

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Thomas West

SERIES

Planting The Gospel

PART

4

TITLE

Care Personally

SCRIPTURE

Luke 10:25-37



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Amen and amen. If we don't know each other, my name is Thomas, and it's one of my joys to serve as one of your pastors here at Providence. Special welcome to any guests and visitors in the house with us this morning. We're glad that you're here. Really appreciate you spending your Sunday morning with us. Pray that you will find this entire environment to be hospitable and encouraging to you. We're going to be in the book of Luke, chapter 10 this morning. If you have a Bible, please go ahead and open up to Luke chapter 10. If you made your way in here this morning and you don't have a Bible, then you can find one under the chair in front of you.

If you're on the front row and you notice there's not a chair in front of you, then you can ask a neighbor behind you. I'm sure they'll be happy to pass one up to you. If you don't have a Bible, we invite you to take that one home with you. Consider that gift from us to you. We want you to have a copy of God's word. We want you to read it, we want you to enjoy it. Hey, for all we care, take two or three, give them out to your friends. We just want you to have it. Luke chapter 10. We're going to study verses 25 to 37 this morning. Before we study Luke chapter 10, we need to have a moment of family time with one another.

Living room setting right here. This is family time. In a couple of weeks, August chapter ... Not August chapter 20. What am I doing? I need to go take a nap. I'm going to go lay down after this. That's happening. On August 20th, Sunday, August 20th is Celebration Sunday. On Celebration Sunday, we're going to have an opportunity for many of you who have not yet been baptized to be baptized on Sunday August 20. That morning, we're going to have different stories, videos, and testimonies going on in our worship gathering, just going to be business as usual in the morning. Sunday night, August 20, we are heading out to new life camp in north Raleigh. We're going to have a massive meal that's free.

We're all going to get to eat and enjoy with one another, and we're going to have a time when any of you who have not yet been baptized, you're going to have an opportunity to get baptized Sunday night August 20. We really put this date before you. I really encourage you. If this is something you've been thinking about, go on and take this as your sign from God that this is your time, this is your moment. We need to step forward in it. It'll be your actually last opportunity to be baptized with the Providence family for a while until we're in that room right across the hall. This will be it for about nine months, so I really encourage you.

If you have not yet been baptized, take this as your time. We take baptism very seriously here because we take the gospel very seriously. We believe God created a good world. It's broken because of sin. Jesus is the only one that can put the pieces back together, and once Jesus does, one of the things that we get to do next is to go public by being baptized, where the water represents a grave, where one of our pastors or elders, they dip us beneath the water. They don't hold us down for three days. Only a little less than a second, and you pop right back up as a sign that you're going public with what Jesus has already done inwardly, almost privately in our own lives.

Baptism is a way we make public the declaration of faith that we have in our God. Sunday night, September 20, you can sign up via the snapshot that somebody handed to you when you walked in. There's a tab that you can fill out right there. You can take it around the corner to next steps. You can also sign up online. It's going to be a huge night in our family of faith, and I would love for you to be a part of it if you have yet to be baptized. If you have been baptized, come on out. Free dinner, lots of encouragement. It's going to be a great night. Family time not over, just different. We move into the word.

Today we're continuing our series called Plant the Gospel, which is birthed from our three-year vision called Plant. Over the next three years, if this is your first time here or first time back in a while, just so you know what we've been up to, we are hoping, believing, and praying that God is going to do such a work among us in the next three years that a thousand of us are going to be able to share the gospel with someone, watch them move from death to life, and we're going to start walking with them in the way of Jesus. You need to know that this comes from none other than the mouth of Jesus himself.

Jesus told us in Matthew chapter 28, verses 19 and 20, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded to you." We're following Jesus. We're trying to be obedient, and God's put this number of a thousand souls on our hearts, and it's something we're all very excited about. As we're excited about, I think we would also admit that we're a little intimidated by it as well. Do you feel that way? You're not alone. I feel that way with you, but you need to know a word of encouragement this morning. There are rumors going around this church.

There are rumors of grace where in the last couple of weeks since we started this Plant Vision, some of you have shared the gospel with someone for the first time. Others of you have shared the gospel with someone, and you've been able to watch that person repent of their sins, move from death to life and become a follower of Jesus. That number is no longer a thousand. It's in the upper 900s, but God is indeed bringing it down, and we're going to trust him that we would just be faithful to where if God were to save ten people in the next three years, but we were faithful, and we did what the spirit put on our hearts, then we would still celebrate in the end.

This is a season of intentionally trusting Christ. You need to know the spirit is already at work among us. There are people here this morning that didn't believe in Jesus a few weeks ago. God is doing it, my friend, so we want to hang on, and we want to trust him. This teaching series that we're in right now called Plant the Gospel, it's where we're taking a couple of weeks to think about what are the elements involved? What's going on in each of our lives for me to be the type of person that I can share Jesus with somebody? Over the last couple of weeks, if you missed them, all the content is online for you. Resources are available at next steps.

Over the last couple of weeks, we've been giving you different tools and different resources. How can we people that remember how God saved us? How can we be people that rehearse the gospel? We know the story, we committed a prayer, and this morning we can be people who are committed to care. You need to know we're in the gospel of Luke, and a few context clues will be very helpful for us as we make our way today. In the gospel of Luke, Luke chapters 1 through but, they ask a question, "Who is Jesus?" We see that Jesus is a messenger of hope. Then we learn by implication we must be his messengers of hope, as well. Then in Luke 10 to 19, everything hinges with what we're going to study this morning.

We ask another question. What does it mean to follow Jesus? we see Jesus is our good neighbor, and by implication we ought to be good neighbors, as well. We're going to need God to help us with this because this isn't something that I can simply encourage you to. This is something that the spirit of God has to release among us, so let's just go him in prayer and admit our need for him, and let's see what he can do for us now. Father, we need you. We need you to work in this moment. We need you to do what only you can do. Many of us, we are excited about this vision. Others, we just honestly feel a little apathetic because we know everything that feels wrong in our hearts.

We know the obstacles, we know the stumbling blocks that we have, and they seem like they're going to keep us from getting to you some days. They seem like they're going to keep us from living your way on others. Father, I pray that you take this moment right here, and you do a thousand different things with it. We pray that you'll convict of sin where necessary, pray that you'll heal where it's needed. God, we pray that we would find Jesus this morning working in the way of our lives, removing the stumbling blocks, taking out the obstacles for us so we can run hard after him and be a part of what he's doing in the world. God, we're here. We submit and we yield, and we ask that you work, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Luke chapter 10. I'll start reading in verse 25. Please follow along with me. "And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He thus Jesus said to him, 'What is written in the law? How do you read it?' He answered, 'You shall 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 you should love your neighbor as yourself.'" Jesus said to him, "You've answered correctly. Do this and you'll live." He, desiring to justify himself said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, it's almost as if Jesus is saying, "That reminds me of a story." Here he goes. "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers."

"Robbers stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. By chance, a priest was going down the road. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place where he saw him, he passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.

Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day, he took our two dineri, and gave it to the inn keeper saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever you spend, I will repay when I come back.’”

“Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among robbers?” The lawyer said, “The one who showed mercy.” Jesus said to him, “You go and do likewise.” This morning I want to talk to you about the relationship between gospel sharing and gospel caring. In this season of the life of our church, we are trying to enter into a place where we would cultivate the habits and the disciplines that would help us be people that know how to share the gospel with people. More than that, would want to have hearts that want to share the gospel with people. We’ve been thinking about gospel sharing. Then for just a few minutes, I could frame up this encouragement to you under the idea of gospel caring.

I want to lead you to think about what’s involved in the relationship between speaking the gospel to someone, and then caring for people, and the everyday, ordinary stuff of our lives. To bring it to life, if you will, a couple pictures might be helpful. Some of you have heard the quote from Francis of Assisi. I didn’t say he’s a sissy. I said that’s where he’s from. “Share the gospel, and if necessary, use words.” It iterations of the quote say, “Preach the gospel at all times. Use words if necessary.” Has anybody heard this before? Many of you probably have. This is where Dwight Schrute would come along, and he would say this is actually false.

Not that the actual quote is false. I’m just looking for a way to work this into the sermon. Let’s be honest. Dwight comes along, and he says not that the quote itself is false, but actually it’s false that it’s often attributed to our main man Francis. Some people put together some research in, I almost said 1992. That would be a while ago. In 2012. They actually fact-checked the whole thing and found out that our main man Francis never said it. If we think the quote is a good quote or not, it helps illustrate the idea. There’s something going on between caring for people well and actually speaking the gospel to people well.

Thanks, Dwight. Cultural prophet here. I really like what Lesslie Newbigin has to say. Newbigin said, “Words without deeds are empty, and deeds without words are dumb.” Newbigin comes into the whole matter and he says, “Here’s the thing. If we’re just going around all the time, and all we do is just tell people gospel, gospel, gospel but we’re never doing anything with our lives to back it up, eventually we take this gospel that we share, and we dilute it of its content and its value.” We just empty it out, because the gospel we speak to people is intended to be illustrated from a life of good deeds and good works and love and care.

On the other side, though, it isn’t good enough, it’s not going to cut if we merely, if we merely do good things, if we’re just a really great neighbor, if we’re a wonderful person to be around, and we never get to the moment where we tell people who God is, and why he’s changed us, and why we’re doing this. That’s not going to cut it, either. Here’s the idea for the morning. Caring will lead to sharing, and sharing the gospel with someone is the highest form of caring. It sounds like we have a lot of shares before us in the years ahead, and we indeed do. What we have more of than the need to share are lots and lots and lots of opportunities to care.

The whole idea is this. If we would become people of care, if something could happen in us to where we'd be caring and loving people, then we'd very naturally find opportunities to share the gospel with people out of that life of care, wouldn't we? If a question were to be hung over the next few minutes is this. What does Jesus teach us about caring for a neighbor? I want to show you at least three things before I try to work this out in our lives. First thing is this. Jesus provides the right questions for us to ask. What does it mean to care for a neighborhood? We're going to go to Jesus. We're going to watch him, we're going to listen to him, we're going to see how he acts, and see how he talks, and we're going to let him work this out in us.

We see Jesus provides the right questions for us to ask. Pick up the action in verse 25 with me. You see a lawyer standing before the truth, the one who wrote the law himself, and he asks a question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" If you're here this morning and you're like, "Man, this is great for you, church. Y'all are getting to figure how to tell people about Jesus, but I'm still trying to meet him myself," then I encourage you to listen in to the answer to this question, because this is the question that you need answered most. What does it take to have eternal life? How can we be justified? How can we be made right with God?

You need to know this is a lawyer who is speaking here. This law is an expert scholar. He's more like a seminary professor. Think religious lawyer, depending on your brand of entertainment. This isn't Mike and Harvey from Suits, or this isn't that team of non-lawyers from Law and Order: SVU. This is something a little different. You can think in terms of of a seminary professor or research scholar. This guy is a Torah lawyer. He knew the Hebrew scriptures backwards and forwards. He specialized in the first five books of your Bible. He's an expert on God's rules. In this moment, he wants to discredit Jesus as someone who does not respect the law, because he can get a feel for what's going on here.

If the way Jesus is walking and talking, if the things that he's saying and doing, if these things are true, then I'm not going to have what it takes to be made right with God on my own, so I need to find a problem with Jesus. We do this in our own heart so many times. We try to find something about him that doesn't make sense or is inconsistent. We poke all the holes that we can, but we can't find any cracks in him because he's perfect and he's solid. This lawyer wants to be sure that he's right before God, because he's skeptical about Jesus. Look at the question in verses 26 and 27. "He asked, 'Jesus, what do I do to inherit eternal life?'"

Jesus just turns around and asks another question back to him. Have you ever noticed how few times Jesus actually answers the question that's actually pitched to him? Jesus has this knack or this habit of taking the questions that we bring to him, and he reforms them, and he restructures them, and just sends them back our way. That's a good way to talk to people about Jesus, as well. Sometimes when people just hit you with a hard question, just don't ask. I answer the hard question. Just send them a question that they need to be thinking about, and answering, as well. We get this method from Jesus himself. Jesus looks at this young lawyer, and he says, "Here's the deal. You've passed the bar. You've read the books. You tell me what you think it says."

The lawyer says, “Well, love God with everything, and love your neighbor as yourself.” Let’s not run past this, because this is huge. Love God with everything. He’s right. The law, it tells us to love God with everything. What does it mean to love God with everything? This means everything about me is directed towards God. Not myself, not my own desires, not my own interest, not padding my reputation. Everything about me is about God. Everything I do with my mouth is directed at God. Everything I do in my mind is directed at God. Everything I do in my body is directed at God.

I’m pretty sure about you, but I know for a fact for me, I’ve blown it. I’ve fallen short. In fact, if that isn’t getting real enough to you, I love what Archbishop William Temple says. “Your religion is what you do with your solitude.” Think about this. At the end of the day, when all the emails have been checked, and the house is clean. Maybe it’s not even clean. It’s just clean enough, and everybody has been attended to, and you have a few moments of quiet, what happens? Does your heart drift to God, or does your heart drift to something else? For all of us, our heart drifts to other people and other things because whatever our mind goes to when we have nothing else to tend to, that is the thing that we worship.

That is the thing that’s at the center of our lives. Does God dominate, not much your life, just your solitude? I know for all of us, it doesn’t, and this is what the law demands of us. Everything about is has got to be about God. Not only that, there’s more to it. The law also says that we have to love our neighbor as ourself. What does it mean to love our neighbor as ourself? This means everything about me is I find my happiness in your happiness. This means there is never a hit of envy, of jealous, of gossip or deceit in any way. If the first thing the law demands of us isn’t enough, the second just piles on.

This gets us to Jesus in verse 28, doesn’t it? Can you just imagine? Read with your imagination. Just imagine how Jesus responded in verse 28. “Yeah, do that, and you live.” Though the law is the way of life, it’s how all Christians live. We live in congruence with God’s heart for the world. The law is not ultimately the way to life, because the way to life was standing right before this lawyer, and he has a name, and his name is Jesus. Verse 29. The lawyer feels exposed like many of us do in the room right now. Verse 29, and the Bible tells us, “Wanting to justify himself, the lawyer, he knew what was right. He knew the high standard, and he also knew what was in his heart.”

He knew he’d never be able to live it out. He knew he’d never be able to measure up, so he tries to find any little loophole that he can. He looks to Jesus and he says, “Who is my neighbor?” Lawford tells us when desiring to justify himself, this is a word that we don’t use too commonly in our culture, but is really core to the heart of the biblical narrative. Closest thing we get to it is when you’re writing an email or a paper, you need to justify the margins, but that doesn’t help because nobody knows where the button is. You got to justify the margins to this thing. The lawyer in the moment, he needed justification. He needed to make it right.



He needed all of it to line up, so he asked the question, “Who is my neighbor?” Why do this? You do this because in the moment, your heart is looking for anything it can find their justify itself and to feel like you’re doing enough, and you’re doing good. He realizes it’s impossible to live the way God is calling him to live, and then the story unfolds. Through the story, the question shifts. The question shifts from, “Who is my neighbor?” To, “What kind of neighbor am I?” It shifts from, “Who deserves my love and care?” To, “How loving and caring of a person am I?” Friends, when we think about being people of care, when we think about being people of loving care, we go to Jesus, and we realize that this relationship with him is living and dynamic.

We come to him with certain things on our hearts, and oftentimes he reforms them and sends them back into our life asking the questions we need to ask, but we don’t the minds and hearts to ask. Rule keepers, religious people trying to really hard, trying to do good, trying to justify themselves before God, they look around the world and say, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus looks into us and says, “What kind of neighbor are you?” Knowing God is a relationship. There’s give and take. There’s highs and lows. God commonly asks questions of us, the questions that we need to be asking, the questions that can change our lives. Even think of Job, chapter 38, God asks some 61 questions in a mere 123 verses to Job when they were working out their relationship, as well.

What does it look like for us to be people of loving care? First, Jesus provides the right questions. Second, Jesus highlights the prejudices that limit our care. Not only does Jesus give us the questions we need to ask, Jesus is gracious enough to do the really hard work of digging into our lives and showing us the many ways that we’re prejudiced. This is a good thing for him to do because we all have stumbling blocks, we all have obstacles inside of each and every one of us. If unaddressed, they’re going to limit the people that we ultimately try to care to.

Jesus continues in verse 30, “Listen, man, that reminds me of a story. In this story, there’s a hero who does certain things.” We need to remember what this story is an answer to. We’re after this idea of what does it mean to provide neighbor love and neighbor care, and how can I be that kind of a person? To care for people who don’t agree with you, that’s the core of neighbor love, and that’s the point of the story. The story is intended to burden us. The story is intended to get us to the end of ourselves so we can get to that gracious place where we can just admit, “I’m not going to be able to do this on my own.” Then we can look to Jesus. We can see that he’s already done it.

He just invites us into a relationship with him where he’ll empower us to work through us. The Christian life at its heart, it’s about caring for people. We care for people in the real, ordinary, human, everyday needs. This is what the story proves. Jesus with the story starting in verse 30, he tells them about a place they would know. There was a man who fell among robbers on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he tells them a story with people they would know. He examined this cast of characters, if you will. First you say ee a priest. From the old testament, this is someone the lawyer would have known really, really well.



This is one of Aaron's descendants. This is one of those people, you can call him a gap filler. This guy was supposed to stand in the gap between God on high and the people on Earth, and this man was supposed to mediate the relationship between God and everybody else. He would pray on behalf of the people when they didn't know how to pray. He would offer sacrifices on the behalf of the people when they didn't know how to offer sacrifices. The priest was someone who would literally stand in the way between God and man, and make things right. We also know that the priest in the old testament, they failed. The best one on the best day, ultimately he ain't good enough because he has sin in his life and he has a crooked heart.

This verdict is coming down from Jesus when Jesus tells us, "This guy, he saw a person in need, and he went the other way." He continues, "Next character is a Levite." These are the people who are supposed to circle around God's people. If you read in the old testament, you know the Levites didn't get any land in the inheritance. Their job was to live a life of good works, good deeds, to be a moral example for God's people so God's people, when they wondered who God is, and how should I live? They just look out and see the Levites living around them as a model of good deeds. The lawyer would have known this well. We see these ultimately failed as well, because in this moment, the verdict comes from Jesus.

Yeah, they saw a need and they looked the other way. Then the most shocking moment happens. A Samaritan comes on the scene. You need to know a few things about Samaritans. Samaritans were considered to be enemies of God's people. This Israel lawyer in the moment, this Jewish guy who knows what God is saying, this one right here, he gets into the moment and he wouldn't have liked this guy. In fact, it's not stretch of imagination to say that this lawyer would have hated this Samaritan because Samaritans were enemies of God's people because they were sinful sellouts of the Jewish race. They were people who started living too close to the borders, they started intermarrying with other nations.

Yes, I'm sure they had relationships. Then after that, they started mixing the worship of the one true living God with the worship of the other gods and the Pagan gods of the world. In every single way, the Samaritan people represented a weird mixed nation. They were intermarried with gentiles, they were racially mixed, and they lived in the ghettoized desert because they couldn't work with Jewish communities and they couldn't talk to God's people. Why bring this guy into it? Because Jesus is showing this lawyer, and he's showing us in this moment all of us have prejudices that are going to limit our care. This guy comes on the scene, and it's the one who you never expect who gets deeply involved and provides this incredible soul care for somebody desperately in need.

Jesus is pinching a nerve right here to prove a point. We can't really feel the nerve in this telling, so let me try to wake it up a little more for us and bring it into our lives. Imagine a modern retelling of this that would say it's 1930s in Selma, Alabama. A man has been beaten. He's been robbed. He's bleeding out, and he's left half dead in the middle of Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. Wouldn't you know a pastor comes down the road. This pastor is crossing the bridge, and the pastor sees the man there, and he looks away, and he passes on the other side.

The next thing that happens is a businessman, and wouldn't you know it? This is a good man. He goes to church. He's civically minded. He's passing by on the bridge, and he sees this man in need, and he looks the other way, and he passes by. Then the person you least expected, a white guy from the country that married a person of color is in the town, as well, and he comes, and he sees the situation, and he gets so deeply involved. He sacrifices his life to care for this person. That gets a little closer to the nerve. Jesus is doing something far more dramatic than even that in these moments.

He's pointing out the fact that as the story is told, we have certain prejudices that start to rise inside of each and every one of us, and if the prejudices aren't addressed, and if they aren't acknowledged, they're going to limit the amount of care that we can provide in the world. Caring is a means to sharing. The mission hangs upon the prejudices being removed. I won't even talk about you right here. I'll just talk about me. In so many ways, all of us have different prejudices. We have things in our hearts that Jesus needs to come in and cleanse. If they're racial, social, economic, or political, all of us have things to where we're tempted to look down on other people if the spirit isn't living and acting inside of each and every one of us.

Think of the ways that we try to limit care based on our prejudices. We try to limit the who. We want to give our lives to people we can identify with and understand, but our neighbor from this parable right here, our neighbor is anyone in need. We try to limit the when. We have all of our conditions met, it nicely fits into our schedule, it can fit on a easy cozy morning of the week, but think about it. The neighbor here, the neighbor in this moment is one who deserves our care whether it's convenient for us or not. There's more to it than that. We try to limit the how much. I'll give this much. I'll stay this long. I'll say this much.

Look at the length to which this good Samaritan goes in verse 33 and 34. He went to him. Look at the investment of energy. He bound up his wounds. He risked his own cleanliness, he poured out oil and wine. Look at the possessions being given extravagantly. He set him on his own animal. Now we learn the Samaritan was apparently riding on a donkey or a horse, or whatever you're riding in that time. He puts the man who's hurt on there so he can walk beside him. He risked his comfortable. He brought him to an end to take care of him. He gives time. We see that investment of time. It wasn't just for a few hours. He didn't simply drop him off.

He spent the night, and then he goes to the inn keeper in the morning, gives a little more money, and says, "If you need anything at all, I'll come back for him." Look at the investment of money and his future. Is this crushing? That's the point. We hear the question. What do I got to do to inherit eternal life? You got to love God with everything. You need to love your neighbor as yourself. I don't know if I'm going to be able to chin it. Who's my neighbor? Then this incredibly vivid picture comes out where our prejudices are exposed, how selfish we are gets really, really clear when we see someone doing what none of us has the energy or the life to muster.

That's the point. This is intended to crush us. This is intended to get us to the end of ourselves so that we can see Jesus. Third thing I need you to see is this. Jesus is our good Samaritan who makes caring possible. How are we going to be people of care? We go to Jesus and we consider that we're probably not asking the questions we really need to be asking. We go to Jesus and watch as we watch him work, and we listen as we hear him teach. We watch the prejudices come out. We watch the selfishness come out. Then when we're left in a moment where we're just thinking to ourselves, "I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't know where I'm going to turn. It looks like this just isn't going to work out." We listen to what Jesus is doing through all of it, because Jesus was doing something for the this lawyer in the moment, and he's doing something for us this morning.

Jesus puts two moral religious do-gooder people in front of the lawyer as a way of challenging him with where he's at. The Levites and the priest, they represent the ceremonial law. God's people believed that they could approach God through the law, but they were living in such a way where they only gave out of duty, and when the stakes were high, they backed off and they didn't get involved. It's as if you can hear the verdict of Jesus coming out, speaking on behalf of the law and the prophet since he is the law and the prophets saying in this moment, "Though you approach with your hands, your hearts are far from me."

The key to the parable where we can find life this morning is where we find ourselves in the parable. First we might be tempted to find ourselves in the face of this priest who had an assignment, he had a duty, he had a mission, and he couldn't live it out. Then we find ourselves in the place of this Levite. I'm supposed to live a life of good works and good deeds the whole world can seem, and he couldn't live it out. Then we come to find ourselves in the life of this person who had been beaten, who had been robbed, and who was left for dead, and we see Jesus coming through on his horse. We don't read this and think, "Oh, I really need to go out there and help people."

We read this, and it's intended to get us to a place where we say, "I was left for dead, and Jesus came for me." That's where the heart of caring and loving comes from. We heard Jesus taking our question, taking our motives, taking our hearts, and listen to him reform them and send them back to us. Listen to the questions that come out of this. What if you were on the ground? Instead of who is my neighbor? What if you were on the ground? Instead of who is my neighbor? What if you were bleeding to death? Instead of who is my neighbor? What if you were physically, emotionally, and spiritually robbed? What if the only person who helped you was the person who you thought of as an enemy?

What if you were saved by the grace of someone who you owed nothing and you could never repay? What kind of person would that make you, and how would you live differently? This is what the parable is intended to do, because here's the trick. We'll never be a neighbor to people unless Jesus has first been a neighbor to us. Until Jesus has been a neighbor, all this teaching will do is crush and discourage, but knowing that Jesus came to us when we were left for dead, and Jesus loved us as this good Samaritan, it changes our hearts. This is what Jesus said. In another time, Jesus is talking to Simon, and something just happened, and people can't understand the extravagant sacrifice.

They're looking around and they're whispering, and you know how people do. "I don't know why she's doing this. What is going on? This just doesn't make sense." Jesus looks into the situation, he says, "This woman is loved much because she has been forgiven much. You, Simon, you love little because you have been forgiven little." His sacrifice changes our hearts, and it changes how we give love and care in the world. You need to know that this teaching is crushing. We cannot fulfill the law, and you need to know for that, this teacher was crucified. He became the broken man. He became the one who was robbed. He became the one who was beaten. He became the one who actually died so that you and I can learn from his sacrifice what it means for us to provide love and care.

With this, with this being what we learn about our hearts for loving care, here are a few constructive points about how we can massage this into our own hearts, and how we can work this out as a community of faith. I have four. Don't lose your breath. I'm going to hurry, and then we'll be done. First, let's refocus on the heart of the Christian life. Look, if Luke 10 is true, then what does it mean for today? It means that we need to refocus on the heart of the Christian life, because the religious leader asked the question about the heart of the Christian faith. What must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus could have responded however he wanted to, but he chose to talk about a life of love, care, and mercy.

The heart of the Christian life, I need you to listen very carefully. The heart of the Christian life is not sharing the gospel with people. The heart of the Christian life is caring for people. One way to care for people is to share the gospel with people. In fact, the most loving way to care for someone is to share the gospel with someone, but the heart of the matter is care. We care for people. We care for body, mind, and soul. If we live a life of care, eventually, and even frequently we're going to share, but that sharing has a context, and that context is caring.

Second, let's reexamine our starting point in evangelism, because evangelism flows most naturally in relationships of care. For some of us, we want to get involved, we want to take the next step, but we don't know where to start. What if this was it? What if it's to consider the people that God has put before you and care for them? We do this as we reimagine what it means to even invite people here. We look to even invite people to experience what's going on here as we try to share the gospel with them. Imagine you had a neighbor on your block.

Odds are this is true for many of us in the room, where they've experienced the loss in their family, and they're in a time of bereavement. They're mourning.

What if we were to go to our neighbors and say, "Hey, I just want you to know there's this group that meets at my church. It's called grief share. You can come, and you can talk about loss, and you can talk about what's going on in your heart, and we're to talk about these things from a biblical perspective." Then through somebody just coming here and receiving care, they might find the gospel here. What if there was a coworker who's going through divorce? We feel the tremors of divorce all throughout our culture. What if a way to reimagine this is if we go to our coworkers and we say, "Hey, look, I know you're on a hard time, but man, we have these groups called divorce care."

"You can come into this room. You can talk about where you are, and you can talk about your heart." What if it's actually through an environment of being cared for that people come to hear the gospel? We need to reexamine our starting point in all of this. Brian Nelson, our care pastor, does a phenomenal job in organizing these efforts for us, and information about these different care groups is available right around the way in next steps. Number three, and I'm almost done, let's realize who God has put in front of us. The first thing that separates the Samaritan from the other two guys, and from you and me as well is that the Samaritan saw, he had compassion, and then he moved to action.

I think we miss what God has for us. We miss the mission, we miss the conversation, we miss the opportunity because we're so busy walking around this world asleep to what God is doing right in front of us. What if we ask God for the eyes of faith to see the people that he's already put before us and that are in our way? What if we reenvision the people that we're going to see at the restaurants that many of us are going to visit for the second, third, and fourth time this morning when we leave here? What if we started seeing them as the people that God has put before us?

What might be shocking is what if we actually reenvision the hallways of our church, and we saw our children's wings and our children's rooms as these are the people that need love and care maybe the most in our family? People groups hundreds strong that desperately need the gospel and desperately need our love and care. We're still recruiting. We have needs of over 100 teachers to get involved on Sunday mornings. Some of you have been asking the question, "Where am I going to go? What does God want me to do?" The needs are right before us. What does it look like for us to look at our church and consider the people that are already here as the people that we can go to, and provide love and care, and eventually have a way to share the gospel with them?

You contact Gretchen Averette and our incredible children's ministry team to serve. Last, and I'm out of here. Let's remember the ways that Jesus cares for us. I was thinking about you. I was thinking about this text. Something unexpected happened for me this week. I was thinking on scriptures. One came to me that has done so much for my heart. It's Romans 12, 1 through 2, "By the mercies of God, offer your bodies as living sacrifices." By the mercies of God. Not by that one thing that Jesus did for you. Not by that one time that Jesus was good for you. By all those times Jesus was for you. By all those things that Jesus did for you. By all those ways that the good Samaritan came, and he loved us so perfectly.

In light of all of those things, let's offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God. Let's consider the little things that we've been giving as but a small token of thank you to the King who's done everything for us, and he made dead people alive because of his son. Because Jesus came into our world, Jesus got onto our road. While not when we were left for dead, when we were dead, he saw us. He owed us nothing, though we owed him everything. He had compassion, though we can never repay him, and he gave his life for ours. How has Jesus been a good Samaritan to you? Go and do likewise. Let's pray.

Father, we to you for your word, and how so many times in so many ways it addresses us with where we are. Father, in thanking you for your word this morning, we thank you for this church that we're a part of. We pray that you'll show us things that are true about you and this passage as we continue to turn it over in our minds for the rest of today. Father, we pray that you'll show us where we are and how we measure up. God, in our brokenness and in our weakness, we pray for the strength to look to Jesus and to see him as the one who loves and cares perfectly. Seeing him, would you transform our hearts and make us more loving and more caring? God, we love you, and pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



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