is impossible for us. And it shows us why we need Jesus so much.
- But the lawyer wanted to justify himself. Maybe he's trying to protect himself from the claim that he doesn't deserve eternal life. And this is definitely in the soul of each of us.
- The desire to protect ourselves, to defend our actions. To say, Oh, look, I'm not that bad. You know, I'm not as bad as other people. Look, there's people that are far worse than me.
- And this lawyer wanted to justify himself. So he asks Jesus, Well, who is my neighbor? Father, give me a list. You give me a list of the neighbors and I'll show you how much I have loved them.
- [4 : 53] Now, I know three or four lawyers. And unlike the standard jokes about lawyers, the lawyers I know are all very lovely people. They're really great.
- And this man, he might have been really lovely. He may have been really great as well. He may have been an upstanding citizen. He may have been kind and compassionate.
- But maybe he was just kind and compassionate to the people who fitted his definition of neighbor. If you were like him, if you were part of the same tribe as him, if you were, if you looked like him and smelt like him, well, do you know what?
- He would love you. He would show compassion to you. And so wanting to make sure that he was above that claim, that he had not fulfilled the law, he asks, Well, who is my neighbor? This is the desire to just do the bare minimum.
- Limit the people I need to love, Jesus, and I will love them. You tell me who these handful of people are that are my neighbor, and I can do that. But in response, Jesus tells us the famous story of the Good Samaritan.
- [5 : 59] And first of all, he shows us the bad example before he shows us the good example. Have a look with me at verse 30. In reply, Jesus said, A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers.
- They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. This man, although not specifically stated here, it's most likely that he was Jewish.
- He's coming down from Jerusalem, likely from the temple, and maybe he had been worshipping God and bringing sacrifices. And as he's coming down, he is waylaid by bandits.
- He's beaten, he's robbed. And this is no fault of his own. It's a total accident. He could not be blamed. It was just misfortune. But good news, salvation comes.
- Verse 31, a priest happened to be going down the same road. And at this point, we can be expecting the priest is going to help out. He's a compassionate guy. And when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.
- [7 : 07] So to a Levite, yes, great, a Levite. He's going to help him out. When he came to the place and saw him, he passed by on the other side. How did this priest and this Levite happen to be on the same road?
- It's as if God has brought this priest to this very spot to help this man, to go and see what his needs are. And then a moment later, when the Levite arrives, they can both help him.
- Maybe they can carry him to an inn, to a hospital. Maybe one can stay with him and guard him while the other goes off to get medical assistance. And Jesus tells this story as if God has brought both of these men to care for this person.

But they both willfully refuse to give aid. And it's far worse than if they had just found the man. But Jesus uses their identities and the location to show what a bad example they are.

In Jesus' story, both the man who was attacked and the priest and the Levite, they're coming down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Jerusalem, this is the capital city of Israel.

[8 : 21] It's up high. It's the location of where the temple is, whereas Jericho lies quite low. The purpose of the priest being in Jerusalem would have been for offering service to God.

He would have been working in the temple. He could have been bringing sacrifices. He could have been praising God, singing holy psalms and prayers.

And in the midst of worshipping God and bringing sacrifices, he had not learned how to make a sacrifice himself. He had learned the same message as the lawyer to love God and to love his neighbour, but he did not act upon it.

The Levite acted similarly, although not central to the work inside the temple. they both had been near to God, but had not become like God.

Both of these men were bound to help the beaten man, and yet they came close enough to see him and yet passed him by. They've slowed down at the site of a car accident with people crying out for help.

[9 : 33] There's no one around, but they have driven off. Charles Spurgeon, the great preacher, suggested that the reason that they hurried on and didn't help was because they had too many great excuses.

I've got a quote from Spurgeon. He said, I never knew a man to refuse to help the poor who failed to give at least one admirable excuse.

For instance, the priest and the Levite were both in a hurry. The priest had been away for a month, away at Jerusalem from his wife and dear children, and he naturally wanted to get home.

If he lingered, the sun might go down. It was an awkward place to be after sundown, and he could not expect him to be so imprudent as to stay in a lone place with darkness coming on.

He'd spent a very laborious month in the temple, and you do not know how exhausting he had found it to act as a priest for a whole month. And if you did, you would not blame him for wanting to get home to enjoy a little rest.

[10 : 36] Besides, he'd promised he'd be home at a certain hour, and he was a man of punctuality, and would by no means cause anxiety to his wife and children who would be looking for him on their house stop.

The thieves might be back again. They were scarcely out of hearing, and after a month's service, the priest would have had some fees in his purse, and it was important not to run the risk of losing the support of his family.

And he might be wounded too, and then there would be two people half dead, and one of them a valuable clergyman. Really, philanthropy would suggest that you take care of yourself, as you could not possibly do any good to the poor man.

And then the man might die, and the person found near the body might be charged with the murder, and it's always awkward to be found alone in a dark spot with the corpse of one who was evidently suffered from foul play.

Moreover, he could pray for the man. All these powerful reasons put together made him content to save trouble and leave the doing of kindness to others.

[11 : 47] This is a big list of excuses. It may have made you smile a little bit at the poor excuses that the priest may have given. But you know what?

That's me. All I need is a small excuse to justify not helping someone. They're fine. Someone else is going to help them. You know, I can hear the Levite coming.

He's going to help them. Somebody else will do it. I don't need to do it. But hope in the gospel calls us to radically love others.

Jesus contrasts the story of the priest and the Levite with a good example. One they wouldn't expect to see help from. So this is our third point this morning. This is the good example.

From verse 33. But a Samaritan as he travelled came where the man was. And when he saw him he took pity on him.

[12 : 43] 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. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper.

Look after him he said and when I return I will reimburse you for any extra expenses you may have. The Samaritan was as different as the priest and the Levite were similar to the wounded man.

They were enemies of the Jews because they had been part of God's people but they had been separated to the north and their country had been filled with Gentiles and other people's gods and they worshipped God differently.

And yet the Samaritans seized him like the priest and the Levite did and took pity on him. He doesn't ask why are you injured?

He doesn't ask well what have you done to get out of this situation? There's no inquiry into his faith. There is no questioning of his political viewpoints.

[13 : 49] He sees the wounded man and he takes pity. Although the wounded man had no way to repay him the Samaritan went over and cared for him.

He doesn't say I'll help you as long as you pay me back. There is no contract or deal just compassion. He bandaged his wounds poured on oil and wine.

He risks the thieves coming back and his own life being in danger. He does it at significant cost to himself. He pours on oil and wine.

He puts the man on his donkey and he has to walk. He gives the innkeeper money. He cares for this man as best as he could in the situation.

And then he takes him to the inn and at this point he could have just left but he stays to take care of him and then the next day he gives the innkeeper money to continue to care for him until he comes back.

[14 : 50] Jesus asks the lawyer verse 36 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.

The strange thing is that the priest and the Levite really were his neighbor. They're from the same family group the Israelites the Jews and yet they didn't neighbor him.

And it's as if the lawyer can't say the word Samaritan because it's like a dirty word in his mouth. So he doesn't say it was the Samaritan it was the one who had mercy on him.

And when we see the word neighbor here by Jesus the one who was a neighbor Jesus is almost using it like a verb it's not just describing how close they are but it's describing what he did neighboring someone caring for them and loving them.

And so Jesus encourages him and us to go and do likewise. Jesus calls the lawyer and he calls us to live a life of radical discipleship.

[16 : 00] In his life and his death and his resurrection Jesus has showed us what it looks like to love other people. And as we read this story from Jesus we see the Samaritan be compassionate and generous and help the wounded man and we can think that Jesus is putting himself into the story.

You know the Samaritan man well that's Jesus but our Saviour Jesus is so much better than even this good example. The wounded man could not be blamed for his situation it was just an accident but you and I we stand condemned for our actions because we are dead in our sins.

We have from our first moments been attacking ourselves and attacking other people and even when Jesus comes to us we have resisted him and rejected him.

The beaten man did not ignore the Samaritan but how many times have we refused the help and healing of our Lord? The Samaritan man happened to come across the wounded man and yet Jesus came to earth with the only intention of saving us.

He didn't take a risk of running into thieves he knew he was going to be attacked and stripped and crucified and laid in a grave. What the Samaritan man gave was generous but it is not comparable to all that Jesus has done.

[17 : 34] The Samaritan man gave wine and oil. Jesus gave his own blood. The Samaritan man gave two coins but Jesus gave up heaven to take on flesh so that we might have all of the blessings of our inheritance from God.

You who know the love of Jesus and the hope of heaven you are called by Jesus to have practical love and kindness.

To have a radical discipleship that will love what God loves and that says even to an enemy you are my neighbor and I will neighbor you.

I will care for you. I will love you. I don't think though having enemies really stops me from loving people.

I don't actually know if I have any enemies. Most of us don't live in that kind of world but I think the biggest enemy I have is not a person or a group of people.

[18 : 39] It is busyness. It is my own time that stops me from being compassionate. I don't think I have enough time to show love to people.

Back in the 1970s a study was done at Princeton University based on the story of the Good Samaritan. They wanted to investigate why people did good things.

And they went to Princeton Theological Seminary just next door and they found a group of people studying to be ministers people who are keen to do good things and to share Jesus.

They set up a study with these people and they were told to prepare a brief talk on the parable of the Good Samaritan just as I've done today to prepare the talk and then to walk to a nearby building to give a talk and by random chance they were told one of three things they either had a lot of time to go to the building and give the talk some had to leave now but they weren't rushed but the third group they had to go now you have no time you have to rush so you can go and give the talk on the parable of the Good Samaritan but between where they were and the building they had to go and give the talk at there was a corridor and they placed a person in that corridor a person who was sick on the ground and in need of help and to get past these men would literally have to climb over this person what do you think would happen do you think these people who were training to be ministers of do you think that they would stop well 60% of these people did not stop people studying to be ministers of

God's word who had just sat in this part of the Bible the good Samaritan 60% of them did not stop and the most significant variable was how much time they had of the people who did stop to help the stranger over 60% of them were in the first group who had plenty of time of those who weren't rushed 40% of them stopped but of those who were rushed to go and give the talk on the Good Samaritan only 10% of them stopped they they they they had sat in God's word dwelt on this part of the Bible and we're going to go and encourage people to do the same thing but only 10% of them stopped when they were rushed for time how damning is that and how true is that of you and of me now the shutdown period of COVID has showed me that I am just too busy and if my default position in life is busyness then this study suggests that

[21 : 44] I'm not going to have time to respond to God's call to radical generosity and to love other people if we are going to live a life worthy of Jesus death and resurrection to live a life worthy of what we have been called to it will cost the cost we usually think is of money and there is wonderful things that we can be supporting the food drive the narrow bri fund supporting Sam and Sally low in the gold coast supporting them we usually think about the cost in terms cost our time let's not be bare minimum Christians but be willing to sacrifice time in our lives so that we can love our God and that we can love our neighbours with our soul our strength and our mind let me pray dear heavenly father we thank you for our

Lord Jesus and for this parable of the good Samaritan Lord father we thank you for the reminder about how much Jesus has done for us and all that he paid so that we could be brought into your family father we ask that we would not be like the priest and the Levite in this story that we would not just walk on by when we see people in need father help us to respond to your call to be radical disciples to give of our money and to give of our time because you have given us every moment we have in our lives help us to love you and to love our neighbors with every single second that we have Lord Amen■u I want to grow heart and fear to win