

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

The week of JULY 21/22

Who Is My Neighbor?

#1 *On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” 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.’” “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”*

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins 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.’”

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” Luke 10:25-37

If your neighbor gets hurt and is lying on the ground in the yard, what would you do? Do you have a telephone? What number are you supposed to dial to get help? That’s right, 9-1-1. It is great that we have telephones today. Our Bible reading tells us about a stranger, not a neighbor, who needed help. There were no phones back in Jesus’ day. Two people passed by, but they didn’t help. Then the third man came by and took the time to bring the man to a place where he could get help and paid for it too. Jesus said the most important commandment for us to keep is to love God with all our heart and to the stranger who needs our help. Let’s be good neighbors to everyone, whether we know them or not.

Pray: *Lord, point me to those who need help so that I might be a good neighbor to them. Amen.*

#2 *“I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat.”*
He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and they did so. They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. About four thousand men were present.
Mark 8:2, 6-9

In today's Bible reading there was a hungry crowd of 4,000 people. No one did anything because no one could afford to feed all of the people. Yet, Jesus could afford it. He had compassion on them. He took a little food and invited everyone to sit down. Then He fed the whole crowd and had food left over. There are two important things to learn from this. First, Jesus was not afraid to see the needs of others and reach out to help. He did that for us, seeing our sin, and coming down to die on the cross. He did not want to see us suffer. Second, we can afford to help others just like Jesus did because we are not alone. We can care about others and help them when they are hungry or sick because we are part of the church, the body of Christ. Together we can do anything God wants us to do. Even feed 4,000 people. We can afford to care because we have Jesus with us.

Pray: Jesus thank You for caring about me and forgiving my sin. Help me to care about others and let them know You love them too. Amen.