

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity  
Luke 10:23-37 (ESV)

Jesus said, "He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him."

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

A blessed Lord's Day to all of you, dear ones. And how very wonderful is our Gospel lesson appointed for today with the parable of the Good Samaritan?

You know, I think it goes without saying that there are certain providential blessings, certain golden opportunities that the Lord will send our way, which it'd be just laughable, if not criminal, for us to turn away from and not embrace with thankfulness to God.

Imagine, for example, a small ship on the open seas one evening whose captain has become aware that a terrible storm has developed and is heading right towards his vessel. It's become clear he can't outrun it, his radio is cutting in and out, and he's prayed to God that He would save him and his crew.

And then, amid all the chaos and confusion, he spots the beacon of a lighthouse with a nearby harbor, which he vaguely recognized because someone told him about it. And immediately he and the whole crew rejoice and give thanks to God. But soon, a member of the crew saw that the ship was off course and wasn't heading where it obviously should.

And when asked about this, the captain said, "Well, I've never actually been to port there before, and right now, the whole process of docking and offloading sounds very draining. And besides, I'm not even sure we'll really enjoy it there, especially if there's no Starbuck's coffee for us.

"So, we're going to try to find some other place. God is gracious. He'll provide for us, and when it really comes down to it, I think we'll be fine no matter what."

What would you say about that, dear ones? No doubt, you'd think the captain of the ship had lost his mind!

No doubt, some of you are thinking, "Ridiculous! I know some people like that, Pastor, but *I* would never do something so foolish."

Well, be careful, dear ones. Be careful. Because our Gospel lesson appointed for today may just leave you thinking otherwise. The parable of the Good Samaritan may just cause you to see yourself and your own circumstances very differently, especially in view of the divine mercy and healing the Lord Jesus has seen fit to pour out on you and the ongoing care He's personally seen fit to give you within the church for your good.

Our Lord's parable is instigated by a certain lawyer wanting to get into specifics about who exactly we should consider to be our neighbor. Who exactly do we need to love as we love ourselves?

So, Jesus, of course, begins describing a man who's on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho and who gets ambushed and beaten by robbers. They strip him naked. They leave him wounded and half-dead, our Lord says. And the man simply has no ability or means to restore himself. He's desperately in need of help. But he won't find it among those from whom he thought he should.

A priest and a Levite, pass by—two men of the Jewish people bound to service at the Temple and who should draw near and help, but instead they go out of their way to get out of his way and any obligations they would otherwise have towards him. And let me just say that while they didn't rob the poor man to begin with, they did rob him of the compassionate help he desperately needed. They were inhumane, dear ones. And let no one imagine, on the one hand, that we can join the priest and the Levite in callously turning away from the needy and destitute, and, on the other hand, that we're not also keeping company with thieves. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

But soon enough, a Samaritan, of all people, comes near to help. Now, the Jews hated Samaritans, dear ones. They wanted nothing to do with them. The Samaritans were foul and detestable. So maybe you can imagine lying there, bloodied and wounded, when suddenly someone dressed from head to toe in K-State clothing coming towards you. Or, someone decked out in KU clothing—imagine they rush over to help you. And you think to yourself, “Oh, not them. Anyone but them.” But are you really going to pass up this Godsend, this golden opportunity of receiving the life-giving care you need? Surely not. Surely not.

The Samaritan shows the stripped and wounded man mercy, examining his wounds, binding them up, and pouring out on them oil and wine—basic first-aid in first-century Palestine, dear ones. This is antiseptic wound care in the ancient Near-East. The Samaritan cleanses the man's wounds and soothes his pain. And then he lifts him up and takes him to an inn, to a place of safety and healing and rest, where the Good Samaritan cares for him there, even commissioning the inn-keeper to do the same in his stead with the means for ongoing treatment and care in that place—a place not unlike a hospital.

And surely you now see, dear ones, that the Good Samaritan is the Incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who's shown us what it is to be a neighbor by drawing near to us and showing us mercy.

Because the man who fell among robbers is you and I. We've fallen among the demons who've stripped and robbed us of our innocence and our right standing before God, and they've left us wounded and as good as dead in our sins by the wayside.

Now, when confronted by the Law of God with its demands and accusations—we will have no help in being healed and regenerated from the inside out.

But Christ our Savior has come and entered into our suffering and pain in the ultimate act of *sympatheia* in Greek—suffering with us, taking our suffering upon Himself, that by His stripes we'd be healed.

He's poured out the oil and wine of the holy Sacraments, the means through which He pours out His healing grace. And even now He cares for us in the inn of the holy Church.

And, dear ones, you've been given the golden opportunity of being able to have your conscience examined and treated with the utmost privacy by the Great Physician's assistants, men sent by Him to treat your soul's specific wounds and infections—the particular maladies plaguing you from within—those that may announce themselves and those you may not really be aware of because your conscience has been deadened by sin.

Christ, in His mercy, has sent you trained Pastors, sworn to secrecy, to treat your wounds and deliver the medicine of His forgiveness for the specific sins you reveal in private and to continue providing this very potent, ongoing treatment for your soul until He returns, and you see Him face-to-face.

And in the meantime, would you do well to refuse and to turn away from such a gift He's personally seen fit to give you for your good?

Because our Good Samaritan is so good, in fact, and so wise and merciful that He surely wouldn't provide you with such treatment if He didn't think that you need it and that you'd suffer without it.

Surely, He knows best how to take care of you and what you truly need for healing from the inside out.

And surely to the same Lord Jesus Christ will be all glory forever and ever. Amen.