

One Body Initiative: Week Five – The Good Samaritan

October 5, 2020

Scripture: Luke 10:25-37

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?” he 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.’” “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 was attacked by robbers. 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 was journeying, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he had compassion 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. The next day he took out two denarii (two days of wages) 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.”

Deuteronomy 6:5: Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Leviticus 19:18: Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Commentary

Luke for Everyone by NT Wright

- “The lawyer’s question and Jesus’ answer don’t quite match up, and that’s part of the point. He wants to know who counts as ‘neighbour.’ For him, God is the God of Israel, and neighbours are Jewish neighbours. For Jesus (and for Luke, who highlights this theme), Israel’s God is the God of grace for the whole world, and a neighbour is anybody in need. Jesus’ telling question at the end isn’t asking who the Samaritan regarded as his neighbour. He asked, instead, who *turned out to be* the neighbour of the half-dead Jew lying in the road. ... Can you recognize the hated Samaritan as your neighbor? If you can’t, you might be left for dead.” (128).

- “What is at stake, then and now, is the question of whether we will use the God-given revelation of love and grace as a way of boosting our own sense of isolated security and purity, or whether we will see it as a call and challenge to extend that love and grace to the whole world. No church, no Christian, can remain content with easy definitions which allow us to watch most of the world lying half-dead in the road. ” (129).

Interpretation commentary: Luke by Freb B. Craddock

- Having right answers does not mean one knows God... Jesus did not say to the lawyer, “Great answer! You are my best pupil.” Rather, Jesus said, “Go and do.” (150)

“Luke A. Powery: Brutalizing Black bodies is an assault against God” in *Faith and Leadership*

- Barbara Brown Taylor, in [“An Altar in the World,”\(link is external\)](#) explores the incarnation’s claim “that God trusted flesh and blood to bring divine love to earth,” revealing that if one wants to become more spiritual, one should become more embodied as a human and person of faith. Religious faith is a material one, not just a spiritual or a virtual one on Twitter. It takes place in and through bodies. Thus, bodies are vital to the practice of faith, and how we treat Black bodies, and every body, matters.
- Whether wounded or whole, the incarnation of Jesus is the affirmation and embrace of all bodies, all flesh, all Blacks. Our bodies have been graced with the presence of God; indeed, human beings are created in the image of God.
- Every time we enact violence against another human being -- like Jacob Blake -- we destroy the beautiful image of God found in the human collective body, and we reveal a distorted, immature and anorexic spirituality. Any move toward the destruction of a body is a gesture in the direction of the destruction of God; to embrace a human body is to embrace an enfleshed God.
- To embrace and love a Black body is to embrace and love God. To be human is to have a body, and to be a person of faith is to affirm the body as vital to the spiritual life. Thus, to be anti-Black body is to be anti-human and anti-God, because within the Christian tradition at least, God became a human body to redeem and heal bodies and claim them as vital for life in the Spirit.
- You can’t be *pro humanitate*, pro-human, and be for anti-Black violence. You can’t be for God and be for anti-Black violence, regardless of the source of the brutal violence, because all human bodies are temples of the Spirit, and what we do with them and to them should matter for people of faith. Every body matters, and any body is a somebody to God.

Questions to consider

1. What stops you from being a neighbor?
2. In what ways do you use social media to “justify yourself” or pass by on the other side?
3. How can you be present to your neighbor? Those nearby you? In this time of pandemic? How can you implement practices of neighborliness into your life?
4. Jesus calls us to “Go and do likewise.” How are love and action connected?
5. The Lawyer says that the greatest commandment is to “‘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.’” How are loving God and loving your neighbor related?