

## Daily Readings

Please note: This week we look at Jesus' parable Good Samaritan. In this parable we see Jesus putting a priority on a caring spirit over position or religious observance. These passages are recommended for your daily reading. Each deals with a different aspect of God's way to caring.

### Monday, July 14 – Read 1 Peter 3:7-8.

Peter encourages the reader in his letter to lead a life that gives witness to the way of Christ. In this passage, he speaks of harmony, sympathy, love, humility and compassion. In what way have you shown these qualities at home, work or school? Can you identify anyone who needs any of these from you today?

### Tuesday, July 15 – Read 1 Corinthians 13.

This famous passage about love is often used in weddings. As you read this passage, identify the different qualities of love and write them in the margin of your Bible. How does your life reflect these qualities in every relationship? Can you use these qualities in your work and school?

### Wednesday, July 16 – Read Galatians 6:2.

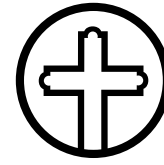
This passage is the founding passage for Stephen Ministers. The "law of Christ" is defined in how we treat others. What is the law of Christ? The law of Christ is to bear another's burdens. Whose burdens have you carried lately? Whose can you carry with a word, phone call or encouraging note today?

### Thursday, July 18 – Read Ephesians 4:32.

Paul identifies two qualities of caring in this passage: sympathy and forgiveness. Reflect on the people you know. Is there someone that needs your forgiveness? Is there someone for whom you need to seek forgiveness? Take the first step and initiate redemption with that person today.

### Friday, July 18 – Read 1 John 3:27-18.

In John's letters, he emphasizes love again and again as the primary character of God. In chapter four he writes, "Love is of God." John is clear here in chapter three that love is not a feeling, but rather an action. Love is shown in "action and truth." List the persons you love in your life. What action do you take daily to show this love? List the persons you have trouble loving. How can you show love to them in action and truth?



TRIETSCH

July 13, 2008

Study Guide & Daily Readings

## Front Porch Stories

### Gleaning the Truths from the Parables of Jesus

#### Erasing Boundaries

#### Luke 10:25-37

##### The Word from the Bible paraphrase called *The Message*

Just then a religion scholar stood up with a question to test Jesus. "Teacher, what do I need to do to get eternal life?" He answered, "What's written in God's Law? How do you interpret it?" He said, "That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence – and that you love your neighbor as well as you do yourself."

"Good answer!" said Jesus. "Do it and you'll live." Looking for a loophole, he asked, "And just how would you define 'neighbor'?"

Jesus answered by telling a story. "There was once a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead. Luckily, a priest was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him he angled across to the other side. Then a Levite religious man showed up; he also avoided the injured man.

"A Samaritan traveling the road came on him. When he saw the man's condition, his heart went out to him. He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds. The he lifted him onto his donkey, led him to an inn, and made him comfortable. In the morning he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying 'Take good care of him. If it costs any more, put it on my bill – I'll pay you on my way back.'"

"What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbor to the man attacked by robbers?"

"The one who treated him kindly," the religion scholar responded. Jesus said, "Go and do the same."

#### The Good Samaritan

The parable of the Good Samaritan is the most well known parable in the gospels. The example of the aid the Samaritan gives to the man in need is unparalleled. As such, many helping agencies are named after this parable. The parable takes the question and answer format with a religious leader asking about eternal life. Jesus answers this question by point-

ing not at the law, but rather to the eternal value of loving your neighbors. The parable unfolds in typical question-and-answer fashion.

**Luke 10:25-37.** Since Jesus has spoken of revelation, an expert in the law tries to put him to the test. A similar question is asked of Jesus recorded by Mark in 12:28-31. In Mark the question is “What is the most important commandment?” The question for Luke concerns eternal life. This distinction between law and eternal life was important for Jesus. The law was an Old Testament or old covenant issue, while seeking eternal life was a concept developed by Jesus and the New Testament and the new covenant. The answer was the same to both questions, “What is the greatest commandment?” and “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” — “That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence – and that you love your neighbor as well as you do yourself.”

**Luke 10:29-32.** In the first century, it was common to twist the law to find loopholes in order to justify certain behaviors. So... in order to justify himself, or to find some way to escape the demands of the law, the lawyer raises a question, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan in answer.

This parable is without parallel in the other gospels. The meaning of the story is clear. A man went down the dangerous road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Attacked and beaten by thieves, he was left beside the road to die. First a priest and then a Levite came along and passed by on the other side. These two represented the religious leaders of the Jews, and Jericho was a residential center for priestly families. Perhaps they had completed their service in the temple and were anxious to get home. Just why they passed by the needy man is not stated. Possibly they feared contamination from the dead or were reluctant to associate with the lowly “people of the land.”

**Luke 10:33-35.** The introduction of the Samaritan into the story was shocking. In contrast to the priest and the Levite, the listeners might have expected a layman. But the man from Samaria represented both racial impurity and religious heresy. Without fear of contamination or exposure to the robbers, this stranger treated the wounds, brought the unfortunate to the nearby inn, and left enough money to care for him. Oil and wine here believed to have curative and antiseptic value. The Samaritan leaves two denarius to pay for the cost of the care at the inn. This represented about two days’ wages.

**Luke 10:36-37.** When Jesus asks the question, “Which of these proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” Some scholars see evidence that the story is out of context. The question of the lawyer was, “Who is my neighbor?” The question of the parable is, “Who acted like a neighbor?” One must not escape the demand of the law by asking “Who?”, but respond to the divine demand by seeking “How?”. In any case, the commandment is clear: **show love to those who need it.**

## ***Discussion Questions***

*Please note: These questions are intended to be used in any way that is helpful for you. You may use them as a means of personal reflection. Or you may want to use them as a family to further discuss the issues of caring.*

- Share a time when you chose to help and felt good about the experience.
- Name some reasons why people steer clear of getting involved.
- Why do you think the parable of the Good Samaritan is so well known?
- What lessons can we learn from the parable of the Good Samaritan?
- Why do some people have a servant attitude, while others do not?
- When you are asked to help, what criteria do you use to make a decision?
- What expectations do you believe Jesus has for his followers today?

***Next Week’s Worship: Guest Speaker Alice McKenzie  
“Finders Weepers, Losers Keepers” from Mark 8:27-38***