

Grace and Peace to you from God Almighty, and from our Lord and savior Jesus Christ

Amen

In our gospel reading today we have a lawyer who approaches Jesus with a question

This man is a studier of God's law,
So, he is a lawyer, and he is a theologian

And he poses Jesus with this question of, "How do I inherit eternal life?"

Jesus replies,

"What is written in the law? How does it read to you?"

He's like what do you think it says, what do you think you have to do
Mr. lawyer/theologian

And the lawyer answers back what he knows, what he was taught "You shall love the Lord your God with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

And Jesus basically answers Yes.

Yes, those are the things you need to do. Do that and you will have eternal life

So, the lawyer kinda 'gets smart with him'

And so the lawyer questions, "Who is my neighbor?"

Have you guys ever played the questions game,
Where you try to answer someone's question with another question and just keep it going

I know Jesus would win this game, every time

He was very good at answering questions towards him with another question.
So, before he is able to ask back his question
To this lawyer's question of 'Who is my neighbor?'
He first tells us this parable of the Good Samaritan

A man has been robbed he his left beaten, stranded on the side of the road

A priest passes by him

A Levite passes by him, another holy man of the church

And now a Samaritan man comes upon him

Now the Samaritan were – not really thought of that greatly of by the Jewish people,
or they just didn't really think that fondly of each other

So, the man that was lying there beaten, on a normal day he may have judged to Samaritan to
be 'a bad guy'

But this Samaritan comes upon the beaten man, and we are told upon seeing him, he feels
compassion for him

And he bandages him, he puts wine and oil over him, he brings him to an inn,

He does not even leave him there, but he goes in with him and cares for him
Giving the inn keeper 2 denarii to care for the man,
and says he will come back and pay whatever else is used beyond that to care for him.

The Priest and the Levite that passed by, we do not know if they were going to do something
very important, or why they passed by this man

But they did

Each time they passed by 'on the other side'

I imagine when you are out for a walk
And you see something way was down the path
And so you cross over to the other side of the trail, the other sidewalk.
Or kind of prepare yourself to avoid this roadblock

This is what I imagine the Priest and the Levite to have done

They saw the man lying on the ground beaten up ahead and they passed him on the other side
of the road.

I see them as trying to avoid the man, trying to not see him, trying to just pretend like he is not there...

But the Samaritan
It says 'he came near him',
And when he saw the beaten man, he was moved with pity

The Samaritan man, he comes near,
He looks down the road and sees the man and comes upon him,
I find him to be curious in how he can help

I think of him as being open to what God had in store for him that day

And what's funny to me is then Jesus' response
He is now able to ask back his question,
And he says, 'which one of these men do you think was a neighbor??'

The two that passed by him on the other side,
or the one that cared for him, bandaged him up, brought him to an inn, paid for him, continued to care for him,
Which of these three was a neighbor?

I think we know the answer but that does not always make it easy

It can be easy to help others, to be friendly, and polite,

But the important thing and the hardest thing is helping all of our neighbors

Its really hard to help the people in our lives that have done wrong to us, that are mean to us, that oppose us

And I think even harder, what about the people that oppose others, are mean to others, that have done wrong to others

They also need to be cared for, and held, and loved

Through this gospel text today we are all challenged with who our own neighbor is?

When we come upon our neighbor who may be in need, how do we respond?

Do we avoid, ignore, pretend they don't exist, try to move around them on the other side of the road

In this story we don't really know why the man was beaten and robbed

Do we evaluate,

Do they really need help? How did they get to where they are in life? What will they do with me help?

Or do we care like the Samaritan,

Like the obvious example of a neighbor for us in the story,

Who cares for the man, and keeps caring for the man, and treats him as if he were his own family

This past week for school I was reading Dorothy Day's autobiography,

She was a social activist and anarchist, and she became Catholic,

And she cofounded a newspaper the Catholic worker,

That addressed issues happening in the world

But they used the profits to feed the hungry and provide shelter for the unsheltered.

I was inspired by her compassion and also her discipline in caring for others.

For example, some of the people she provided housing for would steal all the furniture she provided

And others would stay, knowing Dorothy would never evict them.

She tried her best to turn the other cheek, and always care for others

She practiced voluntary poverty,

In her book she talked of a priest that came to stay with them on their farm,

Father Roy

And his favorite tale to tell everyone

Was of a pastor that wanted to build a school

And it would take \$100,000 to build this school

These days of course it would be more like half a million

But he wanted to raise \$100,000 for this school
And he only had \$1000
And sadly he knew that was not enough to do anything with
And instead of starting to save,
He just gave the entire \$1000 away

The next week, miraculously a doner gave the 100,000 to the church

Father Roy would then tell another story of a man that wanted to go to California.
It would cost \$100,
But he only had \$10

He gave away all that he had and received back \$25

Still instead of starting to save he threw it away recklessly

He then had \$75

Now the point of this story is to sow!

Sow, sow, sow your seeds abundantly and you shall reap abundantly!

Like we are told in our text from Deuteronomy today,
The Lord will make you abundantly prosperous in all your undertakings

Give your needs to God and he will provide for you!

Not always in the ways that we think,

Maybe the man who wanted to go to California should not have gone,
The story ends there, maybe he only ever got the \$75
Maybe he would have been in a train wreck,
Maybe his life would have been worse off.

And this story is not just to talk about finances, but in all aspects in life.

If you feel rushed for time, like there is no way that you could get done all that you need to do
in a day

Sow time
Spend an hour in prayer
Spend an hour helping another

And suddenly you will have more time than ever

Sow kindness

Sow love

Now my point of this story is not to say that we should go give away \$20 because surely we will receive back a hundredfold

But that it is our faith that allows us to give,

It is when we live into our faith that we are able to sow abundantly

And to know that no matter what we will continue to be cared for, and held

Sow!

Sow time with your neighbor,
In your prayers for them
In your care for them

Do not give out of calculations of how much we can afford
How much time can I devote to you

Do not withhold your care out of fear of reputation,
Of what others may think

Do not withhold your care because of the reputation of the other
Because of your anger or dislike for them

But give from you whole heart
Sow abundantly!
Sow! In your compassion and care for others.
As the Good Samaritan did

I have truly found it such a blessing to be a part of this Hope community,

Because of all of the seeds that it has sowed in this community and to its neighbors

And I challenge us all to continue to think of who our other neighbors are and the ways that we can sow into our relationships with them

Sow abundantly

In your time, in your giving, in your prayer for others, in your compassion, and in your love for your neighbor

And may the peace of God which passes all understanding, go with you to keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen