

**Luke 10**  
**October 27, 2024**  
**Rev. Kelley Becker**

**Video-Storyteller Neal**

**<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?mibextid=WC7FNe&v=264709609003962&rdid=I3D1CzZtihZtTSLx>**

In some ways, this story by storyteller Neal Foard is a modern-day retelling of today's text, commonly called the parable of the Good Samaritan. Neal and his dad received help from strangers, people they did not expect to help them. And these strangers didn't just do the minimum they could, like get them to town so they could fend for themselves. They went above and beyond, even inviting them to share a meal. The people who helped Neal and his dad are the very definition of "Good Samaritans" as we use the phrase today. They understood the concept of grace. Grace steps into the messiness of life and says, "I'm here for it."

The parable of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 10, is a well-crafted story. It has conflict, bandits, plot twists, unlikely protagonists, and a call to action. It is one of the most familiar stories in the New Testament and instantly draws us into its action. Incidentally, it also tends to leave preachers a bit flummoxed because there is a sense that we've said everything there is to say about this story. I mean...everyone knows what it means to be a "Good Samaritan."

To really understand what's going on in this parable, it's helpful to look back at Luke 9 which includes the story of Jesus and his followers passing through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem. While there, the Samaritans did not offer them food, water, or a place to stay, in other words, they did not offer them hospitality, which as you know was a very big deal in the ancient world. This made his disciples, James and John mad, so they spouted off, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" Jesus was like, "Seriously?"

In the next scene, Jesus and his followers continue their journey to Jerusalem. This is Luke 10:25-37.

25 An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" 27 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." 28 And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." 29 But wanting to vindicate himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and took off, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by

on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while traveling came upon him, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, treating them with oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 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.' 36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

First, we may be tempted to villainize the lawyer asking questions. But let's not do that. The questions are good, and his questions are reasonable. The lawyer even answered his own question correctly, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" When Jesus asked the law expert what the law said, he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind and love your neighbor as yourself." The lawyer had a follow-up question though, "Who is my neighbor?" And that is when Jesus told the story. This question, "Who is my neighbor?" still trips us up today, doesn't it? It is clear from the story that our neighbors aren't limited to the people who live near us. If that were true, the neighbors in the story would have been the priest and the Levite, certainly not the stranger in the ditch and most definitely not the Samaritan...I mean, they didn't even offer Jesus and his disciples a slice of bread when they were passing through.

At the end of the story, once again, the lawyer gives the correct answer when Jesus asks him who proved to be the neighbor. "The one who showed him mercy," the lawyer answers. That would have been horrifying to the lawyer and to Jesus' followers who were listening to this exchange. The Samaritans were the "other." They didn't follow the law. Specifically, they didn't go to Jerusalem to worship. And they demonstrated their lack of faith when they refused hospitality to Jesus and his followers. How could the Israelites be expected to love *them*?

If you were writing a modern-day Good Samaritan parable, who would you cast as the Samaritan? Who is it or what group is it that, when your story is told, listeners will gasp when they learn who the *real* neighbor is? In the story Jesus told, the audience expected the religious leaders to act neighborly, but that was not to be. Sadly, for so many listeners today, the opposite is true. The Church being cast as the real neighbor would be shocking. When I first met some of you, that is essentially what you told me. "Why would I want to be part of the system that hurt me, judges me, and sees my suffering, yet leaves me in the ditch?" And I said...DCC is different.

DCC is different because we know that life is beautiful and life is messy and we are here for all of it. We believe there is space for everyone in this community. In this place, diversity of belief, thought, sexuality, gender identity, age, race, and ability are celebrated. This didn't happen overnight and didn't happen because someone waved a

magic wand. It happened because since 1964 this congregation has worked hard to be who we say we are, and we continue to do that today.

This is a church where one of the ministers answers the phone when it rings and very often the call is from someone who needs help. And. We. Help. Them. This is a church where the noise of children isn't noise, it's the sound of life. This is a church where teens who are trying to figure themselves and the world out are part of a group where their belonging doesn't hinge on what they believe about God. This is a church that cares about food scarcity, so it grows a garden and stocks a pantry for anyone to use all day every day. This is a church that sees immigrants, people of color, senior citizens, trans youth, children, women, people who are hungry and houseless, who are left in the ditch by churches, politicians, businesses, and unjust systems, and says, "How can we help? You are welcome here. You are safe here. Here's a meal. Here's a place to stay."

This is a church that does all of that and more. Because of you. Because of your generosity. Your support of this church, both financially and with your presence, has allowed all of us together to follow Jesus' directive and "Go and do likewise." But there is still so much for us to do. There are so many people we need to know that we are who we say we are. And we are here for it. The Board has worked hard on the 2025 Ministry Plan and Budget. It is ambitious and reflects who we are, what we believe about human beings, and what we believe about the Sacred. DCC members should have received information about the budget via email or snail mail, along with information on how to submit your pledge. If you haven't, please contact me or Anna.

Here's how the stewardship campaign works. First, the Stewardship-Finance Commission, with the help of the Board, creates the budget. They did that. Then Board members are asked to tell you their hopes and dreams for the coming year. They did that in last month's newsletter. If you want more details, just ask. They would love to talk to you. Now we are asking you to do your part, to pledge your resources to those hopes and dreams. Just as you must know your household income for your budget at home, the church must know what to expect too. This is why we pledge.

In the budget, the Board has asked for the money they need to do the work they believe we are called to in 2025. So, I am asking you to please commit to it by submitting a 2025 pledge online before next Sunday or bring your pledge with you next week as we will bless all the pledges. As you decide how much you will give, please think of our community partners and the work they do. Consider our vulnerable neighbors and the ways we can be in solidarity with them. Remember our vision of how we hope the world will be and the work that it's going to take to turn our dreams into reality.

Think about all of it and know that we are always better together.

And I have proof! Take a look at what we have done in the last year!

## **2024 Ministry Video was shown in worship**

You did that! Your generosity and your presence did that.

2025 is going to be a great year. It is a privilege to serve you and to serve with you. I can't wait for what's next! I already can't wait to see next year's video! Whatever 2025 brings, we are here for it!

Amen