

Please Let the Door Hit You on the Way Out! Luke 10:25-37

If you had the opportunity to ask Jesus any question, what would it be?

In Luke 10, this lawyer/scribe asked, **“What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”**

This may sound like a great question, but Luke says that he asked it **“to put him (Jesus) to the test.”** But how is this a trick question posed to test Jesus?

“What shall I do” implies an action required to obtain possession!
“to inherit” implies a right by birth to obtain possession!

These two criteria are mutually exclusive! But this lawyer thought that however Jesus might answer the question, that he had the criteria met!

The pharisees/scribes/Jewish lawyers were always emphasizing their own self-righteousness & adherence to the laws of God. - The religious elite!

The same pharisees/scribes/lawyers would also claim God’s exclusive blessing b/c of their heritage & ties to Abraham, the father of God’s people!

Jesus sees through the question, as well as through this man’s false sense of security, and He turns the question around on him.

Jesus responds by asking, **“What is written in the Law? How do you read it?”**
Paraphrased, **“If you are so smart/righteous/special, you tell me!”**

Jesus often responded to questions w/ a question to draw out the truth behind what was being asked, as well as expose the truth of what is really important!

The lawyer, not surprisingly, answers Jesus’ question correctly – **Vs. 27.** But Jesus points out that the right answer is not enough, it needs action - **Vs. 28!**

But at this point, the man still believed that he had met all the criteria!

In his line of work, he supplied all of Jerusalem w/ the truth of God’s Word. How could anything else be considered more loving towards God & others?

In his mind, loving God & others rightly had already been established by his religious occupation. But like any good lawyer, he asks Jesus a clarifying question so that he could try to establish more evidence for his case!

But what the man’s 2nd question did was actually reveal his true intentions. **“Desiring to justify himself, he said, ‘who is my neighbor?’” – Vs. 29**

This is the backdrop to Jesus’ story, this parable of the **“Good Samaritan!”** It is Jesus’ answer to this man’s 2nd question, that ultimately answers his 1st.

“A man (unidentified) was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, & he fell among robbers, who stripped him & beat him & left him half dead.” -Vs. 30

There are no other details given by Jesus about this man. I believe intentionally. Was he Jew or Gentile? Rich or poor? Slave or Free? Did he deserve it or not?

Jesus did not allow the man to play lawyer by giving him more details! But He did reveal further details about the 3 different men who passed by.

- **A priest – a person with religious status, just like this lawyer.**
The priest sees the man, but he passes by on the other side! Why?

With all the good that the priest does, why did he not show compassion & take action here? Some objections the lawyer could have raised.

Is it possible to be so heavenly minded that you neglect to do earthly good?

- **A Levite – a person with special heritage, chosen by God to care for the temple and lead the people of God in worship.**

He too sees the man on the road and passes by on the other side. Why? Let’s consider it again from a lawyer’s perspective. The Jerusalem-Jericho road

Is it possible to justify why we don’t do what we should do, by trying to convince ourselves & others that it’s someone else’s job to do it?

- **A Samaritan – a person despised by the Jews, a religious fraud, the very last person a Jew would consider as the potential hero in the story!**

He too sees the man but responds very differently than the others. Why?
B/c Jesus wants to show what is lacking in the man He is telling the story to!

The real issue is not answering the question, “Who is my neighbor”, it is discovering how we can be “neighborly” to all people!

When Jesus asked, **“Which of these three proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?”**, **the lawyer couldn’t even say the word!**

This story revealed much about what was lacking in this religious man, & I wonder if it reveals much of what is lacking in us today as well? **Who are the people we need to be neighborly to, & love them as we love ourselves?**

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