

**TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST,  
NOVEMBER 20/DECEMBER 3, 2006**

**EPH 4:1-6**

**ST. LUKE 10:25-37**

by

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**Gospel:** *And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*

*He said unto him, What is written in the Law? how readest thou?*

*And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.*

*And He said unto to him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.*

*But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?*

*And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*

*And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.*

*And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.*

*But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,*

*And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*

*And on the morrow when he had departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.*

*Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?*

*And he said, he that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.*

The Parable of the Good Samaritan -

St. Luke is the only Gospel that contains this parable. In today's Gospel, our Lord uses a parable as His teaching mechanism to graphically demonstrate the duty to love our neighbours. Our neighbours are not narrowly defined, as in family and friends. To Christians, everybody is our neighbour.

The Lord is tempted by a certain lawyer, who stood up and posed his questions with the ulterior motive of obtaining self-justification. This lawyer was really a Jewish teacher of the Mosaic Law. He had no intention of learning from the Lord. Rather, he was trying to 'trip up' Christ in His answer.<sup>1</sup> Christ leads him to answer with the "very law of which the lawyer boasted such great knowledge".<sup>2</sup> The First and Greatest Commandment – the law commands us to love God. Being in part like God, man being "more perfect than all other created beings,"... "having something exceptional"... a mind. We must love God with all our hearts, souls and our minds, the latter power being unique to us "the intellect". We must use all our strength, all these powers, heart, soul, mind in the love of God..."we must also subject, with strength, the power of all our senses to the love of Christ" as well as subject the "power of our rational soul" and "our biological powers, our sensory powers, and our intellectual powers" to loving God.<sup>3</sup>

And one must love thy neighbour as thyself.

The above was the Law. Note how the law was not as fully developed as in Christ's teaching. It taught man "*only* to love one's neighbour as himself. But Christ taught man to love one's neighbour more than oneself" (emphases supplied).<sup>4</sup>

Bl. Theophylact cites St. John:

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.<sup>5</sup>

The Lord said to him that he had answered correctly. He had put forward the two interdependent great commandments. They are connected; one who loves God will love his neighbours and who doesn't love them doesn't love God because he breaks God's commandments. "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets; that is, all the Law and the prophets have these two commandments as their root, cause and content."<sup>6</sup>

The tempter would not be sidetracked by Christ's response "Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live." Even though his initial entrapment had failed, he continued. The lawyer thought only his equal in virtue to be his neighbour. His query "And who is my neighbour?" really asks who is his equal?<sup>7</sup>

Christ answers his deceptive query with a parable:

He cloaks his answer in terms of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho is our neighbour, anyone in distress. A neighbour is one who needs help.<sup>8</sup> The Samaritan, although despised by the Jews, was the neighbour of the injured man who needed

help. The parable demonstrates our mercy must know no bounds, and we must go to the aid of our neighbours in distress, voluntarily, without being asked.

In the parable, human nature was 'going down' from Jerusalem to Jericho, meaning descending continuously toward a sinful life, human nature "had not yet been slain outright," death, which had entered the world because of "Adam's transgression" had yet to be abolished by Christ's righteousness.<sup>9</sup>

The man fell among thieves, the latter being demons, so he fell among demons. The priest and levite who passed by the man in need, the neighbour, signified the Law and the Prophets "who desired to make human nature righteous, but were unable to do so".<sup>10</sup> They, the Law and the Prophets, were overcome by the severity of the man's wounds, and passed him by. They were unable to heal him so they left. The Law was 'not enough'. The Law came and stood over the fallen man "but since it could not heal him, it turned away in revulsion and went on the other side".<sup>11</sup>

They had happened on the injured man by chance. They had not come intentionally to heal the man as did the Samaritan, our Lord. The reason for this is that the Mosaic Law was not given expressly for "healing the wounds of sin, for Christ, *not* (emphasis supplied) the Law, was to be the healing of Adam's wound. Instead, the Law was given [as a stopgap measure] on account of human weakness which could not immediately receive the mystery of Christ".<sup>12</sup>

Our Lord, called by the Jews a Samaritan, came specifically to heal us. "He came to visit us, *not as a passerby* (emphasis supplied), not disdainfully, not as one engaged in some other business like the priest and levite."<sup>13</sup> He binds our wounds, pours on oil and wine, meaning the oil is the teaching word exhorting us "to virtue by the promise of good things" and wine "is the word of teaching leading us towards virtue by the fear of punishment".<sup>14</sup> I.e., a spiritual carrot and stick!

The oil can also be understood to be Christ's life according to His Humanity, and the wine His Divinity, for He acted according to each at different times.<sup>15</sup>

Christ saves the man in need by His Humanity and His Divinity. He saves us in the same way. He carries us, lifts us up as He did the man upon "His beast of burden".<sup>16</sup> The Inn is the Church. It receives all, and this distinguishes Christ's Church from the Law, which did not receive all.<sup>17</sup> The innkeeper is "every apostle, teacher and pastor (archpastor), to whom the Lord gave two pence, the two pence representing the Old and New Testaments.<sup>18</sup> Christ gave us the Holy Scriptures and said to the innkeeper to take care of the Church and promises to recompense us upon His Second Coming.<sup>19</sup>

The Samaritan was the man's real neighbour. We are created in the Lord's Image. Jesus says "Go and do thou likewise." He is saying to us, go and be like I am. We are commissioned to be a true neighbour in Christ to any and all. Let us not pass by!

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Bl. Theophylact's *Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Luke, Vol. III* in the series, Bl. Theophylact's *Explanation of the New Testament* (tr. from the original Greek by Fr. Christopher Stade, Chrysostom Press, House Springs, MO, 1997, p.116 and see Hieromonk German Ciuba (tr. from the Slavonic into English; tr. from the Greek into Slavonic in the year 6851, in the 11th Indiction), *The Gospel Commentary*, Russian Orthodox Church of the Nativity of Christ (Old Rite), Erie, PA, 2002, "The lawyer thought to trap the Lord with a snare, luring Him into commanding something completely contrary to the Law.", at p. 504.

<sup>2</sup> Bl. Theophylact, *op. cit.*, p.116.

<sup>3</sup> *id.*

<sup>4</sup> *id.*

<sup>5</sup> St. John 15:13.

<sup>6</sup> Ciuba, *The Gospel Commentary, op. cit.*, p. 506, citing St. Matthew 22:40.

<sup>7</sup> *id.*

<sup>8</sup> *id.*

<sup>9</sup> Bl. Theophylact, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>10</sup> *id.* and see Ciuba, *The Gospel Commentary, op. cit.*, p. 508.

<sup>11</sup> Bl. Theophylact, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-119.

<sup>12</sup> *id.*, p. 119 and see Ciuba, *op. cit.*, pp. 508-509.

<sup>13</sup> Ciuba, *id.*, p. 509.

<sup>14</sup> Bl. Theophylact, *op. cit.*, p. 119. and Ciuba, *id.*, p. 509.

<sup>15</sup> Ciuba, *id.*, pp. 509-510. and Bl. Theophylact, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>16</sup> Bl. Theophylact, *id.*, p. 120 and Ciuba, *op. cit.*, p. 511.

<sup>17</sup> Ciuba, *id.*, p. 510 and Bl. Theophylact, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>18</sup> Bl. Theophylact, *id.*, p. 120 and Ciuba, *op. cit.*, p. 511.

<sup>19</sup> Ciuba, *id.*, p. 511 and Bl. Theophylact, *op. cit.*, p. 120.