



Day 5: Our Neighbors

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?” Jesus replied, “What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?” 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.’” “Right!” Jesus told him. “Do this and you will live!” The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 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. “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. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. 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. 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.’ “Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked. The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy. ”Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”

Luke 10:25-37

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Luke 10:29

Invisible. Johnny Price is 44-years old and is struggling to raise two kids alone while being unemployed. Jodi earns \$8.25 per hour and depends on a food pantry for survival. Rosa lives in an unheated garage and says half the people in her church are in a similar situation. Juanita, a recent immigrant, works 70 hours a week as a domestic servant at wages that amount to \$4.03 per hour. None of these individuals live in low-income inner city neighborhoods or Majority World villages. They live in suburban America. And yet they often feel invisible. A lawyer, seeking to put Jesus to the test, asked how to inherit eternal life. He knew the answer: “You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself.” Yet the lawyer pressed on and “desiring to justify

himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'" In response, Jesus told a story of a Samaritan who came upon a robbed and badly beaten man lying on the side of the road. A stranger, he bound his wounds and carried him to an inn where he cared for him. Interrupted. Inconvenienced. The Good Samaritan looked with compassion on the one in front of him, his neighbor, and met his need.

Proximity. The poor aren't just "out there" but are right among us, if only we look. The suburban poor live in older apartment complexes, pocket communities of mobile homes, and small enclaves of modest single-family houses in the shadow of 5000 square foot homes. Our neighbor is not just the orphan in Ethiopia who we can support monetarily and write a letter to now and then, but also the single immigrant mother struggling to survive in a forgotten apartment complex near our home. Are we willing to be interrupted and inconvenienced? Will we be neighbors to the people who can complicate our day-to-day lives? Look around. Jesus says, "You go, and do likewise."

PRAYER:

Jesus, open our eyes. Show us our neighbors. Give us compassion and a willingness to be interrupted and inconvenienced by the materially poor among us.