

Welcome. As many of you know, I grew up a Preacher's Kid which means that I was involved in a lot of church events. And because of who my parents were/are, that means that I spent a lot of time doing church serve projects and helping in our community. I'm not sure if you are more like me, but oftentimes if not most of those times, I had a begrudging posture. I remember one time specifically where our church was helping people who were hit really hard by some local flooding (collecting donations at a Chick-fil-a to hand out later) and I just did not give a rip! I actually have a picture in my phone that I live with that my dad took of me, at the Chick-fil-a, in Cumberland, MD, when I was in high school. Here you go: **PIC**. See that look on my face? You know what that face says? It says "Selfish." That was my posture. Horrible, isn't it? Keeps you humble for sure.

We're currently in a series called **FOR THE ONE**. In Week 1 we talked about SEE-ing people as God sees them (*imago Dei*). Week 2, Chad did a great job showing us how God's Word teaches us to not only SEE people, but that God is SEEK-ing people (and we should too). Now, we enter our third and final week, we'll be in **Luke 10:25-37**, and we're focusing on SERVE-ing those around us. And as we'll see, we're gonna need more than a better posture. Let's jump in!

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus responds: 26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" to which the lawyer answers: 27 He answered, "'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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." Now, there's nothing wrong with those answers! In fact, these are the kinds of answers that Jesus himself had given when asked about the most important commandments! So, they have some similarities! But this is where they stop! In other words, even though the answer that Jesus had given was the same as the answer this lawyer gave, the *meaning* of "Love God. Love People" between the two of them could not be more different.

And here IS that difference. It centers on what the lawyer asks next: **29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"** And in reply to this, Jesus tells a story.

30 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." The path from Jerusalem to Jericho is somewhere between 18-

20 miles. Like from here to the airport! The road goes from a semi-arid region to a VERY arid region. On top of that, the path to Jericho is very treacherous. It was a home for all sorts of brigands and thieves. You can see a picture of it [HERE](#). Because of the terrain, it was easy for bad guys to hide and then attack travelers with the element of surprise. Solo travel was ill-advised, and as we see here in Jesus' story, this guy learned this lesson the hard way.

But here's where it gets interesting. Jesus continues: **31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.**

Evidently, these guys didn't hear the first two sermons of our FOR THE ONE series – about SEEing and SEEKing. They BOTH see the guy and they both sidestep him. It's important to note here that a priest and a Levite were religious leaders for the Jewish people. And yet, despite their apparent religiosity, BOTH of these guys leave the hurting guy to die.

Whatever their reasons for leaving the guy to die (fear, purity, etc.), none of those things are a barrier for the guy who comes next in the story. **33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.** This is a hold the phone kind of moment. You need to know that for the lawyer listening in, the fact that Jesus brings up a Samaritan would have made his jaw drop. Jews and Samaritans *despised* one another!

But notice how Jesus describes what the Samaritan did: **34 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. 35 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.'** Here the Samaritan not only approached the man, but actually had pity on him. To have pity in this verse isn't just to "feel sorry," it means that the Samaritan man had *compassion*. And compassion isn't just a feeling, it's an internal state that moves you to action! As Jesus tells us, the Samaritan man takes care of him, attends to him, and brings him to safety—with all expenses paid! Incredible.

After finishing the story, Jesus comes back to the lawyer who had asked the question, "Who is my neighbor?" with a question of his own. Jesus asks, **36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."** And what does Jesus say? **Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."**

Ok, now we've gone through the passage. Where does this leave us? I think this interaction, this story poses three questions for us as we think about SERVING. Here's the first question...

1. Do we have...the right question?

Ha! Yes. Question 1 is whether or not we have the right question in mind!

When I was dating Ashley, we both asked a lot of good questions of each other. Here were some of the things I was keen on asking: Do we have the same vision for life? Do you feel like it's important for us to have the same life vision as we ponder a marriage together? How do you approach finances? What is your sexual history? How do you feel about kids? Are you a Calvinist or an Arminian? Not even kidding! For some reason, I had to know!

Here's the point: Good questions are important! In business, in relationships, and in following Jesus. Notice that the lawyer asks, "Who is my neighbor?" And notice Jesus' response: He doesn't say "this person, that person, this person, that person." What's he do? He flips the question because, really, the lawyer's question isn't the best question! Instead of "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus tells the story and then asks, "Who in this story was a neighbor?" See the difference?

So, for you and me...we have to discern if we're going through life with the right question if we want to be the kind of people Jesus is calling us to be. The right question *isn't* "Who is my neighbor?" but, per Jesus, "Am I BEING a neighbor?" That's an entirely different frame of mind. Instead of concerning ourselves with who counts and who doesn't like the lawyer's question concerns itself with, Jesus' question just flings wide the gates of grace and says, "I'm called to BE a neighbor, so I'm gonna live like it!"

So, that's question 1: Do we have...the right question? Am I BEING a neighbor? Now, #2.

2. Do we have...the right posture?

Some of you know my family, my parents. They're both great. And they more than anyone have exemplified the kind of servant posture God asks for us all to have. As one example: I have a text from my dad about his helping a neighbor of his because it impacted me. Here's what he wrote: **"My neighbor has an old metal sign in his garage which says "Dead End." They come from one broken generation after another. Drug addiction is common in the family. Within the last few years his nephew died from an overdose. If I'm being honest, when I first moved into this house, I thought, "GOD--REALLY? THESE are my neighbors?!" After many brief acts of kindness and interactions, one thing led to another and he asked me for a ride to a veterinarian appointment. I did not have time!! But in that moment I remembered the sign in the garage: "Dead End." I remember thinking: "If not me then who??" I gave him the ride."**

My dad went on: "I ended up giving him several more rides" and that, shortly thereafter, those rides turned into conversations about Jesus. He said FROM those rides "I started picking him and his wife up for church every Sunday."

Isn't that awesome? "If not ME, then who?" I love that posture.

Now contrast *that* posture with that photo I showed you earlier of myself.

This, my friends, is the challenge this story poses to us! The Samaritan in this story, unlike the priest and Levite both saw the man left for dead, took pity on the man left for dead, and served the man left for dead. He wasn't worried about differences, about purity laws, about the cost, or about his own safety. He had **compassion**. That was his posture.

QUESTION: What might it look like for us to cultivate a compassionate posture in our hearts? Maybe the thing for you to do today is to ask yourself, "Do I have the right posture? Is it more selfish? Or is it more compassionate?" Then, take that to God. Ask for his help. On our own, we cannot serve past our selfishness. With the Holy Spirit, we can live the life Jesus is calling us to!

So, we have question 1: **"Do we have...the right question?"** We now also have question 2: **"Do we have...the right posture?"** Now here's our third question...

3. **Do we have...the right gospel?**

Why do I share that? I share that because right from the jump the lawyer who came to test Jesus had a different vision of God's expansive love and welcome from that of Jesus. Like I mentioned earlier, even though they used the same words, they had different PICTURES of what those words meant! In other words, they had different PICTURES of the gospel. The lawyer's interpretation of God's command to "Love neighbor" was too narrow—it was only for the Jews. Jesus' interpretation was appropriately wider—not wide in the sense that anything goes but wide in the sense that anyone and everyone can come!

Isn't this the heart of our faith? God's love for everyone, not just some? So, the question before us is simply this: Do we have the right gospel? Do we see God's to "love neighbor" as a command for all people or some people? Do we limit God's grace or do we see how extensive it really is?

In order to become the kind of people Jesus is calling our Church to be, we need the right gospel. So, we have question 1: **"Do we have...the right question?"** We have question 2: **"Do we have...the right posture?"** And now we have question 3: **Do we have...the right gospel?**

Church, listen: Jesus is calling us not just to SEE and to SEEK but also to SERVE, but in order to do so, we've got to get these questions right.

Now, here's how I'll end: When I was a kid, my family and I would often play "I Spy" any time we went into Cracker Barrel as we waited on our food. The goal was for one person to see something that we then had to find. The game would go something like this: "I spy something orange" and it'd be a Fanta Cola sign. "I spy something brown" and it'd be a wagon wheel on the wall. "I spy something red" and it'd be the fire in the fireplace. "I spy something beige" and it'd be the bald spot on the top of the guy's head at the table next to us.

Now, this may be silly, but we could EASILY "I SPY" need upon need upon need in our community! Let me just list some:

I spy an aging woman who just fell again and can no longer get around without help.

I spy an unmarried gal with nowhere to go on holidays that aren't Christmas and Easter.

I spy a single mom who's all alone trying to figure it out.

I spy a 73-year-old man with back pain and who struggles to mow his own grass.

I spy a college student wrestling with doubt and needing someone with answers.

I spy an 84-year woman who hasn't left her house in 9 days but hasn't said anything because she doesn't want to be a burden.

I spy a 24-year-old gal stuck in a torrent of anxiety.

I spy a 26-year-old guy stuck in a pit of shame because of mistakes he's made online.

I spy a young woman who is looking for discipleship but doesn't know where to turn.

I spy an elderly man who just buried his wife and is wrecked by grief.

I could go on and on! These are all examples. I didn't have particular people in mind. But the reality is this: there are people and places where the world needs Christians to step up to the plate: to SEE, to SEEK, and to SERVE.

"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are...what??" FEW.

It doesn't take a lot, it just takes a "YES."

We have the right **question**.

We know the right **posture**.

We've been given the right **gospel**.

Jesus isn't asking us to come up with the "next big thing", all he's asking is from us is to do the "next right thing." The question is this: Will we?