

Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, 5th Sunday after Pentecost, July 10, 2022.

If you had to pick one passage of scripture to introduce your faith to a curious person, and you had to do so in 10 verses or less, which passage would you choose?

My guess is that many of us would choose the Parable of the Good Samaritan, today's gospel passage (**Luke 10:25-37**). And why is that? What is it about this passage that lends itself to a summary of faith?

Well, like any parable, it's fairly easy to understand. "Which of these three ... was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" Two people passed by, observed the injured person, and did nothing. The third person, by contrast, stopped to help, and helped in a major way.

Clearly, helping the person in need was a better response than "passing by." The message is clear. The person is in serious trouble, and we can choose to pass by or to help. We don't have to be in the first century AD to understand what Jesus is saying. We, in the 21st century, get the point.

And it's not just the clarity of the story that makes the choice obvious. It's the depth of the story. We're talking about a big decision. We're talking about injury and response to injury. Do we ignore the person in serious need, or do we help? There's nothing fuzzy about the options.

The clarity of the Good Samaritan passage is its strength. No ambiguity. And chances are that a curious person will appreciate this straight-forward response on our part.

But what comes next? Do we end the conversation and go on our way, as the curious person goes on his or her way? At a minimum, aren't we now the curious person? Why did the person engage us in the first place? Was it a theoretical issue, or had the person faced a similar circumstance?

And what impact did that decision have on the curious person's life? Was there a real-life situation that went unresolved because our curious person wasn't sure what to do? Help, or look the other way? Just like the parable.

In today's passage from Colossians (**Colossians 1:1-14**), Paul is thanking "the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae." "We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints."

These people have acted on their faith. Other people are better because of the actions of the early Christians. Belief and action stemming from that belief are making a difference. "He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

The connection between belief and action is featured in today's Psalm (**Psalm 25:7-8**). "Gracious and upright is the Lord; therefore he teaches sinners in his way. He guides the humble in doing right and teaches his way to the lowly."

So it's not just the clarity of the gospel question – do I help or pass by – but the experience of those who chose to help, not pass by. Faith that leads to action has positive consequences. Indeed, "stepping up" to help is the message of today's passage from Deuteronomy (**Deuteronomy 9:11**): "Surely, this commandment – turning to the Lord – is not too hard for us, nor is it too far away."

The short version – the simple directive in today's gospel (**Luke 10:37**) – "Go and do likewise."

All of us, I suspect, have responded in multiple ways to challenging situations. Sometimes we have passed by, and sometimes we have stopped to help. And isn't true that we have felt better when we have stopped than when we have passed by? Our own experiences teach us what our Lord teaches us

And that, in fact, is one of the reasons we respond to Jesus. He is one of us. God is one of us. Yes, God is lofty, above it all, the Creator. But God is also in the trenches, subject to it all, suffering as we suffer and see others suffer. There was death on the Cross. But there was, there is, also the empty tomb, with a whole teaching ministry that followed.

Maybe, just maybe, stopping to help the man who was beaten and robbed was not only the right decision, but the most satisfying decision. What a great combination. Feeling good about taking the tougher road.

One more observation about the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and indeed about all the parables that Jesus shared. Simplicity can be first a magnet – it can draw us in – and then a vehicle – it can take us and others helpful places that we might not go otherwise. Think of all the people over many centuries who have been motivated to serve, to help, to heal, thanks to the simplicity and clarity and, yes, depth, of this parable.

It's as if, when faced with a tough decision – help or pass by – this parable comes quickly to mind and encourages us to help. An accidental link? No way. It's intentional. Jesus used it for a purpose. He himself probably learned it from others, and then applied it himself and subsequently to generations that followed. Including our generation.

We can be certain that “help or pass by” will be a decision of the future as well as the past. It's part of the human experience. Not just the matter of choice – do I help or not help - but the matter of decision – yes, I will help, I will do what I can, I will run some risk, I might not make a difference, but, then again, I might.

Which leads perhaps to three summary questions: what would Jesus do? what would Jesus want me to do? And now, the big one: what will I do?

Our final hymn today is “God of grace and glory.” Here's the conclusion from stanza one: “Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour.” New hours, new days, new situations, new decisions. It's called life, and, in Christ, we have a life-coach. Tough practices, but great preparation. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Coach.

Amen.

Lessons for Pentecost 5 – July 10, 2022

Collect for 5th Sunday of Pentecost: O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Deuteronomy 30:9-14

Moses said to the people of Israel, “The Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all your undertakings, in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your soil. For the Lord will again take delight in prospering you, just as he delighted in prospering your ancestors, when you obey the Lord your God by observing his commandments and decrees that are written in this book of the law, because your turn to the Lord your God will all your heart and with all your soul. Sure, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say ‘Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?’ No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.”

Psalm 25:1-9

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you;
let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph over me.
Let none who look to you be put to shame;
let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.
Show me your ways, O Lord,
and teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.
Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.

Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
*remember me according to your love and for the sake of your goodness,
O Lord.*

Gracious and upright is the Lord;
therefore he teaches sinners in his way.

He guides the humble in doing right
and teaches his way to the lowly.

All the paths of the Lord are love and faithfulness
to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Second Reading: Colossians 1:1-14

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, and he has made known to us your love in the spirit. For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom, and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "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." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.'" Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Pentecost 5 Morning Prayer Service – July 10, 2022

Prelude

Hymn 596 – Judge eternal, throned in splendor

Judge eternal, throned in splendor, Lord of lords and King of kings,
with thy living fire of judgment purge this land of bitter things;
solace all its wide dominion with the healing of thy wings.

Still the weary folks are pining for the hour that brings release,
and the city's crowded clangor cries aloud for sin to cease;
and the homesteads and the woodlands plead in silence for their peace.

Crown, O God, thine own endeavor; cleave our darkness with thy sword;
feed all those who do not know thee with the riches of thy word;
cleanse the body of this nation through the glory of the Lord.

Opening sentence - BCP page 40

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Invitation to Confession – BCP page 41

So that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship Almighty God, let us, with penitent and obedient hearts, confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy.

Confession – BCP pages 41-42

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against thy holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who confess their faults, restore thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

Absolution – BCP page 42

The almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Gloria – BCP page 42

O Lord, open thou our lips.
And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Venite – BCP page 44

Come, let us sing to the Lord;
 let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
 and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God,
 and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are all the corners of the earth,
 and the strength of the hills is his also.
The sea is his and he made it,
 and he prepared the dry land.
O come, let us worship and fall down
 and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is the Lord our God,
 and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.
O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
 let the whole earth stand in awe of him.
For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth,
 and with righteousness to judge the world and the people with his truth.

Psalm 25:1-9 – insert

First Reading: Deuteronomy 30:9-14 – insert

Second Reading: Colossians 1:1-14 – insert

Hymn 7

Christ, whose glory fills the skies

Christ, whose glory fills the skies, Christ the true, the only Light,
Sun of righteousness, arise! Triumph o'er the shades of night:
Day-spring from on high be near; Day-star, in my heart appear.

Dark and cheerless is the morn unaccompanied by thee;
joyless is the day's return, till thy mercy's beam I see,
till they inward light impart, glad my eyes, and warm my heart.

Visit then this soul of mine! Pierce the gloom of sin and grief!
Fill me, radiance divine; scatter all my unbelief;
more and more thyself display, shining to the perfect day.

Gospel Lesson: Luke 10:25-37 - insert

Sermon – The Rev. Charles Rowins

Apostles' Creed – pp 53-54

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried,
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father
almighty.
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Lord's Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Our Father, who art in heaven,

*hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Suffrages A – page 55

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;

and grant us thy salvation.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness;

and make thy chosen people joyful.

Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

for only in thee can we live in safety.

Lord, keep this nation under thy care;

and guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Let thy way be known upon earth;

thy saving health among all nations.

Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Create in us clean hearts, O God;

and sustain us with thy Holy Spirit.

Collect for Fifth Sunday after Pentecost – insert

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Prayers for Sundays (BCP p 56) and Peace (BCP p 832)

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. *Amen.*

General Thanksgiving - BCP pp 58-59

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

Announcements and *America*

*My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might, great God our King.*

Prayer of St. Chrysostom – BCP, p 59

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication unto thee, and hast promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

The Grace – BCP, p 59

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Hymn 594 – God of grace and God of glory

God of grace and God of glory, on thy people pour thy power;
Crown thine ancient Church's story; bring her bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo! the hosts of evil round us scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us free our hearts to faith and praise:
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Cure thy children's warring madness, bend our pride to thy control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss thy kingdom's goals.
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of thy salvation be our glory ever more.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving thee whom we adore,
serving thee whom we adore.

Dismissal and Postlude

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

