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## Luke 10:21-42 – Who is My Neighbor and What is My Portion?

**“All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” -- Jesus, Luke 10:22**

As Jesus continues toward Jerusalem, we begin with a glimpse into how He prayed. **Read Luke 10:21-24.** The context is immediately after the discussion with the 72 heralds sent out to heal and proclaim the kingdom (see 10:1-20). Jesus has just taught them to rejoice in salvation more than their authority over the spirits. Note the Trinity is in view as the Holy Spirit inspires rejoicing in the Son as He prays to the Father. In this short prayer we gain insight into how special revelation works (those divine truths revealed to man) and we also learn about the extent of the authority given to Jesus--“all things”. Notice Jesus begins addressing the Father with exaltation as the “Lord of heaven and earth”, thanking Him for concealing truth from the wise, educated persons there in Galilee but revealing beautiful truths to “little children”, which reminds us of Jesus’ words to His disciples at Luke 9:48. This indicates the humility required to approach and receive from God. Then Jesus notes that all authority is granted to Him, even as only the Father knows the Son and the only way to know the Father is through the Son (John 14:6). Just as Jesus chose His disciples (the 12), He also chooses who will know and be known by God, to be spiritually born again and follow Him as trusting children in the Lord.

Then He addresses the Twelve with additional comments that what they have witnessed and heard has been desired for centuries by the Prophets and kings of Israel. Imagine hearing that as a simple fisherman or tax collector! They are privileged, with privileged information. But we are also privileged to be on the other side of the cross of Jesus and holding the completed canon of Scripture, God’s special revelation to us.

Next a lawyer approaches, but not out of a true desire for knowledge, but rather to test (and entrap) Him. **Read 10:25-37.** His question regards what actions are required to enter into eternal life. Do not miss the verb “inherit” in his question. He is right in that eternal life is an inheritance, but to qualify as an heir is not something we can do. Their culture was heavy with moral deeds in order to earn salvation. The Law did provide for this, but one had to keep every single detail of God’s command perfectly; any failure on any point meant condemnation. But, as said in Ephesians 2:8-10, we are actually saved by the gift of grace, by faith in

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Our desire is to witness God’s work in transforming hearts.  
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Christ's death on the cross, after He perfectly kept the Law for us! It is not earned by any of us, else we would boast. Back to the conversation, Jesus recognizes the man as a lawyer and so asks Him about the Law (v 26). The lawyer rightly responds that the two commandments summarize the Law: Love God with everything you are and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus then says, "Correct, do this, and you will live." Except there is no way he can. If he could, he would achieve co-heir status with Jesus without the need for the cross.

Jesus' direction causes the questioner to feel guilt, as illustrated by the lawyer's attempt to justify himself. He quibbles with Jesus, seeking a legal loophole on the definition of the word "neighbor". This allows Jesus to give us the famous parable of the Good Samaritan, and address the bias against the Samaritans that the Jews—and His own inner circle of disciples (see Luke 9:54)—held toward that people. In doing this, He does not let the lawyer off the hook but expands the definition of the word neighbor.

Jesus begins that a man is descending from Jerusalem to Jericho, a drop of around 3,000 feet, when he is accosted by robbers who take all he has and leave him for dead. This evil occurred frequently around the region so most travelers moved in groups for protection. First a priest (a Levite in the line of Aaron), then a Levite (not a priest) pass and cross to the other side to avoid even touching him. They justify their actions in their own minds so they can maintain their "cleanness" and participate in Levitical activities. The Law does not help here. Then a Samaritan, of all people, compassionately stops and goes over and above to care for this man, even transporting him to an inn and spending money to provide for his every need. Anyone hearing this story may have physically flinched upon hearing who the hero is. The lawyer has to admit that the one who proved to be a neighbor was the one who showed mercy, to which Jesus says, "Go and do likewise." Basically, He told a Jewish lawyer to go and emulate a Samaritan! Do not miss that cultural significance. But also realize that everything the Samaritan did in the story is what Jesus did for us: Seeing the brokenness caused by sin, He came to walk the dust of our world, showed God's love for us while we were dying in our sins, healed our brokenness while tearing down all the human barriers between us, paid the price for our salvation on the cross, and is coming back to graciously cover all costs for eternity. Jesus is the Good Samaritan.

Going on, Jesus enters the village where Martha and Mary live. **Read 10:38-42.** We know from the other gospels this village is Bethany and the house is shared by these sisters with their brother, Lazarus. And although we saw in the last chapter that Jesus owned no home, this house was the closest to being His home during His public ministry. Jesus' strong friendship with this family meant He stayed with them whenever He passed that way (about 1.5 miles east of Jerusalem). On this occasion, Martha stresses over her hospitality role while Mary sat at Jesus' feet, absorbed in His teaching. Martha's complaint to Jesus, asking Him to order Mary to help, demonstrates her level of frustration. Jesus' gentle rebuke is that Mary has chosen the better option and Martha's harried soul needs to rest. The lesson is not that service is not necessary or good, we are commanded to love one another, which means active serving. But all the religious activity we do is not as important as being a devoted follower and student of the Word (John 1:14). First abide in Him, then serve.

**Questions To Ponder Further:** *Do you have barriers against anyone you should extend grace? If so, confess them as sin and look for ways God will call you to be a neighbor to someone you may not normally. Are you consumed by doing good works such that you are missing out on abiding in Christ? Salvation must precede good works (Matthew 5:16).*

*God is not your Father until you have submitted to His call to salvation—and made you an heir.*

**Contact Information:**

Ron Comoglio, Alabama State Minister  
[Ron.Comoglio@capitolcom.org](mailto:Ron.Comoglio@capitolcom.org)  
Ph: 334-476-9333

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