

## Luke 10C

- Last week we stopped in the midst of a well known exchange between Jesus and the lawyer who stood up to test Him
  - We introduced this passage last week by mentioning that this lawyer is a good example of the kind of Jew that Paul talked
  - He described in Romans the zealous Jews who rejected Jesus though they embraced the smallest detail within the Law given to Moses
  - And this exchange gives us an excellent opportunity to see how that group could understand the details of the law but yet miss the main point
    - We have term for this kind of blindness...we call it not seeing the forest for the trees
- Let's re-read those verses from last week...

[Luke 10:25](#) ¶ And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

[Luke 10:26](#) And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?"

[Luke 10:27](#) And 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 YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

[Luke 10:28](#) And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE."

[Luke 10:29](#) But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

[Luke 10:30](#) Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.

[Luke 10:31](#) "And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

[Luke 10:32](#) "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

[Luke 10:33](#) "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion,

[Luke 10:34](#) and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on *them*; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

[Luke 10:35](#) "On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.'

[Luke 10:36](#) “Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?”

[Luke 10:37](#) And he said, “The one who showed mercy toward him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.”

- As we said last week, this lawyer has stood up expressly for the purpose of tearing Jesus down
  - The question seemed legitimate enough – why was it a test of Jesus?
  - Actually, the question was a favorite question of the religious leaders of Jesus day
- The religious leaders in Jesus day spent countless hours debating and discussing ideas taken out of the law
  - One of the favorites was the question of how to obtain eternal life
  - For all their knowledge of the law and for all the scripture that had been given to Israel through the prophets, they had not found universal agreement for how to obtain salvation
    - That fact alone is a telling indicator of how these men could be experts in God’s Word yet not understand it’s true meaning – forest for the trees...
- These false leaders were fascinated with questions like how to obtain salvation or similar questions like the one asked by another lawyer in Mark 12 asking Jesus where he wanted to know which commandment was the greatest...
  - This kind of never-ending picking apart of the law was actually a natural consequence of how these religious leaders had distorted the law for their own purposes
  - Remember, these leaders had turned the entire Law of Moses into a yoke, a burden to be borne by men in an effort to obtain righteousness by their own work
  - And more than that, the leaders had added their own subtleties to the law with their complex interpretations and added rules for applying the law in everyday situations
    - Like when the disciples were picking heads of grain

- Sooner or later these religious zealots would encounter a situations where one law would seem to be in opposition to another
- We sometimes face this question ourselves
  - Like the requirement to honor your parents and to not bear false witness (not to lie)
  - What if you father asks you to lie to your Aunt and Uncle when they ask if you like your birthday gift
- The Jewish leadership had created for themselves countless such conflicts, and they spent their lives debating how to resolve them
  - Like we said last week, they loved the law because it served their own selfish purposes to manipulate and control their work toward righteousness
  - It let them be their own source of salvation, or at least they thought it did
- So to this lawyer's question, Jesus deflects the controversy by responding with His own question
  - Jesus asks the lawyer what answer he would see in the law...what does scripture teach him
    - The lawyer answers from Deut 6:5, taken from God's introduction to the restating the law to the nation of Israel
    - And from Lev 19:16, which is a summary of the requirements in the law regarding how people are to treat one another
  - This lawyer, whether by chance or perhaps spiritual insight given by the Holy Spirit, happens to give the correct response to his own question
    - So all that's remaining for Jesus to say is to command the lawyer to do as he teaches
- Before looking at the lawyer's reaction, let's ask the obvious question
  - Is Jesus telling us to work our way to heaven?
  - For example, could someone deny Jesus and yet do these things two commandments and therefore be saved?

- The answer is no, and the easiest way to prove that is to simply recognize that these commandments are impossible to keep perfectly
  - No one who has ever lived – apart from Jesus Himself – has ever succeeded in keeping these two commandments without error
  - And so if these are the requirements for salvation, then no one can be saved
  - But since men are being saved, there must be more to the answer
- Well, let's look at those commandments again ...
  - For example, in the first one we're told to love your God with all your heart...
  - Jesus states that to obtain eternal salvation, God requires that we love Him with our entire heart
    - And loving God with our whole heart requires that we also love His Son
    - Listen to what Jesus tells these leaders in John

[John 5:37](#) "And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form.

[John 5:38](#) "You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.

[John 5:39](#) "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;

[John 5:40](#) and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

[John 5:41](#) "I do not receive glory from men;

[John 5:42](#) but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.

- Jesus sums up the state of the heart of these religious leaders
  - They have no love of God in them, which has been exposed by their hatred for Jesus
  - If someone loves God with their whole heart, then their love of God will bring them to a love of His Son as well
  - And their love of Jesus will therefore be their source of salvation

[John 14:23](#) Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone **loves** Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will **love** him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.  
[John 14:24](#) “He who does not **love** Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.

- Furthermore, someone who loves God and His Son is to abide in the words Jesus spoke
  - So those who truly have a love for God hear the Word of Christ and abide in it - in other words believe it
- Then look a little further in verse 27
  - The commandment says to love God with all your mind
  - Mark’s version translates mind (dianoia) as understanding
    - So obtaining eternal life rests not merely on some emotional response to an abstract idea of God
    - It’s not the result of some religious trance
    - It depends upon loving God with our minds, through a clear understanding of God’s word - including all He has to say about the source and person of our salvation – namely Jesus
- And the lawyers and Pharisees failed this test as well

[John 8:42](#) Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

[John 8:43](#) “Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word.

[John 8:44](#) “You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

[John 8:45](#) “But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

[John 8:46](#) “Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

[John 8:47](#) “He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God.”

- These men could not inherit eternal life because they would not love God with all their mind –
  - Instead they were seeking to do the desires of their father the devil
  - And only the lies of their father the devil appealed to them
  - The truth spoken by God through Jesus was ignored
- Likewise, we are of God – if we have heard the words of God, and heeded them

[Rom. 10:17](#) So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

- So to receive eternal life, we must love God with all our mind, which requires we hear His Word and believe it
- Then came the second commandment
  - But it's merely a natural extension of the first
  - Having been changed by our faith to love God, we then have the capacity to truly love others

[John 13:35](#) “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** for one another.”

- So in His answer to the lawyer, Jesus didn't present salvation as a work
  - To the contrary...His statements reflected the impossibility of achieving salvation by our own efforts
  - And yet Jesus was, in fact, teaching how eternal life can be received – but it was according to faith
    - That a believer's heart must first be changed by God, to be given over fully Him
    - Believers are nothing more than sinners saved by God's grace
      - They are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit into men and women who
        - have such a love for God,
        - such a desire to know Him through His word
        - and to obey Him,

- That they gladly receive His Son and then show His love in their lives
  - But the lawyer couldn't get see this
- In verse 29, Luke says the lawyer still wished to justify himself – to make himself look righteous
  - What's truly fascinating here is how this lawyer realized that Jesus beat him at his own game
  - When Jesus asked the lawyer what the Law taught him and then the lawyer gave his answer, he didn't realize that his answer was going to be his on undoing
  - Because the answer he gave Jesus actually brought into question the lawyer's own righteousness before the crowd
    - Everyone who heard the lawyer's answer knew that no one could ever hope to keep such demanding commandments
    - The lawyer was seeking to box in Jesus by giving the standard answer and expecting Jesus to argue with him over the definition of words and the meaning of the text
    - Instead, Jesus just says you're right, now go try and do it
    - And now the lawyer stands there looking foolish because the crowd wants to know how he expects to accomplish this
- So what does a lawyer do when he's boxed himself into a corner?
  - Naturally, he tried to change the terms of the discussion
  - He equivocates
  - He looks for loopholes that might allow him to escape from the corner he's in
  - Rather than admitting he is helpless and without an answer and requires God's grace if he has any hope of being rescued from certain judgment
- No, he simply responds by trying once again to trap Jesus
  - He asks who is my neighbor
    - How can I possibly know who my neighbor is?

- Is it just the person who lives next to me, the person who works next to me?
  - What about the person two house down the street? Or maybe on the next street?
  - Or is it only those in my town or my tribe of Israel?
  - How can we expect to be held to these rules, Jesus, when they're so ambiguous
- It's the kind of question unbelievers have loved to ask God and his followers since the beginning of time

[Gen. 3:1](#) , “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’”

- My personal favorite: can God create a rock so big He can't lift it?
  - The purpose behind these questions is not genuine curiosity or sincere desire to understand God and His nature or His purposes
  - They are tests intended to puff us up and diminish faith in God at the same time
- But God's foolishness is infinitely wiser than man's wisdom, so Jesus deftly addresses the lawyer's question
  - He tells the story of the Samaritan
  - You'll remember what we taught about Samaritans just a few weeks ago
    - These were the much despised inhabitants of Samria who thought themselves to be Jews, yet were seen as traitors and imposters by the true Jews
    - In other words, they were the farthest thing from a neighbor – they were scum
  - In the parable, a victim of a robbery on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, a road famous for it's treacherous passages and frequent robberies
    - This poor man beaten close to death is left for dead by a priest



- In the fact the priest goes out of his way to avoid even coming near the man – probably out of fear of becoming unclean from the bleeding man
- Of all men, the priest should have been one to show compassion as a servant of God
- Next comes a Levite
  - A Levite would have been someone of the priestly tribe who was not actively engaged in temple service, and therefore would not have been given the title of priest
  - Yet as a Levite, he would be seen as the consummate Jew, a man who epitomized the upright and proper Jew
  - Yet he did the man no better in ignoring him
- Finally, a Samaritan stops to help the robbery victim we're told
  - Now what hasn't been given us is the identity of the victim here
    - It isn't terribly important to the story, except that it was likely that the crowd listening to Jesus' parable would have assumed any man traveling from Jerusalem was probably a Jew
    - And that's significant because it means that a Jew in need was overlooked by two men of high standing in Jewish culture
    - And yet he was aided by the enemy of a Jew, a Samaritan
      - This is similar to what Jesus taught in Matt 5

[Matt. 5:43](#) ¶ “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’

[Matt. 5:44](#) “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

[Matt. 5:46](#) “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

[Matt. 5:47](#) “If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

[Matt. 5:48](#) “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- So in describing the great lengths this Samaritan went to in helping this Jew, Jesus obliterates any concept of a limit to who our neighbor might be

- The lawyer was busy trying to draw boundaries to limit his need to be loving to his neighbor
- And in one moment, Jesus erases every possible line and teaches that a neighbor is the person we consider the least, which naturally means that everyone must be considered our neighbor
- If the person we hate, the person who is our enemy must be considered a neighbor, then how much more so the person living next door or the stranger at the grocery store or in the car next to us in traffic?
- Jesus again boxes in the lawyer, leaving him with no where to go
  - If you desire to work your own salvation, then be prepared to love your God perfectly and to love humanity perfectly
    - And if you can't manage those two things, then may I suggest we do as Jesus is commanding here and rely on God's love available to us by His mercy and Grace through a faith in His Son
- And then to end this chapter, look at the final 5 verses

[Luke 10:38](#) ¶ Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.

[Luke 10:39](#) She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word.

[Luke 10:40](#) But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up *to Him* and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me."

[Luke 10:41](#) But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things;

[Luke 10:42](#) but *only* one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

- While there is probably much we could say about this exchange, it's actually quite easy to fit into the larger context of this morning,
  - While this chapter begins with a look at the two chief commandment, loving God and loving your neighbor
  - It ends with two simple examples of each
    - First, in the parable of the Samaritan, Jesus illustrates what loving your neighbor means

- And here, Luke gives us a simple example of what loving your God before all else looks like
- Martha welcomes Jesus into her home, and her sister Mary is so captivated by Jesus
  - By his words, His power, his love for her
  - That she neglects to assist her sister in her normal duties of preparing a meal for the visitor
  - And Martha makes a biting comment to Jesus, correcting Him for distracting Mary away from her duties and not expecting her to help Martha
  - And Jesus gently responds, Martha, Martha
    - You are so worried about so many things
    - His comments leaves a sense that Martha must have been someone who was always worried,
      - Always troubled by the cares of her day
      - Always busy, always with demands on her time
      - Never enough time to attend to that which truly matter in her relationship with God
- You can almost see Jesus shaking his head as He spoke these words to her
  - What a shame Martha
  - If you only understood that you have the wrong priorities
    - Martha, Jesus says, only one thing is necessary
    - There is only one thing you need to worry about
    - There is only one thing that deserves this much energy and concern
    - It is the good part, the part Mary has chosen
    - To sit at Jesus feet and listen to His word
  - Can it really be that simple?

- Is loving your God with all your heart, and mind and soul and spirit really as easy as just putting everything else aside in your life
- And making hearing the word of Christ the primary, the only thing to seek and to be concerned about?
- And the answer is yes
- This good part will never be taken away, while all the other things in our life that we cling to and elevate in our own minds
  - The activities, the routines, the hobbies, the entertainment, the various stresses and demands placed upon us by others and their expectations for us – none of that is eternal
    - But Jesus and His Word are eternal, and they bring contentment, they bring satisfaction, they bring real healing and growth and they bring eternal life
    - It really is just that simple