



March 9 – Stranger & Neighbor

We all feel the tension of the extremes in our lives and the pressure to choose a side. We begin a journey this week that will challenge us with the idea that instead of sides, the “in-between” is actually a beautiful spectrum of color and can redefine things we cling so hard to. This week we join Jesus as he is asked the question – “who is my neighbor?”, and the answer leaves us, perhaps staring into the eyes of a stranger.

Scripture:

I John 3:1, 16-18 NLT

¹¹ This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another. We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So, we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God’s love be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.

Luke 10:25-37 NLT

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?” 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.’” ²⁸ “Right!” Jesus told him. “Do this and you will live!” ²⁹ The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 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. 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. ³² A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. ³³ “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. 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. 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.’

³⁶ “Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked. ³⁷ The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.” Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”

Questions:

- Have you ever had someone unexpected reach out to help you? What happened? What did you do? How did it make you feel?
- The Samaritans were (and are) a group within the Jewish faith, not outside it. This places the Samaritans and Jews as neighbors. Are there people groups within the larger umbrella of your faith that you struggle to have compassion for? Who are they? And what is it that makes you struggle?
- Who might you reach out with compassion towards? Instead of seeing an “enemy” or “the other” who might you step out in faith and comfort, help, and support this week?

Reading for the Week:

Monday: Matthew 22:36-40

Tuesday: Philippians 2:3-4

Wednesday: Galatians 5:14

Thursday: Leviticus 19:18

Friday: Proverbs 10:12