



8th Sunday of Luke

The key around which the entire story of the Good Samaritan revolves is the question of how to inherit life in the Age to come. The answer is to love God and to love your neighbor. But, the lawyer had to ask, “Who is my neighbor?” He was hoping that Jesus would define “neighbor” as his fellow Judean. After all, it’s easy to love those who are like you. Jesus’s story turns the question around a bit. Jesus answers the question, “Who was neighbor to the Judean, the person like you!” If your enemy can treat *you* like a neighbor, what’s stopping you from treating him like one too?

Scripture: Luke 10:25-37

Bottom Line: Your enemy might just be your only hope!

Discussion Questions

1. The Judeans and Samaritans hated each other. In our society, who are our enemies? Who would we have a hard time accepting help from? How do we talk about these people in the media? At home? Among our friends?
2. The priest and levite, who walked by, thought they were following the law. They were forbidden from touching anyone unclean. But, God’s law of love says we should have mercy. What ethical dilemmas have you faced? How did you resolve them? How does Psalm 50 (“I desire mercy, not sacrifice”) help in those situations?
3. Being “chosen” makes us have a duty to let the world know that God’s grace is for everyone. How are we doing as Orthodox Christians? Are we reaching out? What can we get better at this? How can you help?

Moving Forward

The Judean lawyer desperately wanted his neighbor to be his own people. After all, Judeans thought they had received God’s grace and this made them better than others. But, in the story, Jesus makes the one in need just like the lawyer, a Judean. However, when his fellow kinsmen see him, they keep walking. According to the law, they were actually doing the right thing! Since they were on the way to serve in the Temple, they were forbidden from touching anyone unclean. So, on they went. The only one who stopped to help was someone from an enemy tribe. Samaritans and Judeans had hated each other for quite a while. Yet, when the beaten Judean needed a friend, it came in the form of an unexpected person. So, the question is: as recipients of God’s grace, do we use that to boost our own sense of superiority and purity—keeping our enemies as enemies? Or, do we use it to spread God’s love in the world, making our enemies our neighbors?

Changing Your Mind

“‘Who of these three does it seem to you became a neighbor to the man falling among bandits?’ And he said, ‘The one treating him with mercy.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise’.” (Luke 10:36-37)