

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

6.22.14 Marge Shiflett- Certified Lay Speaker

A DEEP HATRED EXISTED BETWEEN THE JEWS AND SAMARITANS. THE JEWS SAW THEMSELVES AS PURE DECENDANTS OF ABRAHAM, WHILE THE SAMARITANS WERE A MIXED RACE PRODUCED WHEN JEWS FROM THE NORTHERN KINGDOM INTERMARRIED WITH OTHER PEOPLE AFTER ISRAEL'S EXILE. THE PERSON LEAST LIKELY TO ACT CORRECTLY WOULD BE THE SAMARITAN. IN FACT, HE DID NOT EVEN SAY THE WORD "SAMARITAN" IN ANSWER TO JESUS'S QUESTION. THE "EXPERTS" ATTITUDE BETRAYED THIS LACK OF THE VERY THING THAT HE HAD EARLIER SAID THE LAW COMMANDED-Love.

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE DONE THE SAME THING? HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE PASSED BY A NEEDY PERSON, KNOWINGLY, THEREBY SHOWING OUR TRUE FEELINGS ABOUT OUR NEIGHBORS? WELL LET'S LOOK AT OUR NEIGHBORS?

JUST WHO ARE THEY? ARE THEY THE PEOPLE LIVING IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

FAMILY MEMBERS? FRIENDS? CHURCH MEMBERS? WHO ARE OUR NEIGHBORS?

THE EXPERT REFERRED TO IN THE SCRIPTURE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THAT THE LAW DEMANDED TOTAL DEVOTION TO GOD AND LOVE FOR ONE'S NEIGHBOR.

JESUS TALKED ABOUT THESE LAWS IN THIS PARABLE BUT ALSO IN MATTHEW 19

16-22. ALSO IN MARK 10: 17-22.

SO, HAVE YOU DECIDED WHO YOUR NEIGHBOR IS? HAVE YOU EVER SEEN BEGGARS ON THE STREET? HAVE YOU EVER VISITED AN ORPHANAGE? HAVE YOU EVER HAD A SISTER, COUSIN OR OTHER RELATIVE ASK FOR A LOAN. HAS A CHURCH MEMBER EVER NEEDED HELP? DO YOU GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO TAKE SOMEONE TO THE DOCTOR? BRING A MEAL TO A SICK PERSON OR VISIT A SHUT IN? HOW MANY OF YOU OFFERED A ROOM IN YOUR HOME TO A PERSON WHO LOST THEIR HOME AND ALL THAT THEY HAD IN KATRINA? HOW MANY GOOD HEALTH KITS DID YOU PUT TOGETHER? HAVE YOU EVER PURCHASED CLOTHING FOR A STRANGER? HOW ABOUT JUST GIVING CLOTHING TO SOMEONE IN NEED?

DO YOU KNOW WHO YOUR NEIGHBOR IS? NOT LONG AGO I WAS IN EL PASO TEXAS, WHERE MANY OF THE NEEDY IN MEXICO ARE FLOCKING TO THE BORDER. IF THEY MAKE IT TO THE US, THEY OFTEN HAVE NO FOOD, CLEAN CLOTHES OR OTHER THINGS ESSENTIAL TO WHAT WE THINK OF AS NORMAL LIFE.

I WENT SHOPPING WITH MY TWO DAUGHTERS AND AS WE WENT INTO A STORE I SAW A SMALL 6 YEAR OLD BOY SITTING ON THE CONCRETE SIDEWALK HOLDING A COFFEE CAN. THE SIGN SAID HELP/AUYDA. THE CHILD WAS OBVIOUSLY HUNGERY. THIN, DIRTY, LIPS PARCHED. I PASSED HIM BY AND WENT INTO THE

STORE AND SHOPPED. THE OWNER WENT OUTSIDE AND MADE THE CHILD LEAVE. SO HE WENT TO THE NEXT STORE AND SAT DOWN AGAIN. I PASSED THE CHILD THE SECOND TIME. I SHOPPED SOME MORE. BUT MY HEART WAS GRIEVED. I THOUGHT, HIS MOTHER PROBABLY PUT HIM OUT TO BEG. AS WE WERE RETURNING TO THE CAR, I PASSED THE CHILD AGAIN JUST AS ANOTHER CHILD ABOUT THE SAME AGE CAME RUNNING UP WITH A QUARTER AND DROPPED IT IN THE CAN. I HEARD THE CLANG OF THE QUARTER AND TURNED AROUND TO SEE THE CHILD WITH HIS PIGGY BANK SHAKING IT OVER THE CAN. THE SOUND OF EACH COIN HITTING THE CAN, MADE TEARS COME TO MY EYES I WAS A LEVITE! I WAS A PRIEST! I WAS NOT A CHRISTIAN WITH LOVE IN MY HEART. GOD DID NOT SAY JUDGE YOUR FELLOW MAN, HE COMMANDED US TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER, TO CARE ABOUT SOMEONE WHO HAS NO HEAT OR WHO IS HUNGERY, OR WHO IS WOUNDED, SICK OR WHOSE SOUL IS TROUBLED. I WENT BACK TO THE CHILD AND DROPPED A \$20 BILL IN HIS CAN. HE LOOKED AT ME AND TEARS WERE IN HIS EYES AND A BIG SMILE ON HIS FACE. HE JUMPED UP AND STARTED TOWARD A CLEARING, MOMMIE, MOMMIE, I HAVE MONEY FOR FOOD.

ARE YOU A LEVITE? ARE YOU THE PRIEST WHO WALKS ON THE OTHER SIDE? DO
YOU SEE A BEGGAR AND JUDGE HIM TO BE A DRUNK OR A DRUGGIE AND PASS
HIM BY? Do you judge him? WHO IS YOUR NEIGHBOR?

Let us Pray