

The gospel of Luke is written with a Gentile or Greek-speaking cultured people in mind. In writing the gospel account Luke focuses upon the role and importance of women and the poor, more than the other three gospels, and relates the most parable teachings of Jesus in his story of who Jesus is, how he was and is in the world, and how that changes even us.

As we read through Luke, structured by the narrative lectionary, we have passed the turning point in the gospel, when Jesus (as Luke writes) sets his face on Jerusalem: his climactic preaching of a reformed faith and new humanity, which leads to his public execution for heresy and insurrection on the cross. We mark this season, or passion as we often call it, during and with the season of Lent, which began this week on Ash Wednesday. Today's proposed reading follows Sunday's, in which Jesus is transfigured and reveals himself as the Messiah: *more* than human, *other* than what the disciples expected. Having just crossed through the villages of Samaria, where he called people to discipleship, Jesus has returned to Israel proper (Judea) and begins a series of conversations with the spiritual and religious leaders of Israel.

lawyer: νομικός [nomikos]: a lawyer, one learned in the Law, one learned in the Old Testament. An expert in Jewish law (theology); an ancient Jewish-attorney ("Scripture-lawyer"), specializing in interpreting the OT and applying the teachings of established rabbis. The word implies someone even more learned in the Law than a typical scribe, for example like the great OT leader Ezra. It would be someone who wouldn't need clarification on what the scriptures relate.

priest: ἱερεύς [hiereus]: from the Hebrew כֹהֵן, a priest; one who offers sacrifices and in general is busied with sacred rites. Priests were highly esteemed a religious and spiritual leaders of the people.

Levite: Λευίτης [Levites]: a Levite, one of the tribe of Levi, in a narrower sense those were called Levites who, not being of the family of Aaron, for whom alone the priesthood was reserved, served as assistants to the priests. It was their duty to keep the sacred utensils and the temple clean, to provide the sacred loaves, to open and shut the gates of the temple, to sing the sacred hymns in the temple, and to do many other things.

SAMARITANS: the residents of Samaria were looked down upon as less than equal and heretics by most Jews because of history. When the Jewish nation was conquered, deported as hostages and exiled by the Assyrian and Babylonian empire in the 7-5th centuries BCE the Samaritans were left behind. In the exile time, during which Judaism underwent a sort of reformation, their spiritual practices diverged, specifically with the Samaritans considering their tradition the most pure (untainted by the Babylonian Captivity) whereas the Israelites thought the opposite. The major issue between Jews and Samaritans has always been the location of the Chosen Place to worship God; Mount Zion in Jerusalem according to the Jewish faith or Mount Gerizim according to the Samaritan faith. In the gospels, we see that historically one would avoid traveling through Samaria to avoid contact with these deplorables. They would never been the "hero" in a classic Israelite story.

SCRIPTURES FOR SUNDAY 3.5.2017

Luke 10:25-42

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

²⁵ Just then a *lawyer* stood up to test Jesus.

"Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to [Jesus], "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷ He answered, "You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a **priest** was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a **Levite**, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a **SAMARITAN** while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two **denarii**, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" ³⁷ [The *lawyer*] said, "*The one who showed him mercy.*" Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

³⁸ Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; ⁴² there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

The one who showed him mercy: The answer to the question is clear. Yet the lawyer doesn't answer in the way that you'd expect. He doesn't respond saying, "the Samaritan" rather he responds imprecisely. Is it perhaps that he can't even stomach naming aloud a Samaritan as someone to emulate?

denarii δηνάριον [dénarion]: a denarius, a small Roman silver coin, weighing in Nero's time, 53 grams. Its value and purchasing power varied from time to time" In the day of Jesus it was seen as the standard daily wage of a worker.

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Questions for the practice of Examen & Contemplation

***What strikes you in this passage ? How does it interact with what you're living these days, or thinking about?**

***This story is commonly known as the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Curiously though the word "Good" never appears. What might that mean in our hearing of it? How do you hear this parable about compassion and the identity of our neighbor in our own current world situation? How is it a challenge to you as a disciple, to us as a church community?**

***Jesus seems to belittle Martha for doing what she should be doing (showing hospitality, preparing to receive Jesus with grace). Why is she picked on for being less faithful than her sister Mary? What is Jesus saying? How do you integrate this teaching in your life? How do we in the life of our church?**