

## Are you helping your neighbor?

On Thursday the 13th day of December in the year 1962. Two brothers ages ten and seven of Florence, Ks. See their father fall to the living room floor and not get up. Their mother is gone to a town thirty miles away. Their sister is at a church function. So one the boys ran to the neighbors house and knocks on the door. He tells the neighbor that his dad has fallen and is hurt. Could he come over and help? The neighbor tells the young boy, " After my television show, I'll come over and see what is going on with your dad." So he frantically runs back home. His dad still has not got off the floor. They now notice that their father is not breathing, and now even more scared, they call up to the church for his sister. She rushes home, to find their father dead. They call the town doctor, who comes rushing over. But all is vain. Their father and my Grandfather was dead at a young age.

A young man headed home on I-70 outside of Ellsworth Ks. stops at the rest stop. As he enters he sees a man there covered in blood. He panics, races home, changing his clothes, takes a shower, throws his bloody work clothes in the washing machine. Starts the laundry. Then goes back to the rest stop. He found the man now dead from multiple stab wounds. (He was too scared to help, the man because he worked a slaughterhouse and was afraid that he would not be able to explain his bloody clothing.)

What do these two very true stories have in common? There was someone who needed help. But someone passed up the chance to help his fellow man. Jesus spoke of something very similar in Luke the 10th. chapter.

Luke 10:25-37 25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" 27 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.'" 28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." 29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two silver coins 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.'" 36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." (NIV)

Now this man has had the misfortune of meeting two robbers. He is injured to the point that he is left for dead at the side of the road. Not only has he lost his valuables but quite possibly in danger of losing his life. Now it gets to be interesting, three men come along the road where the injured man is lying. The first man to pass by is a priest, a man of God. But he walks past the injured man. The second man to pass by is a Levite. But he does the same thing the priest did. He passes on by without even attempting to do anything.

Now the third man on the road stops to help and aid the man. This man is a Samaritan. He is looked down upon by the Jewish people. He is considered less than a dog to them, the lowest form of the

human race. But he stops to help this injured man that considers him an enemy. He goes beyond what most people would have done in this situation.

The first thing the Samaritan does is stop to help one who looks upon him as an enemy, someone who would normally avoid even looking at him.

The second is that he takes him and gives aid to this injured enemy. He puts bandages and oil on his wounds.

The third thing is that he takes him to an inn and stays to care for him there as well.

The fourth thing is that when the man is getting better and the Samaritan has to leave he pays for all the expenses for the innkeeper to continue to look after the injured man. He also offers to pay for any further debt that may occur, after his departure the next day.

Now let me ask you this do you help your brother, your sister, or even your neighbor?

Matthew 12:50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." (NIV)

Mark 3:35 Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." (NIV)

Did the Samaritan do the will of the Father who is heaven? The answer to this would have to be yes.

The next question you have to ask yourself is; am I my brother's keeper?

Genesis 4:9-14 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" 10 The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. 11 Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth." 13 Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is more than I can bear. 14 Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." (NIV)

The answer to this question would have to be, 'Yes.' When God asked, where is your brother? It held Cain to accountability, so it also holds us as well.

Matthew 5:43-44 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, (NIV)

Jesus even tells us that we should love our enemies and pray for them as well. Did the two who passed by on the road to Jericho love their neighbor? The answer to that is not so clear is it? Maybe they only love those who loved them back. But the Samaritan, on the other hand, showed love to someone who would not have loved him to begin with or may even loved or thanked him after the fact either.

Luke 6:31-35 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you. 32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners' love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. 35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. (NIV)

Is this not what the Samaritan did? Jesus spoke these words.

John 15:12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. (NIV)

We also have an obligation to help those in spiritual need as well. If we know of someone, we should help him or her in anyway that can by prayer, encouragement, and comforting.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. (NIV)

Isaiah 40:1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. (NIV)

So let me ask you...

Have you been walking on the other side of the road. Now is the time to return to the Lord.

Joe Broz