**The Gospel of Luke**

**Witness to the Gentiles - #28**

***How Do I Inherit Eternal Life?***

**Luke 10:25-28**

***The Parable of the Good Samaritan***

**Luke 10:29-37**

**Class Dinner Wed., Dec. 2, 6:30 p.m.** – Our always-fun end-of-class carry-in dinner will be in the E91 Friendship Room the week after Thanksgiving. We’ll have sign-up sheets in class this week and next, and we encourage all our friends through the years to come back and join in the event (send me an email at rlwcom@aol.com or call 317-694-4141). Class meets this week and next, is off Nov. 25 through December, and we’ll continue our study of Luke with George beginning January 6, 2016. - Bob

**Luke 10:25-28 – How Do I Inherit Eternal Life?**

 ***25*** *Once a certain lawyer stood up trying to test Jesus saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”*

 ***26*** *And he (Jesus) said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it t?"*

 ***27*** *And he, answering, said, “You should 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.”*

 ***28*** *Jesus then said unto him, “You have answered right: do this, and you shall live.”*

**Notes and Studies**

1. A lawyer, a ***nomikos***, not in our modern sense but someone who knew the Mosaic Law and had but one aim: to “test” Jesus.
2. The question about inheriting eternal life is not new, it was raised a long time ago and can be traced back to Daniel 12:2, “*Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to life eternal, some to shame and eternal disgrace.”*
3. Jesus must have said, “How to you read the Torah?” or rather, “How do you recite the ‘Shema”? To this question the lawyer quoted Deuteronomy 6:5, and the Lord here is ***Kyrios***, that is, the normal translation of the Hebrew Yahweh.

**The various sides of inner life**

1. In Deuteronomy 6:5 we read that love has to be from “heart, soul, and might” but in Luke we read “mind” (***dianoia***) which is the forth element added to the OT’s three which appear in Matthew 22:37. This Greek work ***dianoi*** means “firm intention” and “determination.” Luke paraphrased the OT text to make it clear to his Greek readers.
2. Although the word ***psyche*** means “soul” in Greek, here it means the conscious person and the right use of his vital energy.
3. “Might” in Greek is ***ischys*** that is, the driving force and with this if we add mind then it becomes more clear that love is total and it engulfs the whole life.

**‘Love you neighbor as yourself’**

The lawyer added a line from Leviticus 19:18 to the first series. In Jewish tradition the “neighbor” is a fellow Israelite, as it is clear for Leviticus 19:34, and the “neighbor” is the ***ger*** who lives next to you in the Land (Deut 10:19). This does not include the “gentiles,” the “***goyim***.”

**Self-love and self-denial**

1. Self-love is not a common topic in our teaching. Augustine’s old saying is among the most harmful words ever uttered by a great Christian, “The primal destruction of man was self-love. … There is no one who does not love himself; but one must search for the right love and avoid the warped. … Indeed you did not love yourself when you did not love the God who made you." So also thought Maximus the Confessor, who is rated among the best Byzantine theologians of the 6th century (c. 580-662). But these ascetics who took a one-sided view of human life are not wrong in their exaggeration of the harm that the wrong self-love can inflict on us as it shelters its power in the self and can rotate to Narcissism which is the extreme form of self-love.
2. Self-denial was not known in Judaism and it became known only in the teaching of Jesus. There is one reason for that, that sacrificial love also was not known in Judaism and this dynamic kind of love can’t be exercised without self-denial.

**Love your neighbor as you love yourself**

1. To love whatever form of love that may be there has to be a seed of love in us. Our Lord told us that this seed is alive and can be of good use: *“…what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”* (Matt 7:9-11). Love is in us, and it can be stimulated by a stimulant but if it is not in us love can’t be acquired.
2. The neighbor is the other, who in the Christian vision is Jesus himself, and we shall see how Jesus in the Parable of the Good Samaritan has changed the place of the neighbor for the blood related persons to the universal humanity. Loving the other is extending our love from the self to what is outside the self where we can truly share and receive.

**Self-denial**

1. Self-denial is not self-hate.If we hate anything blindly we allow this virus to live in us. We hate sin not because we hate but because our love is so alive that it rejects sin as the damaging self-injury that we inflect on our being. No one loves to cut off part of his or her body, thus in the same breath no one would like to damage his or her inner life.
2. We deny our self as the only center for consciousness because our being is shared with all that is around us.
3. **What is the use of either words ‘inter-being” and ‘inter-all’?**

a. A long time ago two new words were common: inter-being and inter-all.

b. If you see paper, you likely can’t see the tree and the woodcutter and the wagon that carried the parts of the trees from which was made this paper that comes to your hands. All in the universe are in the state of inter-being and thus inter-all. Nothing does stand by itself and for itself; all are not only just connected but all share one common movement, but for different forms of use and purposes.

**Love and Eternal Life**

1. It is easy to say that since God is love (1 John 4:8) and God is also eternal (1 Tim 1:17), the two together, love and eternal life, can’t be separated because there is no division in God. But this easy way is an attempt to escape from the challenge of how Love is the very eternal life of God.
2. Love is what the Trinity is, which is the communion of being and that communion is love where each person dwells in the other two persons with complete self-giving. This has a name – Perichoresis (from [Greek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language): **περιχώρησις *perikhōrēsis***, "rotation") – which describes the relationship between each person of the triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The word Circuminsession is also used to mean the same kind of dynamic movement of the Trinitarian love.

**Love is eternal**

1. Love is eternal because love does not suffer divisions. Our suffering is due to divided love, which does not allow us to see the eternal and the undivided.
2. Love does not die because it is not made or composed out of perishable elements.
3. Love is God’s gift in Christ.

**Eternal Life - A letter from George**

My dear brother,

I read your letter out loud so that I can sense what is the problem that you have with eternal life. I am aware that we don’t teach that subject except in funerals and in passing.

First, eternal life is the very life of Jesus our Lord. We receive this life when we are baptized. But somehow, there is no post-baptismal teaching in many of our churches. What we receive in baptism, among other things, is our unbroken fellowship with the Father through the Lord Jesus in the Holy Spirit. This is what is given and what we continue to pursue, our communion with the Lord in spite of our weakness and our failure to be fully united to Him. This unbroken communion is the first taste of eternal life that we have in us, something that time, illness, and even sin can’t change or take away. Our fear of condemnation is no longer that of hell but is the fear of losing our love for the Lord Jesus. This continuation of communion is a foretaste of eternal life.

Second, our love has been healed and is in Christ and is no longer a divided love between the self, the Lord and the others. There is a common old saying, “If you have no love for humanity, you have no love for the Lover of Humanity Jesus our Lord.” Our healed love is also a taste of eternal love, for this love can’t be lost or destroyed for this love has the vitality and the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit who pours out the divine love in us (Rom 5:5). This is also a foretaste of eternal life where God who is Love has sustained us by his eternal dwelling in us. From this love we can see in this love how true eternal life will be, for eternal life is true life that death can’t take or destroy.

Third, it is a common mistake to think that eternal life is a life without end. The Christian truth is that eternal life is God’s life resting in us and in God who is Eternal and is sharing His life with us. This means that being in God our biological death is not an end but a promotion that we don’t seek, but accept also in Christ as a way of transformation of our earthly being. We die in Christ and this death is death to sin. What is this death? It sees sin as no longer a way to true being. Sin is what we do and is what we choose as way of life and behind our choice; there is a desire for being immortal. This is the deception of sin. But when we realize that there is a new life in Christ, sin is no longer a way of life and that our being in Christ is the true life, sin then is no longer attractive or an option in life for we are no longer seeking immortality by our own means since we can see immortality in Christ.

To die in Christ is to live differently a life that is crucified seeing that immortality is real only in Christ and that our “fear of mortality” has been healed by our communion with and in Christ.

Our mortality makes us see the end of all that we have and do. But in Christ the end is no longer an end but the end has become the “goal,” and the beginning is no longer the beginning but has become the “origin” where things begin to take their origin and their course in Jesus our Lord.

I hope I have answered you and have made myself clear that now we have a new life in Christ where death is a biological necessity that will lead to a transformation not an end since there is no end in the Lord but only the “Goal” which we attain by His Grace.

George Littlelight

Cambridge, 4 Jan 2002

**Luke 10:29-37 – Who is my neighbor? The Parable of the Good Samaritan**

***29*** *But (the lawyer) wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”*

***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.* ***31****And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.* ***32****Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.* ***33****But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion,* ***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.* ***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.’*

***36****Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?”*

***37****And he said, “The one who showed mercy toward him.”*

 *Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same yourself.”*

**Notes and Studies**

**Background of the Parable**

1. Priests and Levites were very careful not to be defiled by touching a dead person. This was very serious matter because such defilement can prevent them from prayer, (Lev chapter 12).
2. According to John 4:9, Jews will never handle anything touched by Samaritans.
3. Jesus has chosen the best two examples of pious Jewish life.
4. The Samaritan Torah has the same laws of purifications but here; this Good Samaritan did not pay attention.
5. Mercy bypasses the laws, and by making a Samaritan merciful Jesus has expanded the boundaries of love. Jesus did not condemn either the priest or the Levite but when their love was put to test, their love was not active.

**Is this Parable anti-Semitic?**

1. S. Sandmel and others think that the parable does “lend itself to a possible alignment with other anti-Jewish verses” in Luke (*Anti-Semitism in the New Testament*, 1978, page 77)
2. This is far-fetched partly because the injunction “*Go and do the same yourself*” is an injunction to extend the human relationships to what is higher and wider than the ethnic origins. This reading of anti-semitism ignores even the Jewish ethnic origin of Jesus himself.

**The Parable in the Ancient Christian Commentaries**

**Origen of Alexandria (3rd century)**

 One of them wanted to interpret the parable as follows.

 The man who was going down is Adam. Jerusalem is paradise, and Jericho is the world. The robbers are the hostile powers, and the Samaritan is Christ. The wounds are disobedience. The beast is the Lord’s body. The stable that accepts all who wish to enter is the church. The two denarii mean the Father and the Son. The manager of the stable is the head of the church, to whom its care has been entrusted.

 The fact that the Samaritan promises he will return represents the savior’s Second Coming.

 The Samaritan “who took pity on the man who had fallen among the thieves, is truly a guardian and the closer neighbor than the Law and the prophets. He showed that he was the man’s neighbor more by deed than by word. According to the passage that says, “*Be imitators of me, as I too am of Christ*” (1 Cor 11:1), it is possible for us to imitate Christ and to pity those who “have fallen among thieves.”

 We go to them, bind their wounds, pour oil and wine, put them on our own animals, and bear their burdens. The Son of God encourages us to do things like this. He is speaking not so much to the teacher of the Law as to us and to everyone when he says, “*Go and do likewise.*” If we do, we will receive eternal life in Christ Jesus, to whom is glory and power for ages of ages, Amen.” (*Homilies on the Gospel of Luke,* 34:3, 9)

**Jesus is the Good Samaritan**

Ambrose of Milan (Aurelius Ambrosius, better known in English as Saint Ambrose, 340-397AD), in his Exposition of the Gospel of Luke, he followed the exposition of Origen, the Samaritan who came down from Jerusalem is he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man (Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 7:74):

**A Cry of a Wounded Soul**

 O Lord Jesus who did not disdain to think of yourself as a Samaritan who did not abide by the Law to save my wounded filthy soul.

 You are holy and my dirt can’t penetrate your heart for there is no room for sin in your heart. Your love is whole and is undivided, save me from all divisions that bring sins to my frail life that can be seduced from within by lusts and from without by the evil powers.

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