

WD February 22, 2021  
Pastor Matthew Woods, Grace Lutheran Church

“Go and Do Likewise”

Our Reading is from Luke 10, a familiar parable, the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

<sup>30</sup> In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

<sup>36</sup> “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

<sup>37</sup> The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Last week during winter storm Uri— (I didn’t know we were naming winter storms now but okay)—During winter storm Uri you may have heard that Texas had a perfect storm. The storm brought very cold temperatures along with snow and ice just like we did here in Indiana. Except they don’t have the winter equipment that we have nor are they used to that kind of weather in the south. To make matters worse the Electric windmill farms froze up and stopped producing power leaving many in the dark for days, including some of my cousins. In one case the daughter of one of our preschool staff, who lives in Texas was without power three full days in the cold. Yikes. And to make matters even more unbearable a boil water alert went into effect for Houston. That must have felt like a slap in the face. How does one boil water in a home without power?

But there has been at least one reported bright spot in all of it by the name of Ryan Sivley who helped over 140 stranded drivers in the Austin area during the winter storm in just two days. Reports have said that Sivley did it all old school—like good neighbors used to do all the time. He got his four-wheel drive truck out, used chains, and tow straps and just started helping one person at a time. Since most Texans are not known for their winter driving abilities a lot of them got stuck in the snow and ice. But when someone is stranded in record low temps there is a real possibility of freezing to death in one’s car. And if you have kids with you that can be a very helpless place to be and very dangerous. So Sivley pulled them out one by one. And in some cases, he drove them all the way to a safe place. He simply decided to help anybody he saw stranded.

Here’s the kicker. In one interview he explained that he has had a second chance at life. Some time back Sivley in an accident himself. He got hit in a multi-car accident which shattered his pelvic bone and nearly took his life. Today he can’t lift more than 20 pounds with his left arm and can’t walk for more than two hours a day. So, he drives a truck.<sup>i</sup>

And here is the other fun part—something I’ve said before. The world is hungry for good Samaritans. They just step up just because they see a need. They willingly take a risk and

assume the cost, like paying for the victim at the inn or the gas to pull out the cars. What if the bandits came back and robbed the Samaritan—after all the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was notorious for such bandits. Such a picture would be very plausible. Trouble on the road is all that Sivley saw; he had the truck, the willingness, and the chains to pull them out and did over 140 times. The very fact that it made the news is evidence that Jesus reaches a very important place to people with this parable. Tow trucks may have driven right on by like the Priest and the Levite—the ones you would expect to help. But the one no one is looking for or expecting; he does the stopping and the helping and asks for nothing in return.

Now, I have absolutely no idea if Sivley is Christian, but one can't argue that what he has done has helped a lot of people. And the world can't get enough of that. The world is hungry for someone to love them, someone to be a good neighbor. The Samaritan wasn't Jewish and Jesus gives not indication that the Samaritan was Jewish. But his actions were very reflective of an undeniable truth—a neighbor is anyone in need and if we see that need, we are called to action especially when the problem may be life-saving.

I know the world has given us plenty of reasons not to put ourselves out there. But let me just invite you to consider one more text before we finish up. Galatians 6:9-10 which says, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. <sup>10</sup>Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." It is pretty clear that doing good as opportunities come up and not giving up is a pretty important message here.

Helping others in the pandemics of the early days of the church grew the church exponentially because Christians just helped out anyone without distinction. Helping others reminds our neighbors that they are still important. It may save their lives or change their lives or just make their day. But most of all as Christians helping others gives us chance to express our love for Jesus and for our neighbor. This by the way is the fulfillment of God's Law. Sound's like a winner to me. Since Jesus has been so good to us let us also lend ourselves in service to Him and maybe, just maybe, become instruments that lead others to Christ.

And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His Face to shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with His favor and give you His peace in Jesus.

Pastor Matthew Woods  
John 3:30

---

<sup>i</sup> <https://people.com/human-interest/texas-man-helps-hundreds-of-stranded-drivers-on-road-during-winter-storm-uri/>