

EIBC Devotional #11 - “The Lines that Divide”

Emerald Isle Baptist Church

Pastor Zach Emory

Scripture - Luke 10:25-37

29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’ 30 Jesus replied, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, “Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.” 36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?’ 37 He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’

The priest and the Levite most likely refused to help the man on the side of the road because they were ritually clean, and to touch him would have made them unclean. Jesus shocks his audience by making a Samaritan, one who was ostracized by many Jews, the hero of the story. In this parable, Jesus points out that every individual is our neighbor, and it is because we are all in the image of God. God desires mercy, not sacrifice, and more important than our church rituals or head knowledge about God (i.e. the Pharisees) is our willingness to show mercy and compassion (i.e. the Samaritan) [Hosea 6:6]. When we follow Jesus, we become the light and salt of the Earth alongside him, and our responsibility is to minister to and try to include *everyone* into the Kingdom of Heaven regardless of background. What we see in Jesus is a radical inclusion and burning desire that all might be saved, and when we draw circles around ourselves to exclude other human beings, we err gravely. Let us widen our circle so that all might be saved in the knowledge of Christ.

Questions for Reflection

Are there any people you tend to judge as unworthy of forgiveness, grace, or love?

Prayer - Heavenly Father, may we practice radical acceptance, hospitality, and love. In the name of Jesus who taught us how to love, Amen.