

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, July 10th, 2022, Pentecost V
Amos 7:7-17, Psalm 82, Colossians 1:1-14, Luke 10:25-37

The parable of the Good Samaritan. Two stories come to mind that relate men are about dealing with this parable.

As the story goes there was a Bible study group meeting in the church and they heard the sound of a car accident outside. They considered what they were discussing in Bible study was so important, but they didn't want to be interrupted. The irony is what they were discussing was the parable of the Good Samaritan.

I believe it is an Anthony de Mello story which goes something like this. There was a fellow riding a horse and he came upon a man lying beside the road apparently injured. The man stopped the horse and got off to tend to the injured man. The man lying there was not injured but only pretending. He jumped up and began stealing the man's horse. As he began to ride off the man whose horse he stole asked him to do one thing for him.

What is that? he asked

The man answered, do not tell anyone how you acquired the horse.

Why not? Ask the man on the horse.

Because I don't want anyone to be afraid to stop their horse in fear of having their horse stolen.

We can tell stories and the power of the story but is there anything new that can be said about the parable of the Good Samaritan?

Jesus has two messages in this parable with some sort of hidden element to it. Taking us beyond the expected who is thought of as the neighbour. Samaritans were not considered neighbours to those listening to the parable. It is interesting that it is the non neighbour who is the one who shows love for his neighbour.

And Jesus changes the question, and the focus the lawyer is asking who my neighbour is, and by extension who is not my neighbour. But Jesus in the parable Is asking are you acting like a loving neighbour?

Jesus keeps setting the bar high beyond our expectations.

Not only does Jesus have the non neighbour as the one acting like the neighbour but has him risk being attacked himself to care for the man injured. Then he pays for the man's care at the inn and then goes beyond it to say he will cover the cost of the man's stay at the inn, regardless but how long the injured man must stay there.

Would you expect someone to be that neighbourly towards you? And would you expect that of yourselves towards your neighbour? We might be willing to help or ask for help from a stranger we meet on the street, and give them money to support them going forward, but would we leave them an open-ended situation where we would cover their costs almost indefinitely? We might do that for a loved one but I'm wondering how far we would go or a neighbour or more particularly a stranger? But you never know. I started with stories so I'm going to end with a story.

When I lived north of Montreal, I was going into Montreal for a doctor's appointment. I drove to the nearest subway station to park and take the subway. Where I ended up parking it had rained and there was mud. I got stuck but had to leave it to make my appointment. When I got back to my car, I flagged down a young man and asked him for help. I offered for him to get behind the wheel and I would push. That meant that he wouldn't get any mud on his clothes. He refused to get behind the wheel and went to the front bumper of my car and push me out well I got behind the wheel and drove out. Fortunately, he didn't get muddy, but he also wouldn't take any money for helping me get my car out of the mud.

Amen