We love stories because we are created in the image of a story-telling God. Jesus knew this, so he taught often in parables. One of the most endearing and enduring stories of the Bible is that of the Good Samaritan. However, this story caused great offense to a man convinced of his own righteousness and moral superiority. He decides to put Jesus to the test, when in reality a true test awaited him. We all struggle with thinking there must be something we can or must do to make ourselves worthy of the kingdom of God, worthy of eternal life. Toward that end, we ratchet the law down, redefine it, and make it manageable, all in an effort to buy our way in. Jesus changes the questions we raise, and in the process changes us! We are called to bearing the burdens of others, not as a means to merit our salvation, but rather to manifest we have been saved; not as a mean of earning our justification, but as a way of evidencing we have been justified by the True Good Samaritan, Jesus Christ. Burden-bearing is not something we have to become rich in order to do. In fact, we become rich as we bear one another’s burdens. When we bear one another’s burdens, we are showing, from the love and compassion we have been shown, a love and compassion to others that is an irresistible apologetic. By God’s grace, burden-bearing is alive and well in our community at CPC! By God’s grace, let’s continue to explore ways of enhancing and expanding this vital ministry of the priesthood of all believers.

“You can tell a lot about a person by the way they treat those who can do nothing for him.”
– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

“We need to look for ways to press in relationally to those God puts in our path by asking questions that take you beyond the ‘I’m fine’ answer.”
– Jen Seger

In Luke, as in Romans, there is a first Adam, last Adam theological background at work. The indicative must precede the imperative. Imitation of Christ must be grounded in intimacy with the Christ, who has done for us what we never could have done for ourselves.

Most of the needy aren’t literally bloodied and bruised on the side of a road, but rather bloodied and bruised right next to you in the church pew. And, don’t just look for sexy people, or those who are a good fit for your tribe. The real test of a heart willing to bear burdens is that you stop insisting others prove themselves worthy of being your neighbor. In other words, you stop asking, “Who is my neighbor?” and you start asking, “Whose neighbor do I get to be, today?”

“Therefore, Christians must have strong shoulders and mighty bones – sturdy enough that is, to carry heavy burdens.”

“... run unto him, and reaching out your hand, raise him up again, comfort him with sweet words, and embrace him with motherly arms.”
– Martin Luther (on restoring sinners and bearing burdens)

“Hoc est verum. Wir sind alle Bettler.”
– Martin Luther (on the gospel, on his deathbed, trans., “This is true. We are all beggars.”)
“It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree helping each other to one or the other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all of our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously – no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption. And our charity must be real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner – no mere tolerance, or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment. Next to the Blessed sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your sense. If he is your Christian neighbor, he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also Christ vere latiat – the glorifier and the glorified, Glory Himself, is truly hidden.”


“...in the name of Christ and hi kingdom Christians must now employ all their God-given means in opposing the sickness and demonization of creation – and thus in restoring creation – in anticipation of its final ‘regeneration’ at the second coming (Matt. 19:28). This directive holds for our private lives (e.g., in such things as keeping promises, helping friends, practicing hospitality) but also for public endeavors as work in advertising, labor-management relations, education and international affairs. Christ lays his claim upon it all; nothing is excluded from the scope of his kingship... We must choose restoration rather than repristination. It would be a profound mistake to attempt to go back to the original state of the earth’s development, to the sort of world exemplified by the garden of Eden... Biblical religion is historically progressive, not reactionary. It views the whole course of history as a movement from a garden to a city, and it fundamentally affirms that movement. Once again, the kingdom of God claims all of creation, not only in all its departments, but also in all its stages of development.”

–Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained*, 77-78.

“I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?”

– Cain (Ge 4:9)

**GROUP QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the clues in the text that tell us about the character of the lawyer’s question?
2. How and why does Jesus change the question?
3. How are legalism (law-based earning of salvation) and antinomianism (lawlessness) not really a far cry from one another?
4. What can we do to earn the status of being an heir of eternal life (Hint: this is a trick question)?
5. What did Pastor Filson say are some of the most chilling words in all the Bible, from our text this morning?
6. What are some of the opportunities we have available to us at CPC for bearing burdens and answering the question, “Whose neighbor do I get to be, today?”

**CLOSE IN PRAYER:**

Consider using Isa 42:3 to guide you as you pray.