

PARABLES, “THROUGH PEASANTS EYES!”

Study 16, The Good Samaritan, Part II. Luke 10:25-37

1. SPEECH 3

“And 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!”

In Matthew and Mark, this combo of Deut. 6:5 (love God) and Leviticus 19:18, (Love thy neighbor) is attributed to Jesus. Derret observes two occurrences of this combo in The Testaments and The Twelve Patriarchs and the comments that there may be evidence that such a combination was commonplace in some quarters in Jesus time (Dennett). If clear, Jesus endorsed this opinion and made it His own. Maybe the lawyer is doing the same thing Jesus has done. Jesus knows any lawyer will affirm, ‘keep the law,’ as an answer to the question of eternal life. Jesus draws the lawyer out on the topic of the law. The lawyer may know that Jesus affirms this combination of love for God and neighbor as the essence of the law. Thus the lawyer quotes Jesus’ own opinion to enter into this discussion to ‘test’ Jesus loyalty to the law, as Ibn al-Tayyib has suggested.

2. Whatever the origin of this combo of these two texts and whatever the motive for the appearance of the dialogue it is pure genius as a summary of duty to God and people. It is remarkable that one of features of love for God (Found in Deut.) is actually chronologically after Leviticus in the OT (Derrett). It is through the love of God that the believer is to approach people. This then has profound impacts for the how, why and who of the love for the neighbor.
3. We note that this expands from the OT to include ‘with all your mind.’ In Matthew 22:37, this phrase appears in the mouth of Jesus substituting the phrase, “with all your strength.” In Mark 12:3, it comes after “all your heart.” For the Hebrew the center of the intellect (he kept the law ‘in his heart,’ Psalm 119:11). Thus the phrase ‘with all your mind,’ can be seen as an expansive translation of the Greek Gospel of the meaning of the Original text. (Derret offers another explanation in his writing)

4. **SPEECH 4**, *“And he said to him, you have answered right; do this and live.”*
A number of observations can be made; (1) Barth observes that Jesus praises him for his good knowledge and faithful recitations. He has the right theology, is he willing to act upon it? His intellectual stance is excellent; his performance is still in question. (2) As in the case of Simon, 7:3, Jesus evokes the right answer, Jesus doesn't need to tell him what to do, the lawyer tells himself. (3) The lawyer has asked about eternal life, Jesus expands it into the entire life. The Greek texts has a future, “you shall live,” meaning the immediate future ‘do this and you shall live.’
5. However, in the ME Syriac and Arabic translators have consistently agreed upon the former. The Old Syriac version turns the verb into a present and it reads, ‘do this and you are living.’ There are various Syriac versions that construct the grammar somewhat differently, but indicate a present reality result of present action, do this now and now you will live. Finally, the text is a quotation from Joseph in Genesis 42:18, Joseph is talking about the near future when his younger brother is brought to him. (In a parallel and similar discussion from Luke 18, we will observe the same shift from an exclusive interest into the life to come to an inclusion on the present. (4) The verb ‘do’ is a specific limited requirement “what having done, I will inherit” the answer is given in a command for an open ended life-style that requires unlimited and unqualified love for God and people.
6. Clearly the very law which the lawyer quotes sets a standard that no one can fully reach. In a parallel discussion on the same question in Luke 18, a standard is set that everyone listening judges impossible. They ask, “Who then can be saved?” The answer is given, “What is impossible with us, is possible with God.” The same theological posture is here. By this answer, Jesus simply says “You want to do something to inherit eternal life? Very well, just continually love God and your neighbor with the totality of all that you are. The is no line drawn. No list of how much is expected, such as we noted in Slavonic Enoch is offered, Rather the requirements are left limited.
7. The scholar Summers observes; Jesus and Paul agree with their Jewish contemporaries that complete obedience to God's law was the way to be right with God. They found that way ineffective in experience. However, because of man's inability to give complete obedience to the law. The first round of debate closes. The lawyer has not given up the hope that he can earn his own entrance into heaven. The law has been quoted. Now he needs some commentary, some ‘midrash.’ The God whom he must love is

known, but who is his neighbor? Whom he must love as himself? He needs a definition, perhaps a list. If the list is not too long, he may be able to keep its demands. Thus he initiates the 2nd round of debates.

ROUND II

8. **SPEECH 5**, *“He desiring to justify himself said, ‘Who is my neighbor?’”*

This hope for self-justification is not a case of ‘excusing himself for asking Jesus,’ even though he knows what Jesus thinks. (Jeremiah, Marshall) Rather he simply hopes yet to do something and gain eternal life; hence the question, Karl Barth, observes; “The lawyer does not know that only by mercy can he live and have life eternal. He doesn’t want to live by mercy as he doesn’t know what it is, he lives by something very different than mercy. By his own intention and ability, ‘he wants to present himself as a righteous man before God.”

9. The same observation was drawn by Ibn al-Tayyib, who understood the question to mean that lawyer wanted to see himself fully righteous. Ibn-al Tayyib continues; “The question put to Christ, ‘Who is my neighbor,’ is asked in order that he will answer, Your relative and your friend.” The lawyer will then answer, “I have fully loved these.” Then Jesus will praise him and say to him, “You have truly fulfilled the law!” The lawyer will depart, basking before the people, in praise of his good works, and enjoying a newly won honor and confidence based on that praise.”

10. It is pointless to press far into the mind of the lawyer. These questions have some merit. Similar to the parallel discussion with the ruler in chapter 18, the discussion does turn into that direction. There the law is recited. The ruler claims to have fulfilled it and probably expects praise for his noble efforts. There, as here, the questioner must be surprised by the unexpected turn of the conversation. In harmony with Ibn al-Tayyib’s suggestion, we observe that the text of Leviticus identifies one’s neighbor as one’s brother and sons of your own people. (Lev. 19:17-18). The rabbis included this to mean all Jews. They were divided over the proselyte and were sure that it did NOT include gentiles. (Jeremias). Jeremias notes a rabbinical saying, ‘that heretics, informers, and renegades, ‘should be pushed into the ditch and not pulled out.’ John Lightfoot quotes a midrash on Ruth, Chapter 4; “The Gentiles, amongst whom and us there is no war, and so those that are keepers of sheep amongst the Israelites, and the like, we are not to contrive their death; but if they be in any danger of death, we are not

bound to deliver them...if any fall into the sea you shall not need to take them out: for it is said, 'Thou shalt not rise up against the blood of thy neighbor'; but such a one is not thy neighbor, (Lightfoot, 107).

11. Thus the lawyer asked this question in a world where there was a variety of views on just who the neighbor really is. Safari observes; "the oral law was not really uniform," there was a lively debate on points of interpretation. The literary form is that of a seven-scene p ballad and is as follows;
- a. A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and he fell among robbers
And they stripped him and beat him
And departed, leaving him half dead. COME
DO
GO
 - b. Now by coincidence a certain priest was going down that road,
And when he saw him,
He passed by on the other side. COME
DO
GO
 - c. Likewise, also a Levite came to that place.
And when he saw him
he passed by on the other side. COME
DO
GO
 - d. And a certain Samaritan, traveling, came to him,
And when he saw him,
He had compassion on him COME
DO
DO
 - e. He went to him
And bound up his wounds,
Pouring oil and wine, COME
DO
DO
 - f. The he put him on his own riding animal
And led him into the Inn
And he took care of him. DO
DO
DO
 - g. The next day on took out and gave two denarii to the manager
And said, "Take care of him, and whatever more you spend
I, on my return, I will repay you." DO
DO
DO
12. "For love does not begin by defining its objects; It discovers them."
(Manson).