



# MINISTRIES

A Ministry of the Athens Universal Life Church  
Dr. Rob White – Senior Minister  
<https://aulc.us>

**TITLE:** Gut Love

**SERMON IN A SENTENCE:** Christ calls us to extend the breadth of our neighborhood and to extend ourselves in the service of our neighbor.

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 10:25-37

Today's scripture lesson comes from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 10, verses 25 to 37.

Starting at verse 25:

Just then an expert in the law stood up to test Him, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the law?" He asked him. "How do you read it?"

He answered:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.

"You've answered correctly," He told him. "Do this and you will live."

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus took up the question and said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him up, and fled, leaving him half dead.

A priest happened to be going down that road. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

In the same way, a Levite, when he arrived at the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan on his journey came up to him, and when he saw the man, he had compassion.

He went over to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him. When I come back I'll reimburse you for whatever extra you spend.'

"Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"

"The one who showed mercy to him," he said.

Then Jesus told him, "Go and do the same."

-- May the Lord add His Blessing to the reading of His Word!

-- Hello, I am Doctor Rob White with the A U L C Ministries with our message this week.

-- I am happy that you can take a few minutes out of your busy week to be with us today!

Dogs are wonderful pets. Certain types of dogs are also trained to assist people in special ways. Guide dogs are trained to help people who are visually impaired. These dogs enable their owner to be out and about in the world. They let their owner know when and where there is a curb, stairs or obstacle in their path. The guide dog helps keep its owner safe. The guide dog and its owner work together as a team and form a close bond to one another.

Another type of specially trained dog is the service dog. These dogs often work with people who are in wheelchairs. They learn to open and close doors, turn lights switches off and on and get items that the person with a physical disability might need.

Hearing dogs are dogs that are trained to assist people who cannot hear. They let their owners know when the telephone rings, the oven timer goes off, the smoke alarm sounds, someone knocks at the door or a baby cries. They go to their owner and lead them to the source of the sound.

All of these dogs are trained to be helpful. They are helping dogs that work with their owners in the spirit of cooperation.

As we think about these helping dogs, let's think of ways we could be more helpful to others. It may be that we can get the mail or pull weeds for an elderly person, read to younger brothers or sisters, help mom in the kitchen, vacuum the car or make our bed without being asked. Can you think of other ideas that would make things easier for a family member, a friend or a neighbor?

In the Bible a man asks Jesus questions and one of the things Jesus teaches him is to love his neighbor. When the man asks, "Who is my neighbor?" (10:29) Jesus answers by telling him a story. It is the story of a man who was injured and lay along the road needing help. Two persons passed by without helping

him, but a third person, a Samaritan stopped and bandaged his wounds and took him to an inn where he would get care.

It seems as if one of the things the story is telling us is that a neighbor is anyone who needs our help. There are many things that family members can do to help one another and there are many things the family can do together to help their neighbors. This spirit of cooperation forms close bonds and honors the commandment to love your neighbor.

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell into the hands of robbers who stripped him, beat him, and left him half dead.

We shouldn't be surprised. That was a bad road. Jerusalem was at the top of a mountain, and Jericho was at the bottom. No superhighways in those days! The narrow road wound down the mountain as nicely as a road could wind down a mountain in the days before bulldozers and dynamite—which is to say not very nicely. Lots of curves! Lots of places where you could fall off the edge! Lots of possibilities for an ambush! Lots of thieves to prey upon lonely travelers!

Most people, when they had to travel that road, did so in a group. Thieves thought nothing about attacking a man traveling by himself, but might hesitate to attack a convoy.

In a way, you could say that this traveler brought his troubles onto himself. If he had been more cautious, he would have joined other people going down the mountain—but he chose to go by himself. He paid dearly for his decision. The robbers stripped him, beat him, and left him half dead alongside the road.

THREE MEN passed by. One was a PRIEST. We expect the priest to help, but he passes by on the other side. There are lots of reasons why he might have done that:

- The wounded man might be dead, and Torah law prohibits priests from touching a dead body—ever—period.
- Or the priest might be headed for the temple to conduct services. A priest wouldn't want to be late for services. But I don't think that was his reason. This priest was going down the road—and "down" is the direction of Jericho—not Jerusalem. I don't think the priest had pressing duties at the temple.
- Or the priest might have feared an ambush. There were robbers in the area—the presence of the wounded man proved that. Maybe the robbers left this man alongside the road to entice someone else to stop. Maybe this isn't a wounded man at all. Maybe he is one of the robbers lying in wait for someone to stop.
- Or maybe the priest just didn't want to get his hands dirty. Priests dress well. They wouldn't want to stain their clothes! To help the wounded man, this priest would have to get dirty—bloody. He would have to get off his donkey and try, somehow, to get the wounded man onto it. Then he would have to lead the donkey several miles to town. Once he got to town, then what would he do?

With the wounded man's life at stake, those seem like trivial reasons for passing by on the other side, but lots of people pass by because they don't want to get their hands dirty—or because they don't want to be bothered. It happens every day. In New York City, on more than one occasion, I have seen men lying on the sidewalk as people walked by on either side. I was one of those who walked by. We

assumed that the fallen men were drunks, and most of them probably were. Some of them probably weren't.

Then Jesus said that a LEVITE came along. A Levite was a priest's assistant. Both were holy men. Perhaps the Levite will stop. But he, too, passes by on the other side—for the same reasons that the priest passed by, I am sure.

But then Jesus says that a SAMARITAN came along. That doesn't surprise us, because we've heard this story before—but you can be sure that it surprised the people to whom Jesus was speaking. Jesus had started at the top by introducing a priest—a priest was the best of the best. Then Jesus came down one notch by introducing a Levite. A Levite was also holy man. Jesus' listeners expected him to come down one more notch and say that a more ordinary man—a merchant, perhaps—came by and helped.

But Jesus doesn't come down one notch. He falls all the way to the bottom when he introduces this Samaritan. The Jews had no use for Samaritans. They hated Samaritans. It had to do with their history, and I'll spare you the history lesson. Just be assured that, when Jesus introduced this Samaritan into his story, the people were surprised. They expected Jesus to introduce an ordinary person who would do an extraordinary deed—but this Samaritan wasn't an ordinary person. He was scum—an outcast!

But Jesus says that the Samaritan stops to help the fallen man. He risks being attacked. He gets off his animal, and helps the man into his own saddle. By the time he does that, his hands are dirty and his clothing is bloodstained. Then he walks in front, leading the animal carrying the wounded man.

Keep in mind that important people don't walk. Servants walk. Ordinary people walk. But this Samaritan has been riding. But to help the wounded man, he has to walk—has to take the role of a servant—has to lead the donkey. That would trouble some people, but it didn't seem to bother this Samaritan.

Then the Samaritan took the wounded man to town and put him up at an inn. He gave the innkeeper money—quite a bit of money—and told him to take care of the man. He promised to pay even more on his return journey if the wounded man needed it.

End of story!

This is a tough story for us preachers to handle. What does it say to us today? Must I tell you to help people pulled off along the road—and to pay to repair their cars? Must I tell you to pick up hitchhikers and take them wherever they want to go? Must I tell you to pick up drunks and pay for their room service?

I can't tell you to do those things. If I told you to pick up hitchhikers and you got hurt, I would never forgive myself. If you were to try to repair all the broken cars or house all the homeless people, you would be broke by nightfall.

But, on the other hand, when Jesus told this story, he ended by telling the lawyer to go and do likewise. It's clear that Jesus wants us to go and do likewise too.

So what did the Samaritan do that we need to do?

First, THE SAMARITAN SAW THE MAN. He didn't avert his eyes. He didn't glance at the wounded man and then look the other way. He saw a fellow human being in need—really saw him—saw his wounded body, but also saw his precious soul.

And then HE WAS MOVED WITH PITY. The Greek word that is used in the Bible speaks of the bowels. This Samaritan was moved with pity to the depths of his bowels. He felt the wounded man's pain. We might call it "Gut Love."

And then HE DID WHAT HE COULD TO HELP. As it turned out, that was quite a bit. If he hadn't been riding a donkey, he couldn't have gotten this man to town—no way—but he was riding, so he had the means to help. The Samaritan got off his mount, put the wounded man in his own saddle, and led him down the road to the nearest inn. Then he gave the innkeeper money—quite a bit of money—and told him to take care of the man.

Jesus says, "Go and do likewise".

Jesus doesn't expect any of us to help EVERYBODY—but he expects each of us to help someone—to see SOMEONE—to care about someone—to feel someone's pain—to render assistance—to help as we are able—to love the other person as we love ourselves—to care about the other person's welfare as we care about our own.

And, if each of us would do that, what a different world it would be.

You have probably heard this story, but it's worth retelling. Two people were walking on a beach, and saw a number of starfish that had been washed ashore and were in danger of dying. One of people picked up a starfish and tossed it back into the water. The other person said, "That isn't going to make any difference, you know." The first person picked up another starfish and, as he tossed it into the water, said, "It will make a difference to that one."

None of us can love everyone, but each of us can love someone. None of us can help everyone, but each of us can help someone. That's the Gospel truth!

-- That's our Lord's message for this Lord's Day and I hope you got a blessing out of it!

-- Go out this week and be a blessing and be blessed! -- For the more you are a blessing, the more you will be blessed!

-- Thank you all for watching and listening and we will see you all next week!

Copyright © 2024 – Athens Universal Life Church – All Rights Reserved!