

Homily: 23rd Sunday after Pentecost (8th of St. Luke)
Gospel: (53) Luke 10:25-37
Date: 16 November 2025
Preacher: Father John C. Holoduek, OCA

Today, Holy Church presents us with the ***Parable of the Good Samaritan***. And, there are so many elements upon which we can focus our reflections: there is the focus on the teaching of the Old Testament, which is also the **Golden Rule of the Gospel**; there is the confrontation of the Lawyer, which is much like the traps of the *Jewish Religious Establishment*; there is the situation of those *Outside the Jewish Model of Living*, like the Samaritans and those who were *Considered Sinners*; and, of course, there is the focus of the many points of the Good Samaritan, himself.

The Good Samaritan is legendary! Even our local hospital has a name of **Good Samaritan Hospital**. When I was once involved in a hit-and-run accident on the Palisade Interstate Parkway (PIP), I was brought to the Emergency Room of Good Samaritan Hospital. Interestingly enough, along the many focuses of our Gospel Passage, to was tended-to by one of *Our Hasidic Neighbors*, as EMT Staff on the Ambulance Corps.

And, I could go on and on with ways we can focus on this Gospel Passage offered to us by the Church. As I have many times suggested, the way Holy Church has organized the sequence of our Scripture Readings for the Divine Liturgy, it is really a *Magnificent Outline for a Thorough Bible Study of the New Testament*.

The focus that I'd like to take, today...is to focus on points of the Good Samaritan Story, itself.... Jesus offers us a rather vivid story upon which to reflect.

First, traveling by road from Jerusalem to Jericho is a *perilous journey*, **The road is still there and there are still dangers along that road**, and, with modern circumstances, we can imagine that there could be many more today.

To the Jewish people of Jesus' time, Samaritans were religiously unclean. In the history of the Old Testament, when the Kingdom of Israel was divided, the North was called Israel, and the South was Judah or Judea. The Northern Peoples started to inter-marry with the *Native*

Peoples, and they started to fuse their *Religious Practices*, with the local culture. The Samaritans were separated from the *Temple Culture*, and, at the very least, the Samaritans became *Ritually Unclean*. In our modern sense, they were a *Marginalized People* to the *Jerusalem Temple Culture*. Jesus' Parable notes that the Samaritan on the Road was *moved...he had compassion*. The Samaritan brought him to the Inn. There, the *Samaritan provided for the wounded man's healing* and paid the innkeeper for ongoing care until he would return.

It is interesting that, today, these people are frequently called Samaritan Jews. And, today, their religious leaders still practice their own form of *Ritual Sacrifice*. Jerusalem Jews have no Temple or Altar to offer Sacrifices, but Samaritans still worship on their Holy Mountain and offer Sacrifice, there.

In our Gospel view, **the Samaritan represents Christ**. The man who was beaten and robbed is nameless because *he represents all humanity*. As the Church Fathers see it, the beaten man becomes *a symbol of humanity's journey from Paradise (Jerusalem) to the fallen world (Jericho)*. In a way, the lesson points to the Lord's own journey...coming down to us, *from the Father in Heaven*, in His Incarnation: **coming in the likeness of men . . . He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross** (Philippians 2:6-8). He did so to help and heal us when we were in our deepest need. The Lord came to save us *when Sin and Death had beaten and robbed us...leaving us half-dead*. The love of God came to us in Christ, and **He does not pass by or ignore us in our pain**.

The Good Samaritan used wine and oil to treat the man's wounds. Wine and oil were commonly used for that purpose at that time, to clean and soften wounds. *This points to the Holy Sacraments of the Church, especially the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist and the anointing in Baptism and Holy Unction*. In St. Luke's Gospel, the Greek word for oil is related to the word for *mercy*, as in *Kyrie Eleison... Lord, have mercy*. In a sense, the *Kyrie Eleison* means, **Lord, pour on Your healing oil on us!**

Just as the Samaritan rescued the man, the Lord heals our wounds and takes us to the Inn (Church) to be healed. Just as I have referred,

many times, **The Church is a Hospital and those who come to the Church are Patients.** St. John Chrysostom himself taught:

The Inn is the Church, which receives travelers, who are tired with their journey through the world, and oppressed with the load of their sins; where the wearied traveler casting down the burden of his sins is relieved, and after being refreshed is restored with wholesome Food.

This Food is the Most Holy Eucharist and the very Word of God!

The Lord rescues us from Sin and Death and places us in His Church, among His People, through the Holy Sacraments. In the Church, we worship God and He gives us His grace to be illumined, forgiven, and united to Him. He fills our hearts with His love and peace. He restores us from brokenness into wholeness. He transforms us into His likeness. The Lord is always with us, and yet He promises that He will come back again on the Last Day to restore all things, to establish His eternal kingdom, on that day that will never end. In the meantime, **He gives “two denarii” to the Church,** which symbolizes **the gifts and talents we have been given to bless and serve one another.** God gives us the strengths and talents not only for ourselves, but *to fill a need around us.* **We serve Him by serving one another, and in this way, we grow in the likeness**

Our neighbor is every human being. A true neighbor shows mercy to others in concrete ways...*by loving others..* **We are all neighbors to one another.** The Samaritan in the parable was marginalized by the very people he loved and helped, in this Lesson. Jesus was, Himself, marginalized, disdained, and killed by His Own People...*the People He loved.* Yet, He remained obedient to His Father, *Who sent Him into the world for the salvation of humanity.*

God’s compassion is not an abstraction; it is real and active; God acts through the Church, through His members who carry on His ministry, through their faith and practice. We become Christ-Like when we serve others: *when we provide for their material needs, protect the weak, care for the poor, and provide for their healing of the body and soul.*

Our Challenge? Maybe, we can love our neighbors by drawing closer to them and each other with heartfelt service. Maybe, we can also remember each other in heartfelt prayer.