

“Go and do likewise”-Luke 10: 25-37

Jesus quite often used parables to convey his message to those who came and quizzed him. On one such occasion one of the experts in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher”, he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Little did the lawyer realize that Jesus would respond in a manner that would force him to unveil his own heart. To this one who was a scholar in the law, who lived under the law, and walked in the law, Jesus answered according to the Law. At Jesus’ answer, the lawyer wanted additional clarification as to who his neighbor was; in other words, he wanted to know how the bare minimum he could get away with, or how to limit the circle of his concern. Oh! How guilty we all are in regard to this kind of attitude! Don’t we all want to limit our concerns to our own group: family, friends, fellow peers, social groups or church members?

Even today Jesus speaks to us through this parable. He convicts us about our attitude and indifference to the lost suffering of humanity. At the same time he challenges us to experience the joy of serving and tap in to the highest possibility of service toward God and man. It is interesting to note how the Lord weaves a beautiful parable and drives his point home. Note the characters in this parable; the unsuspecting but dumb traveler who takes the lonely and dangerous path, the thieves, the priest, the Levite, the inn keeper and of course the Samaritan. Each of them is so unique in their disposition.

The victim in this parable represents the needy in the world we live in. Yes, there are so many who are daily wounded and dying on the highway of life. They come from all different walks of life. Some are victims of parental abuse and domestic violence, while others are half dead due to their own choices and evil desires. The enemy has victimized so many of them through bad habits and addictions to drugs and alcohol. Some lives are paralyzed by fear of the future and unknown. At times people like to overlook the fact that some are victims of wounds that they have received in their friend’s house. Lives marred with fresh emotional wounds.

Truly, one cannot deny how this parable illustrates the attitude of the indifferent and cold hearted religious elite. Ask the Priest and the Levite who

passed by on the other side. The Priest had enough reasons to quote the law and justify his actions. Yes, it is true if he were to touch the man he would be unclean for the next seven days which would force him to abstain from his temple duties. How often we cite the same kind of reasons and shy away from our moral obligations! Yes, as much as they were involved in worship in the temple they forgot that their vertical relationship with God should also lead to a horizontal relationship with their fellow beings. We need to pause and ponder for a moment if we are guilty of such indifference. Have we neglected to show concern for the unsaved by refusing to spend our time, talent and resources that the Lord has given us? If so, just like the religious elite in the parable we are guilty of passing by on the other side.

Jesus brings the parable to its climax by portraying the Samaritan who went out of his way to show compassion. The man heard the groaning and moaning of the injured, and immediately responded with care and concern. He poured in the oil and the wine and took care of his wound. He then elevated the man to his own position (upon his mode of transportation) and safely brought him to the inn keeper. Oh what a portrayal of the Son of Man who came down, so that mankind, who was the victim of Satan and sin, could be made sons of God! As the Samaritan bids farewell to the wounded man he leaves instructions with the innkeeper to take care of the victim. This is not just lip service, for he leaves behind two silver coins; enough to take care of his need. After making a promise to reimburse the inn keeper for any additional expense, he exits the scene.

What a challenge to the lawyer then, and to the children of God today who are indifferent and cold hearted to the needs of our fellow beings around us. Are we willing to choose the hard, unpopular way of service which will bring joy and relief to the lost around us? Or would we settle for lip service, the cop out plan? In this parable where do we see ourselves? Who do we identify with? Do we find ourselves in harmony with the work of the Good Samaritan or do we find ourselves to be like the religious elite? The choice is clear, but the choice is ours. Jesus ends the parable with this instruction: "Go and do likewise".