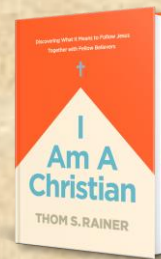


Sermon Notes: **I Am A Witness** (Luke 10:25-37)

Big Picture: *Christ's love enables us to go
and show love to others.*

Series Title: **I Am A Christian**



Introduction

- **Opening Illustration:**
 - Write down the name of one person in your life with whom you think God might want you to build a connection.
 - Write down the name of someone with whom you may have the opportunity one day to share the hope of Jesus.
 - We'll get back to those names at the end, but for now, let's get into Luke 10.
 - As you turn there, let me refresh your memory about our sermon series.
- **Sermon Series:** I Am a Christian
- **Today's Focus:** The parable of the Good Samaritan
 - We're going to talk a lot about being compassionate to our neighbors, but that alone isn't what this parable is about.
 - **Tension:** The parable of the Good Samaritan is not just about being compassionate.
 - The parable is a reminder that we never will be good enough, compassionate enough, or sinless enough to inherit eternal life. But because Jesus showed us the ultimate love, we can go and show love to others.
- **Big Picture:** Christ's compassion for us enables us to show compassion to others.
- **Read:** Luke 10:25-37

Transition: Let's look at the conversation that happens before Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan.

- Here's a lesson we can learn from this conversation: Don't limit the scope of the gospel to fit your limited perspective.

1) Don't limit the scope of the gospel to fit your limited perspective (Luke 10:25-29).

- **What the text says:**
 - ²⁵ One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?"
 - Who is this expert in the law?
 - We'll refer to him as "the lawyer."
 - In Jesus' day, Pharisees and lawyers would have been good friends.
 - Later, in Luke 11:45-54, we see the lawyers sticking up for the Pharisees against Jesus.
 - Lawyers were not concerned with secular law, but the Old Testament law.
 - They were essentially Bible scholars whose lives were focused on making sure the biblical law was followed correctly.

- What is the law?
 - The Old Testament law was used to direct God's people, help them thrive, help them understand God, and keep them in fellowship with him.
 - The Old Testament promised eternal life through faith, but many regarded the Old Testament law itself as a way to gain eternal life.
- The lawyer asks a great question, but with the wrong motivation.
 - He's seeking to test Jesus in order to protect the Old Testament law.
 - But Jesus flips the conversation by answering the lawyer's question with a question of his own: "What does the law say?"
- ²⁶ Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?"
- ²⁷ The man answered, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"
 - There is some scholarly debate over whether this passage is the same conversation recorded in Mark 12:28-34.
 - I lean toward the belief that this is a completely different conversation.
 - Here are my three main reasons:
 - In Mark's account, it is Jesus, not the lawyer, who identifies the two most important commandments.
 - The tone of the conversation is completely different.
 - The parable of the Good Samaritan would have been too memorable not to include.
 - Regardless, the lawyer gives a great answer.
 - Look how Jesus responds:
 - ²⁸ "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"
 - Jesus tells the lawyer he's right. If he can live out the law fully and perfectly, he will have eternal life.
 - **Illustration:** Parents, have you ever had your kids just keep asking for something? Finally, out of a little frustration, you say yes but tell them they must complete a massive list of chores and responsibilities that you know they will never do?
 - That's what Jesus is telling this lawyer.
 - "If you want to inherit salvation by carrying out the law, then you must carry out the entire law without any mistakes."
 - It would never happen!
 - ²⁹ The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
 - When Jesus set the bar at keeping the entire law, it should have been the end of the conversation.
 - The lawyer should have said, "There's no way I can fully and perfectly obey the law."
 - And no doubt Jesus would have responded to the man's humble heart and shown him grace.
 - But the lawyer doesn't admit his inability to keep the law; instead, he shows his true heart.
 - He seeks to justify himself.
 - Here's his dilemma: He wants the gospel to fit his own perspective.
 - He's operating out of a purely self-interested mindset.
 - Atheists often point this out for those who think that they have to earn their way into heaven.
 - Trying to earn your way into heaven is just operating out of self-interest.
- **Emphasis:** The gospel of Jesus is not a gospel of self-interest. It is a gospel of sacrifice, grace, and mercy.

- **Application:** The true gospel of Jesus—that we are saved by grace and not by works—frees us to live in a way that is highly distinguishable from the world.

Transition: This lawyer thought he had Jesus cornered. He thought that by changing the scope of the word *neighbor* he would be able to prove that his way of keeping the law was the way to eternal life.

- But Jesus clearly knew better. So he tells the lawyer a parable to help him understand.
- Here's what we see next: Love those who have been deemed unlovable.

2) Love those who have been deemed unlovable (Luke 10:30-35).

- **What the text says:**

- ³⁰ Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.”
 - This path was well-known to the lawyer as a treacherous place to travel
 - It was treacherous both for the difficult, winding road (which dropped 3,000 feet in elevation over a 17-mile stretch) and for the criminal activity that was common along the way.
 - It was rare for anyone to travel this road alone.
- ³¹ “By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by.
 - We naturally tend to be hard on the priest, but a few additional details are in order.
 - First, if the priest stopped, there was a good chance he would be beaten and robbed as well.
 - Second, as J. D. Greear explains it, the priest “was returning from Jerusalem where he had purified himself so he could perform his religious duties. According to Jewish law, if you touched a man who died after you had been purified, you had to go back to the Temple and purify yourself again, which could take up to 7 days.”
 - In short, it would have been extremely dangerous and inconvenient for him to stop.
- ³² A Temple assistant walked over and looked at [the man] lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.
 - There is a chance the Temple assistant saw the priest walk by, so he may have followed the priest’s lead in passing by.
 - No matter what the reason, both travelers ignored the injured man.
- ³³ “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him.
 - At this point in the story, Jesus’ audience was expecting a third character to come and save the man, but most probably expected a normal citizen.
 - Someone who would do the work the priest and Levite should have done.
 - The phrase “But a Samaritan” probably sent shivers down the spine of the lawyer.
 - To say the least, Jews and Samaritans despised each other.
- The Samaritan sees the man and stops. Why?
 - “He had compassion.”
 - The Samaritan went above and beyond to help the man.
- ³⁴ Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.

- The Samaritan used his personal supplies—bandages, oil, and wine—to clean and dress the man’s wounds.
- He put him on his own donkey and walked the rest of the route.
- ³⁵ The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, ‘Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.’
 - He brought the wounded man to an inn and stayed with him to care for him.
 - When the Samaritan had to leave, he left money for the man to continue to heal.
 - Most likely this was enough money for two months at the inn.
 - Which shows how close to death this man was.
 - The Samaritan showed extreme compassion and love.
- The Greek word in the text for what the Samaritan felt is *splanchnizomai*. Most translations render this verb as “moved with compassion” or “moved with pity.” In essence, it refers to a deep emotional response to the pain of another.
 - **Emphasis:** The compassion we have for others is not merely an action we choose; it is an emotion that moves us to action.
- **Application:** Love those whom you have deemed unlovable.
 - It’s often easier to love people whom others have deemed unlovable.
 - But what about the people you look down on, the ones you have deemed unlovable?
 - This disdain may be conscious or unconscious.
 - We all deem others unlovable at times.
 - Go show compassion to *that* person.
 - Sometimes our problem is lack of familiarity. As Abraham Lincoln is reputed to have said: “I don’t like that man. I must get to know him better.”
- **Application:** Does this mean we have to go to the heights that the Samaritan shows in the parable?
 - Maybe. If there is a time when God calls you to do so, then do it.
 - As a reminder, this is a parable that Jesus told. It’s a story to illustrate a spiritual truth—not an actual historical event.
 - So are we to model this parable all the time? No. It’s not possible.
 - **Emphasis:** But we can show compassion.
 - We can help the widows and orphans.
 - We can help protect the unborn.
 - We can help the hurting and needy.
 - And we should.
 - Jess C. Moody, a former pastor and founder of Palm Beach Atlantic University once said, “Compassion is not a snob gone slumming. . . . Did you ever take a *real* trip down inside the broken heart of a friend? To feel the sob of the soul—the raw, red crucible of emotional agony? To have this become almost as much yours as that of your soul-crushed neighbor? Then, to sit down with him—and silently weep? This is the beginning of compassion.”

Transition: The gospel expands our perspective to love those around us. Now Jesus tells the lawyer—and us—what to do next: Go and show compassion to your neighbor. Go and demonstrate why you are eager to say, “I am a witness.”

3) Go and show compassion to your neighbor (Luke 10:36-37).

- What the text says:
 - ³⁶ “Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked.
 - The lawyer was trapped into an answer.
 - ³⁷ The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.” Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”
 - The lawyer’s prejudice was so deep that he couldn’t mutter, “The Samaritan,” but simply said, “The one who showed mercy.”
 - **Application:** This whole passage hinges on Jesus’ command to “go and do the same.” Why?
 - 1) We can’t do enough to earn our salvation.
 - **Emphasis:** The greatest humanitarian will never have enough compassion to earn his or her way into heaven.
 - 2) We have been given salvation by Jesus.
 - The only thing the law offers is that it shows us our need for Christ.
 - 3) Our salvation should compel us to love those around us. Such is the reason we can say, “I am a witness.”
 - Alistair Begg says, “The attitude of the Samaritan is not the way to life, but it is the way of life for all who have discovered eternal life in Christ, who is the life.”
 - **Application:** So, how do we “go and do the same”?
 - Stop trying to split hairs over who your neighbor is and just start being a neighbor.
 - How do we do that right now?
 - I want to remind you that relationships are progressive.
 - If you tried to host a block party next weekend without knowing anyone in the neighborhood, not many people would come.
 - But if you start getting to know people now, they might come to your block party next summer.

Conclusion

- What happened to the lawyer?
 - We don’t know, but we can deduce from the fact that he walked away that he was still clinging to the law that he lived under.
 - Maybe later down the road, he came back to Christ and asked for another way, the way of grace.
 - If you are here today and you’ve never taken hold of the grace of Jesus Christ; if you are still clinging to some kind of religious system where you are trying to get in good with God, then surrender to Christ.
- **Emphasis:** A greater Samaritan has come—one who has the limitless love the law requires.
 - What must you do to inherit eternal life?
 - Understand that you can never live up to the requirements needed to get into heaven.
 - And then put your trust in the one who has met all the requirements, so that through him, you may inherit eternal life.
 - Jesus truly is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”
 - You must learn what it means to say, “I am a witness.”
- For those of you who know Jesus in this way, here’s your challenge for this week:

- **Big Action:** Make at least one step of progress with the people whose names you wrote down at the beginning of this sermon.
- Do one intentional act this week to be a neighbor to them.
 - Pray for them.
 - Find out their name if you don't know it.
 - Borrow something from them.
 - Invite them over for s'mores.
- You have the hope of Jesus. Let it overflow from your heart. Let's be conduits of hope to the distressed and dejected.