

Won't You Be My Neighbor – Sermon Guide
August 13, 2023
Luke 10:25-37

Upsets and reversals occur frequently in the Bible. The parable of the Good Samaritan is one example. No one present with Jesus would have expected the priest and Levite to pass by the waylaid man or for a Samaritan to come to his aid. Jesus uses this parable to clarify the meaning of the Old Testament Law and present Himself as the fulfillment of that law.

In the parable, when the lawyer responds to Jesus' original question with "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" (Luke 10:27), he is quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. Although Jesus said that if the lawyer did this, he would live, the lawyer wanted to justify himself by limiting the definition of the word neighbor. The Jews understood this to mean Hebrew neighbors, but Jesus meant that your neighbor goes beyond geographical boundaries, or ethnic backgrounds, or lifestyle choices, or even past decisions that may not have been the best.

Perhaps one of the most prominent examples of how to be a good neighbor and of being neighborly can be found in the history of children's television from 1951-2001 when Fred Rogers came into the homes of countless children on a daily basis. Teaching Jesus' message of love for God and our fellow men and women, Mr. Rogers Neighborhood cut through all of the religious language and presented the message of love in the most basic ways.

When we find ourselves in a position where we don't seem to have within us, the capacity to love others the way God wants us to, it is our duty as followers of Christ to pray to God that our capacity for loving be increased, especially when we are dealing with those EGR (Extra Grace Required) people.