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The Parables of Jesus Christ: How to Know Your Neighbor

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PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST

TWENTY-THREE: How to Know Your Neighbor (Lk. 10:30-37)

SURVEY

A man en route from Jerusalem to Jericho was attacked, robbed, beaten and left half-dead by some bandits.

Soon a priest and then a Levite, traveling that same road, saw the man but quickly walked on, refusing to help.

Finally a Samaritan stopped, bandaged his wounds, placed him on his donkey, took him to a nearby inn and paid the innkeeper to nurse him back to health.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is the only parable where a Samaritan was involved.
- There is also only one miracle where a Samaritan was involved (Lk. 17:11-19).
- Both Samaritans were presented in a very positive way. Thus we see:
 1. The gentleness as exhibited in the parable.
 2. The gratitude as exhibited in the miracle.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- There is a two-fold irony and surprise in this parable:
 1. Concerning the two who should have helped the victim but did not:
 - a. The priest—He might have just come from the temple after presenting the sacrifices to God.
 - b. The Levite—He might have just come from the temple after proclaiming the Scriptures. But neither would lift a finger to help a fellow human being.
 2. Concerning the one who should not have helped the victim, but did:

He was a Samaritan and a member of a race hated by the Jews (Lk. 10:33).
- Jesus related this parable to answer a question posed by a lawyer. The question was, "Who is my neighbor?" The answer, of course, is that my neighbor is anyone I can help.

- Some have accused Jesus of borrowing His words as found in the Golden Rule verse from Confucius, who preached the same message over five hundred years prior to Bethlehem. But a quick comparison between these two statements reveal a vast difference. Example:
 1. The Golden Rule as attributed to Confucius— "Don't do to others that which you would not have them do unto you."
 2. The Golden Rule as attributed to Jesus— "*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*" (Mt. 7:12)
- With this background in mind, consider the reaction of the three men who encountered the wounded traveler:
 1. It can be seen that both the priest and Levite followed Confucius' advice in that they did not beat, rob, and leave the victim to die for neither would have wanted this to be done to them.
 2. The Samaritan alone however followed Jesus' advice. He not only did not inflict additional harm upon the victim (Confucius' advice) but then did that which he would have desired someone to do for him, namely, to care for his terrible wounds (Jesus' advice).
- As a final observation, note the three different attitudes seen here:
 1. That of the robbers— "What is thine is mine."
 2. That of the priest and Levite— "What is mine is mine."
 3. That of the Samaritan— "What is mine is thine."

Thus, the first attitude is devilish, the second, fleshly, but the third divine.