

**“Resolved to Love. Resolved to Live.”**  
**Luke 10:25-37**

Greeting: Happy New Year. Extremely thankful for what God did in 2012, and extremely excited for what 2013 has in store.

Intro: There is something that I love about beginnings. That is why I love this time of the year. It is a time to dream about new possibilities. . . . The first week of January marks the time we can kiss 2012 goodbye and say hello to new possibilities, and the hope that we will accomplish many of things we said we wanted to this time last year! Some are jaded and pessimistic when it comes to resolutions, but I have been jacked up about the Power of Incremental Change, and reengineering my morning routine to be more disciplined in my pursuit of God, and I have been focused on setting SMART goals. SMART stands for specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time bound. Get you some... and I have made resolutions for my personal life, for our family, and for ministry. Getting Things Done is Great... App

Recommendation: irunurun... **IRUNURUN PICTURE**

We should be all about setting goals and going after what really matters in life. Jesus told us in John 15 that we should “Bear fruit to our Father’s glory.” -- Resolutions reflect our priorities.

Read 10:25-28.

- A lawyer poses the greatest question anyone could ever ask: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Everyone must ask and seek answers concerning the ultimate questions of life: How did we get here? Why are we here? What’s wrong with our world? Is there something more? How can I experience it? This is one of those big questions. It is built on the assumption that there is something more. The question concerns how we can experience that something more, eternal life.
- The problem with the lawyer is not his question but the state of his heart. Luke tells us that he did not ask the question out of sincerity, but to “put Jesus to test.”
- Jesus says, “You tell me. You’re a lawyer. You’ve read God’s Word.” And the lawyer answers wisely by quoting Deut 6:5 & Leviticus 19:18. “You shall love the Lord your God . . . and love your neighbor as yourself.”
- You’ve got it! Love God. Love your neighbor. The sincere seeker and someone familiar with the heart of God would have happily walked away ready to obey what Jesus identified as the two greatest commandments, but the lawyer doesn’t stop there. **V. 29**
- Trans: Now, we are about to receive an exposition on what it looks like to love God and love our neighbor, and Luke is going to tackle them by working backwards.
- When we think about the parable of the Good Samaritan, most of us probably think about helping a stranger, or more specifically helping a stranger in need. This parable is not less than that, but it is not the primary thrust of Jesus’ message to the lawyer & consequently, to us. The main encouragement is simply this:

**I. Be a neighbor to everyone by showing mercy (10:25-37).**

Let’s read **vv.30-37** and break that down.

*Be a neighbor*

- The lawyer wanted to justify himself. He wanted to justify his current attempts to love his neighbor that was restricted to extending love to a certain group of people. He was looking for manageable righteousness.
- In short, he wanted to put limits on his responsibility to love his neighbor. So he asks the question: “And who is my neighbor?”
- Jesus, in typical, smooth operating style redefines his question, and in the process reorients us to the depth of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment.

The thrust of the parable is found in Verses 36-37.

- Jesus asks the lawyer, “Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers? [The lawyer] said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said, “You go, and do likewise.” Jesus says, just go and be a neighbor whenever you are needed.
- The Lawyer was looking to limit love. Jesus was looking to liberate love. Jesus establishes love without restriction. This is why Paul says, “The fruit of the Spirit is love... Against such things there is no law.” No restraints! No restrictions!
- Question: **Do you limit your love? Or do you love without limits?** Jesus says the way of the kingdom is to love without limits by being a neighbor, but he doesn’t stop there. He tells us to . . .

*Be a neighbor to everyone*

- As we hear this parable, we naturally expect the priest and Levite to be the first to come to the rescue. After all, if anyone knew the law, and if anyone would demonstrate care and concern, it would be the people who represented God and worked in the temple. That is why we are so surprised that Jesus exposes them as those who insulate themselves from the needs of others.
- If that surprised Jesus’ original hearers, *and it did!*, they would be shocked by what they heard next.
- Jesus tells us in verse 33 that it was a Samaritan, the last person a Jew would expect Jesus to lift up as an exemplary neighbor.
- Samaritans were despised and looked down upon by Jews as ethnically and religiously inferior.
- So Jesus heightens the effect of the story by having the Samaritan, who would not be considered a neighbor, actually being a neighbor to teach the Jews who their neighbors really were. Got it?
- Who is my neighbor? Jesus answers: “EVERYONE!” “Anyone in need!”
- When God calls us to love our neighbor, he calls us to love without discrimination.
- The kind of love Jesus is looking for sees beyond skin tone, personal preferences, and cultural distinctives. It is a love that extends well beyond our social circles.
- God’s love calls us to love all people. Jesus calls us to eradicate the category of “nonneighbor.” Be a neighbor to everyone *and . . .*

*Be a neighbor to everyone by showing mercy*

- After re-examing this parable, it seems truer to the text to call the Samaritan **the “Merciful Samaritan”** rather than the “Good Samaritan.”
  - To show mercy is to give of oneself in order to help someone in need.
  - How do we see this in the passage? What does the Samaritan do? We see at least eight specific actions:
- 1. He saw him (33).**
    - a. One of the questions in reading this parable is: “How do we apply this?” After all, there are thousands of cases of need every day. How can begin to help? Are we responsible for all of them? Galatians 6:10 helps us here because there Paul writes, “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do to everyone, especially those who are of the household of faith.” The Good Samaritan was simply going about his business and he saw a need.
    - b. He was not on a mission trip. He simply saw a need.
    - c. Let me state the obvious for us this morning. We will never see what we never see. We will never meet the needs of which we are unaware. We will never be aware of the needs of others if we fail to get out into the real world (a word for any home bodies in the house), and we will never be aware of others’ needs until we take our eyes off ourselves.
    - d. If it has been a while since you have risen to meet the need of someone else, it may be because you are too self-focused and self-consumed to do so. He saw him, and then
  - 2. He had compassion (33).**
    - a. Compassion “implies a deep feeling of sympathy” or pity – Liefeld
    - b. Compassion is the inner force produced by the Holy Spirit that drives us to merciful action.
    - c. When someone possesses compassion, they become acutely concerned about the condition of those in need.
    - d. Matthew 9:36 tells us that “When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” Ultimately, that compassion, as we are seeing in Luke’s Travelogue, caused him to set his face toward Jerusalem and give his life for us on the cross.
    - e. When you see needs around you, does your heart break? Is your heart moved to action out of a desire to see that person flourish?
  - 3. He went to him (34).**
    - a. People in need, need people to go to them. Love takes the first step. The ministry of mercy moves toward others. One of the greatest hindrances to the advance of God’s mission today is the mentality that people will come to us.
    - b. We must go to them! “As the Father has sent me, even so am I sending you.” (John 20:21) This is the essence of what it means to be missional. Jesus has given us a mission to live out in our different spheres of influence. We meet here for an hour and a half or less on Sunday mornings, which means that we have 142 and a half hours in a week to be out there loving people where life exists. Who needs sleep? Vote insomnia in 2013! ☺ He saw him, had compassion, he went to him, and
  - 4. He met his physical needs (34).**
    - a. The man was beaten and bleeding, and in desperate need of medical care. So the Samaritan bound his wounds and poured oil and wine on him for healing.
    - b. The wine would have had a medicinal effect to disinfect his wounds and the oil would have provided some measure of comfort to him as he laid there in pain. He then proceeded to
  - 5. He used his own resources (34).**
    - a. He took his own resources and put them to work for the one in need.
    - b. True love, merciful love is not preoccupied how much it is going to cost. The merciful are ready to sacrifice for the sake of others.
  - 6. He provided shelter and additional care (34).** He took him to the inn and cared for him. Then. . .
  - 7. He gave financially (35).** He paid for his stay and provided extra money for him to recover. Finally,
  - 8. He went the extra mile (35).**
    - a. Mercy is willing to go the extra mile. You want to know when a person’s love for you will go through the roof? When you care for them, not once, but again and again and again. You make that phone call. You go and check on them. You send them a note of encouragement.
    - b. It is often in those moments of follow up that relationships deepen and further opportunities to display and declare the gospel surface.
    - c. The Samaritan displays a radically others-centered kind of love. He risked his own safety and reputation, destroyed his schedule, and sacrificed his own resources to help a complete stranger.

What a great apologetic for the power and validity of the gospel in a day where so few are willing to be a neighbor! The events in India and Ohio over the past week remind us that many experience unimaginable cruelty at the hands of other people and are in desperate need of the love of God poured out through the people of God.

Trans: The parable of the Good Samaritan parable shows us what it looks like to love our neighbor, Our next passage teaches us what it looks like to love God. *Read 38-42.*

## II. Listen to the Word of Christ with a teachable spirit (38-42).

- Here’s the connection: Martha working, serving, meeting needs, showing mercy. She is, in a true sense, “Being a neighbor.” Look at her: she welcomes, she hosts, she serves.... But there are three huge problems with her serving, and we should look for the same problems in our own hearts.
- Problem #1: Serving can be a distraction to devotion.
- Do you know people like this? Ultra hospitable people. My mother fits in this category. When we were home for Christmas vacation, this woman was running the show, breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert. elaborate breakfast, elaborate dinner, a new dessert every night (just about..)
- For those of us, like Martha, who love action and love to serve, we need to realize that we can become consumed with action,

productivity, doing to the detriment of what matters most. This is me so often. My bottom line is accomplishment...

Problem #2: Serving can lead to pride.

- I do it better than others. They don't have it like I do. Or look at how much I'm doing, why aren't others chipping in? Sibling Rivalry...

Problem #3 Serving can lead to idolatry.

- This happens when we begin to treasure serving Christ more than we treasure Christ.
- How bad do we need the truth of **Luke 10:20**? **"Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."**
- Jesus says, you can engage in the most significant ministry, accomplish a lot of great things in life, even in my name, straight up getting ministry done, BUT you can miss what is best. God is the gospel. He is the ultimate goal.
- Jesus says Mary and Martha are confronted with a choice... and

**Listening to the Word of Christ is a matter of priority.**

- Have you made resolutions and goals for the year? They probably reveal your priorities. Is your pursuit of God reflected in those plans?
- Jesus says, "I must be your priority." Even in serving me, ME must be in ALL CAPS.
- How quickly our serving God can replace our knowing God. (reword)
- Where does God fall on your priority list? I mean, if you are a Christian, I know the "Sunday School" answer is: God is number one. Forget the pat answer... What does your life communicate about your priorities? What does your calendar communicate about your priorities?
- So how can we make knowing God our priority? Sit at his feet, listen and learn.

**Listening to the Word of Christ is a gift.**

- *"The picture of a woman in the disciple's position, at the feet of Jesus, would be startling in a culture where women did not receive formal teaching from a rabbi." (Fitzmeyer, Bock, 1037) Luke 8:1-3...*
- Even more than that, we constantly need to be reminded that to listen to Jesus is to hear the voice of God. Remember at the Transfiguration. This is my Son. Listen to him. To do so... requires

**Listening to the Word of Christ requires humility.**

- This is the posture/position of a disciple. Sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to every word.
- Do you have a teachable spirit? Are you eager to learn from Jesus?
- Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible, and it is a chapter entirely devoted to the worth of the Word of God. Throughout the Psalm, a two word prayer surfaces again and again. A hope we will make it our **Prayer for the New Year.**
  - **"Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes!" (Psalm 119:12)**
  - **"When I told of my ways, you answered me; teach me your statutes!" (Psalm 119:26)**
  - **"Put false ways far from me and graciously teach me your law!" (29)**
  - **"Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end." (33)**
  - **"The earth, O Lord, is full of your steadfast love; teach me your statutes!" (64)**
  - **"Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments." (66)**
  - **"You are good and do good; teach me your statutes" (68)**
  - **"Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O Lord, and teach me your rules." (108)**
  - **"Deal with your servant according to your steadfast love, and teach me your statutes." (124)**
  - **"Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes." (135)**

Ten times David asks God to teach him. Ten times. Then his prayer moves to praise in 171.

- **"My lips will pour forth praise, for you teach me your statutes." (171)**

What if your daily approach and posture before God for 2013 was summed up by these two words? "Teach me"

- Would you be wiser? more fulfilled? more joyful? Better equipped to glorify God and serve others?
- We need to make that simple prayer our prayer, and here's why... Because

**Listening to the Word of Christ is always "better."**

- *This is the wise choice. This is where the pay off is found. This is more important. This is better.*
- This is a picture of devotion. Do you love God? Sure I do... How often do you set at his feet? When is the last time you went to bed and couldn't wait to wake up to get in the Word? When was the last time you turned off the TV (Choices) and said, "Man, I am going to put aside the trivial for the \_\_\_\_"
- Our service to others, being a neighbor, is always enhanced and empowered when we make the better choice to consistently sit at the feet of Jesus.
- Here's a challenge: For one week, start your day by sitting at the feet of Jesus. Seven days!

**The Point: Resolve to love your neighbor and listen to Christ like never before.**

**Conclusion:**

A resolution to love is a resolution to live. Here's why I feel like I can say that with even greater confidence this morning: yesterday I was in Kentucky for my grandmother's funeral. I had the difficult privilege of officiating the service and providing the funeral eulogy and sermon. Those who truly love God and love their neighbor are the ones who experience life to the full. How can we love? Have our lives flooded with the love of Christ through the cross.