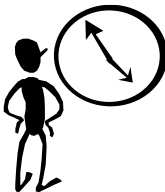


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Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.
(Or every other week)

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.
Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

Are You a Good Samaritan?

By Jefferson David Tant

If you know anything about the Bible at all, you probably know the story of The Good Samaritan as recorded in Luke 10:30-37. But before we get to that, please read the story about a young boy in Leeds, England.

Chivalry Is Not Dead

In Leeds, on a very wet wintry night outside the railway station, a ragged, dirty boy was selling papers. He said, "Buy an evening paper, sir. Please do. Only seven left, and they's all my profit." The boy's eagerness arrested the man's attention. Looking down he saw a bright, honest, intelligent face. He questioned him, and found his parents were, "drinking at a public house in Briggtate."

"Have you no cap to wear this rainy night?"

"Yes," he said, but he had lent it to his sister, who was waiting in a doorway across the road till he sold out. The cap was on her feet because she had "no boots and stockings, so I told her to put her feet inside my cap to keep 'em warm and prevent her ketchin' cold."

Surely this was self-sacrificing chivalry worthy of the knights of old, for a boy who thus cared for his sister exhibited the true spirit of bravery. – [Told in Bernardo's "Night and Day."]

Wow, my heart was touched when I read that.

Touched in two ways.

1. What a sweet, compassionate, kind-hearted young man he was to discomfort himself in order to show love and kindness to his sister.
2. Why in the world were their parents not looking after the welfare of their children rather than being off in a warm

place drinking what was probably liquor? (I won't comment on them now, as I want to focus on the young lad.)

It is quite likely that most, if not all of my readers are familiar with the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke as Jesus answered a question that a lawyer had asked him about "Who is my neighbor?"

"Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise, a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same" (Luke 10:30-37).

Consider that the "religious" leaders ignored the man in distress. Perhaps they thought they might get their priestly garments soiled by the wounded man's blood. But then came the low-class Samaritan. The Samaritans were shunned by the Jews and they had no dealings with them.

There was a time when Christ and his twelve were passing through Samaritan territory and they stopped at a well. Christ rested there while the twelve went into the town to find food. While at the well, a Samaritan woman came to draw water and was surprised that Christ spoke to her, asking for a drink of water. *"Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, 'How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?' (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans)" (John 4:9).*

The implication in the wounded man's story is that he was a Jew, yet the despised Samaritan was the one who stopped and cared for the man.

Now let's connect this story with the scene on Judgment Day as Christ describes it in Matthew 25. In this chapter, Christ gives a picture of Judgment Day when the righteous will be on his right and the wicked on his left. He commends those on his right for their good deeds, mentioning their kindness shown to those who were in need. Then he turns to those on his left and has these words for them.

"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry,

and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:41-46).

Note that Christ did not accuse them of murder, adultery, blasphemy, robbery, or other crimes. What was their sin? They were not “Good Samaritans.” They were like the Pharisee and the Scribe who “passed by” on the other side of the road.

So, why was this scene recorded in the Bible? Obviously as a lesson for us. Note Romans 15:4: “*For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*”

Remember what Jesus told his questioner? “Go and do the same.”

So, my question to my readers is, “Are you a Good Samaritan? Do you have the same kind of heart our young paper-seller had?” We may not have the needs of others staring us in the face every day, but from time to time there are opportunities for us to show a kind heart. I have hesitated to mention the following, as I am not seeking praise for my wife and myself, but I want to encourage my readers to be mindful of opportunities to be Good Samaritans.

Several years ago I got a phone call about a young couple who were homeless and living on the riverbank in our town of Roswell, Georgia. I went and met Ricky and Michelle. I don’t remember the exact circumstances of their situation, but it was obvious they were in need. They were married. Ricky was 20 and Michelle was 17. I talked to my wife Flora, and she agreed that we should take them in. We fixed a room for them in our basement where my office had been located. Ricky was illiterate, so we began teaching him to read. He got a job with the city garbage collection. They were baptized, and he soon was able to do the Bible reading for our church assembly.

We had a brief breakfast Bible study before our older children went off to school, and we invited some neighborhood teens to join us. Janet Leben and Glenn Bruns were both baptized. Glenn’s family then put him out and we added Glenn to our family. Jeff finally got a brother after four sisters. Now many years later Glenn serves as an elder for the Roswell church.

Through the years we have had many others live with us — pregnant girls, teens escaping sexual abuse, boys needing a home. People have asked if we weren’t worried about their influence on our own children. Flora and I would reply, “No. If anything, our children have learned how not to live and behave.” In this process, we have also been able to bless many families with babies to adopt.

Have you ever seen someone standing at an interstate highway exit ramp with a sign saying, “I need help?” If you travel much, I’m sure you have. Have you ever given them \$5 to help? Someone might say, “Well, they’re just beggars.” Maybe so, but not all of them are. There are some with genuine needs. I don’t think the Good Samaritan asked the bleeding victim what kind of character he had.

Have you ever picked up a hitchhiker? Yes, one does need to be careful about that. One time I picked up a young couple on my way from Atlanta to Nashville. I had to stop off in Chattanooga to go by the church building there to baptize Victor Villarreal, the 21-year-old young man. Thankfully, the building was open as someone was doing some cleaning.

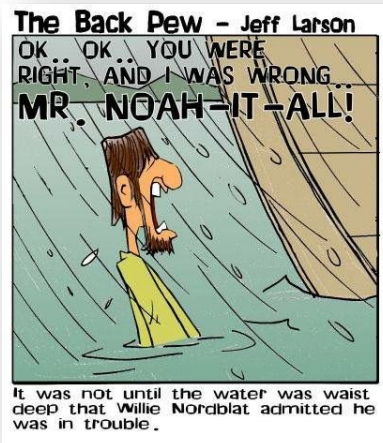
Please don’t think I have listed these things as a matter of boasting. I’m just trying to encourage my readers to be looking for opportunities to be a Good Samaritan. There are many ways we can do this.

- Do you ever have visitors at church on Sunday morning? Do you ever invite them out for lunch?
- Are there any elderly members of the church who might need some errands run, lawn mowed, or house cleaned? We are thankful to be a part of the Broadmoor church in Nashville that has families that are helpful in taking care of the needs of older members.
- Have you ever offered to give some financial assistance to our brethren in impoverished nations who from time to time are in great need of food, medical care, etc.?

Christ gave an admonition to his hearers: *“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. Then He said to them, ‘Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and from inside he answers and says, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened”* (Luke 11:5-10).

I honor my parents and grandparents, who were known to take in those who were in need.

So, I close with the question: “Are you a Good Samaritan?”



You Encourage Me

By Russ Bowman

I am thinking this morning of all those who go unnoticed in their faithful service to God -- at least unnoticed by other people. So, here's a nod of appreciation...

...to all of the husbands and wives who work hard at their marriage and honor their vows, even when it's difficult.

...to all of the parents who sacrifice their time, energy, and sanity to not merely feed, clothe, and house their kids, but who are teaching them to love and serve the Lord.

...to those same parents who make hard decisions regarding priorities, standards, and morals in spite of the conflict that occasionally results (especially with pre-teens and teens).

...to the young people who are being faithful to the Lord, though in the minority and often ridiculed for such.

...to the single folks who persist in faith even though lonely and frustrated, who would love nothing more than to make a life with a godly spouse.

...to the men and women who maintain honesty, integrity, loyalty, kindness, service, and dedication in a work environment that encourages/promotes dishonesty, selfishness, and greed.

...to those who grieve the loss of someone yet don't lose their trust in a good and loving God.

...to the folks who send cards, who take food, who find encouraging words to say, who serve silently and behind the scenes.

...to the folks who never miss services.

...to the preachers whose names are not known outside of their local work.

...to the elders who stay up late praying and are constantly working to help the folks they are leading.

...to the moms (and dads) who wrestle with toddlers throughout worship or bible class, but keep on going.

...to everyone who prays fervently and reads their Bibles diligently.

...to everyone who gets up every day and follows the Lord, no matter the circumstance or consequence.

Hebrews 11:35ff notes "others" who served faithfully in great difficulty, yet whose names are unknown to us. But God knew them. And God knows you.

You encourage me. Thanks. Keep it up.

The God of All Comfort

By Matthew W. Bassford

There are all too many people who want to hold God to promises He's never made. They get sick, and they blame Him for not keeping them healthy. They run into financial hardship, and they grumble because He hasn't helped them prosper. They're single and unhappy, and they claim it's His fault that they aren't married.

The problem is that God never has promised Christians that they would be healthy and rich and have great family lives. We might have set our hearts on these things, but that's a sure sign that we are seeking treasure on earth, not in heaven. The God who unfailingly grants them is the God of our own imaginations, not the God of the Bible.

However, God has made us some astounding promises, and one of them appears in [II Corinthians 1:3-7](#). He does not promise to shield us from suffering. Indeed, the structure of the passage implies that the godly can expect to suffer. Nonetheless, in the midst of that suffering, God will bestow His comfort.

As do all Christians who have sought the Lord through trial, I've experienced God's faithfulness to His promise. It is true in my current distress, and it was true 13 years ago when my daughter was unexpectedly stillborn at full term. Lauren and I suffered. Indeed, we suffered greatly.

Our suffering, though, did not overwhelm us. We did not commit suicide. We did not get divorced. We did not become alcoholics or drug addicts. We avoided the double disasters that befall parents who lose children.

This is not to our credit, except to the extent that we chose to lean on the Lord and His people. Instead, it was due to the brethren both far and near who cared for us in our grief. They came to the funeral (some traveled hundreds or thousands of miles), they brought food, they visited, they sent cards, they sent money, and they prayed. It was due also to the God who worked through them and in ways beyond my understanding. We mourned (and still mourn), but we were (and are) comforted.

However, Paul points out that this blessing carries an obligation with it too. We are supposed to take the comfort that God showers on us and use it to comfort others. Lauren and I certainly were on the receiving end of this. Some of the most memorable, helpful conversations we had during that dark time were with Christians who also had lost children.

Ever since, we have tried to pay it forward. Most Christians are at a loss about how to deal with others whose children have died. We aren't. That's a familiar country to us. When we hear of someone in that position, we try to reach out. We call. We write. We attend funerals with heartbreakingly small caskets. We trust that the God who used others to bless us will use us to bless others.

It's easy for human beings to camp out in their misery and affliction. I know the temptation well. However, as disciples of the Man of Sorrows, we have a higher calling. We must allow our griefs to refine us and teach us compassion. When we do, God can use us in even the greatest tragedies to reveal His comfort and love.