

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 10- Luke 10:25-37

202- Who is My Neighbor?- Part 1

May 19, 2013

Luke 10:25-37

25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 And He said to him, "**What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?**"

27 And 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 answered correctly; *DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.***"

29 But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 Jesus replied and said, "**A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.**

31 "**And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.**

32 "**Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.**

33 "**But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion,**

34 **and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on *them*; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.**

35 "**On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.'**

36 "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?"

37 And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

Now one of the most essential elements of the spirit of this present evil world is that the ultimate sin in far too many people's mind is no longer the failure to honor God and love God and enjoy God- but it is the failure to esteem *ourselves*. Self-abasement, not God-abasement, is the ultimate evil of our day and the cry of deliverance from this evil is not, *"O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me?"* But rather, *"O worthy man that I am, would that I could only see myself better!"*

Today the great and first commandment is, *"Thou shalt love thyself."* And the standard explanation of almost every interpersonal problem from the so-called "experts" is to trace it back to someone's low self-esteem. A veritable avalanche of sermons, articles and books have pushed this idea deeply into even the Christian mind. It is a rare congregation, for example, that does not stumble over the hymn of Isaac Watts that says:

Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed:
And did my Sovereign Die
Would He devote that sacred Head
For such a *worm* as I?

Many song books have actually changed the word, "worm" into something more palatable or removed it altogether. For over a century now- "the cult of the self" has been expanding at a phenomenal speed and its professional members take every chance they get to put a mirror in front of us and tell us to enjoy what we see. What distresses me in all this is not merely that I consider this to be a patently unbiblical shift of focus away from God and toward Man as the goal of Redemption but how rare it is to see any opposition of the spread of this cult in the modern Church. So you should take this sermon this morning as one small vote against the tidal wave of the ungodly cult of self-esteem.

Almost six centuries before Jesus was born- the prophet Ezekiel wrote about the one true living God's great Passion- not to make much

of us- but His great Passion for the Glory of His Own Name in **Ezekiel 36:22-32**:

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD , 'It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.

23 "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD ," declares the Lord GOD , "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.

24 "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.

25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

28 "You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.

29 "Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you.

30 "I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations.

31 "Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations.

32 "I am not doing *this* for your sake," declares the Lord GOD , "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!"

The ignorance of the modern Church to the often repeated statements by God Himself about the fact that Salvation is all about us making much of God and us having the honor and privilege of loving and obeying and worshipping God is frightening. Instead they embarrass themselves by wrongly using verses like **Luke 10:27** as so-

called “proof texts” to justify their conceited message of self-esteem and self-love:

... [You shall love] **your neighbor as yourself**

Now the confusion about loving “self” versus loving God didn’t start with us. Right here in the Passage that Brother Andy just read to us- where this lawyer is facing Jesus some 2,000 years ago- this ancient Command was already being wrongly taught and wrongly understood.

Now the source of the *ancient* error with the Jews hinged on the word "**neighbor**" and just who that really was. And this error was exposed by Jesus in what we call, “The Parable of the Good Samaritan” here in **Luke 10:29-37**. But the source of the *modern* error with the modern Church hinges on the phrase "**as yourself**" from verse 27 and, as far as I know, has really not been publicly challenged.

So let us first look at the old misunderstanding with the Jews. In **Luke 10:26**, a lawyer has just asked Jesus what he must do to “inherit” eternal life. But according to Luke the question is not sincere. There is an ulterior motive here. The lawyer is really not seeking eternal life- he is seeking to trap Jesus. And under the guise of a personal question- he gives Jesus an academic quiz- hoping somehow to entangle the Lord in some heretical contradiction of the Old Testament.

And so Jesus- with a desire to expose the man's hypocrisy- turns the tables on him and answers his question with another question in verse 26:

What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?

And the man just blindly replies with an answer in verse 27 that he has been taught all his life; that he memorized as a child- but an answer that has no meaning or purpose to him at all,

And 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."

... and then in verse 28- Jesus simply agrees with what the Old Testament clearly teaches. Now we have spent the last two weeks going over this and how that lost people in their fallen condition *cannot* and *will not* ever love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. And we have seen that Salvation or eternal Life cannot ever be inherited or earned or even deserved. And of course- the more impossible Salvation is to Man- that simply serves to make Grace all the more magnificent.

And so we have seen that in each and every case- eternal life or being saved or Salvation itself is wholly a Sovereign and Merciful and Gracious act of a kind and Good God to rescue unworthy sinners from the deserved Wrath of God and to *forcefully* and *violently impose* on these elected sinners- eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to believe so that by Sovereignly changing the nature of the person- these blessed people will now automatically love God and desire to serve God and enjoy God forever.

And I took the time to go over all that with you so that you will know the Truth. But this lawyer standing before Jesus couldn't care less about any of this.

But even though his heart is not sincere- he's in real trouble here. Because it is clearly evident to everybody around that he already knew the answer to his question, "**What shall I do to inherit eternal life?**" before he ever asked Jesus. And so it is also clear that his motive for asking the question was something other than what it initially seemed.

And so now everyone in this huge crowd can see two things:

- ✓ Jesus is in perfect accord with the Old Testament Scriptures
- ✓ This lawyer is an insincere, hypocritical man who is guilty of the injustice of deceit.

So what is this man going to do? Will he run away in shame like the Apostle Peter and weep bitterly over his sin and repent? Or will he- with ten million other human beings before and after him- seek to save face or, as Luke puts it, "**to justify himself**"? In **Luke 10:29**- we see the sad answer:

But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

So the basis on which this lawyer seeks to justify the fact that he does not love God or people and therefore does not possess eternal life- comes from the ancient error of the meaning of the word, "**neighbor**".

So in the 1st Century in Israel with the Jews- there was such a serious misunderstanding of God's Demand behind this question that Jesus will not answer it directly and goes through an eight verse Parable to answer it. So where did this misunderstanding come from?

Now what we have to understand, dear friends, is that the main reason that people do not understand the Bible and the things of God is threefold:

- A. They do not *will* to understand
- B. They do not have the *power* or the *ability* to understand because they *will not* understand
- C. God hides it from them by not Sovereignly opening their eyes and revealing it to them

Now all three of these things are absolutely True and they are absolute taught in the Bible and they have always been in the Bible. But this Truth about Man's inherent unwillingness to love and serve God and his Moral Inability to do so is absolutely insulting to the pride and the dignity and the arrogance of fallen Man- who really doesn't think he is fallen at all and in fact he actually thinks he is just fine. In fact- fallen Man in his lost condition not only doesn't think he is fallen and therefore he doesn't need a Savior- he actually thinks he is God.

And as we have studied over the last two weeks- lost and fallen Man *cannot* seek after God; he *cannot* love and serve and enjoy God because of the "Moral Inability" that he has inherited from the Fall that will not allow him to *desire* to love and serve and enjoy God.

So while it is absolutely true that no human being can "inherit" eternal life- we can and we do inherit the fallen and sinful and rebellious nature of Adam from the Fall from one generation to the next through the seed of the father. This is called, "The Doctrine of Original Sin".

And so God and the things of God are as foreign and as strange and as uninteresting and as distant to us in our lost state as is Mars. Hear the Word of the Lord about this issue:

Luke 10:21

At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

Romans 8:6-8

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,

8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

1Corinthians 2:14

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

So the primary reason why people either misunderstand or do not know Christ's Word is not because of innocent intellectual slips or a lack of information but rather because of a deep and profound and a radical *unwillingness* on their part to submit to the Demands of God. Recently the militant atheist, Dr. Richard Dawkins said that he really had no problem with a Creator or an intelligent Designer- he just had a problem with a "God" who placed restrictions on our behavior and imposed laws on us.

So in other words- all this talk of Creation being at odds with science is really not Dr. Dawkins' problem- he rejects the existence of God based on the fact that he just simply doesn't like what God said.

So the disposition of a heart which desires to determine its own affairs, to maintain its own pride, and secure esteem and glory from men for itself will inevitably twist the Words of Jesus to support its own self-esteem. So we can rightly conclude that the evil of the human heart regularly precedes and gives rise to most of the intellectual misunderstandings and abuses of Scripture.

When Jesus told the lawyer that the answer to his question was right- the lawyer's wickedness and hypocrisy and deceit was exposed. And at this threat to his reputation and his own self-regard- the sin of

self-justification sprang up- and this internal lust to be highly regarded took the sweet and pure Commandment of God and deceived the lawyer into thinking that the problem was not his own proud unwillingness to repent and obey- but was really the ambiguity of the word, "**neighbor**." In other words- this man rejected eternal life because he wanted to quibble over the definition of a word.

So his question, "*Who is my neighbor?*" was not a sincere desire to learn and to be taught so he could joyfully and humbly obey- it was nothing more than a face-saving device.

Another way of phrasing this man's question would be "*Teacher, whom do I not have to love? Which groups in our society may I exclude from this Commandment to 'love my neighbor'? Surely the Romans would be excluded because they are the oppressors of God's chosen people, and surely their despicable lackeys- the tax collectors, and those dirty half-breed Samaritans— surely these groups would not be included in the term, 'neighbor'. So please tell me just who my neighbor is, Teacher, so that as I examine the various candidates for my self-righteous, egotistical and arrogant love, I will be sure to be found faithful.*"

Jesus would have nothing to do with that kind of question. Instead of answering it outright—which was really impossible—Jesus tells a Parable- what we call today- "The Parable of the Good Samaritan".

And this is a very familiar story to us- perhaps too familiar- because just maybe we have heard it so many times in our lives that we really haven't heard it at all. So let's go over very carefully what Jesus is really saying here in "The Parable of the Good Samaritan". So let's look again at **Luke 10:30-37** together:

30 Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.

31 "And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion,

34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on *them*; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

35 "On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.'

36 "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' *hands*?"

37 And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

Now the main point of Jesus' Parable here was to show that the lawyer's face-saving, self-justifying maneuver which asked for a definition of "**neighbor**" was simply a skirting of the *real* issue- which was the kind of person this lawyer was himself.

What we have to understand is that this lawyer's problem was not that he didn't understand the definition of the word, "**neighbor**". No, his problem- and the problem of every man, woman and child on earth right now and throughout all time- is that the heart that possesses eternal life is the kind of heart that has been so utterly transformed by the finished Work of Christ and the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of spotless Righteousness that it also *will not* and *cannot*- in the language of verse 32- "**pass by on the other side**".

In other words- a truly regenerate heart- a heart that has been touched and changed by Jesus Christ so that it now loves God- *cannot* and *will not* stand idly by while the mind self-righteously examines a suffering candidate to see if he fits the definition of "neighbor". Saved people extend mercy to the same degree that mercy has been extended to them.

If the lawyer had understood the Intention of God's Command- he would have seen how irrelevant his question about his neighbor really was. God's Intention in Salvation is to Call into being a loving, compassionate, merciful man- whose heart summons him irresistibly into action when there is suffering within his reach; a man who will gladly interrupt his schedule and tolerate inconvenience and risk some embarrassment and use up his own oil and wine and part with his own money for the sake of a stranger.

“Be that kind of person”, Jesus says, “and you will inherit eternal life.” Another way of saying this same thing is when Jesus said in **Matthew 5:7**

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Another way of saying this is that truly saved people- who have been mercifully *granted* the ability to see and hear and believe and those who have been *gifted* with the gift of saving faith and who have been *given* both the will and the power to love and serve and enjoy God, those who have had the old adamic nature replaced with a new divine nature, those who are regenerate, those who are redeemed, those who are saved, those who are born again- are also those who will be like this.

Now even though we look at this issue today as being fundamental Christianity- this was radical doctrine when Jesus first spoke it. The average Jew of the first Century was indoctrinated with wicked and evil concepts that not only violated the New Covenant- but also violated both the letter and spirit of the old Covenant as well.

For example- it was drilled into a Jew from his youth that the only people you treat kindly were other Jews- even though there are many, many examples all throughout the Old Testament where God went to great lengths to show Kindness and Mercy to Gentiles. But to the Jew of the 1st Century - a Gentile was a spiritual “dog”- a pagan idol worshipper who was not to be communicated with.

The old Rabbinical writings of this time period reveal great hostility toward all non- Jewish people- so much so- that a Jew was not to speak or even look at either a Gentile- or a woman for that matter- while walking down the street. To the Jew- any hardship or injustice or suffering that came upon a Gentile was God’s deserved Wrath against the pagan and the best thing a Jew could do was get out of the way and let God judge him.

Compare that with what the Christian Church has brought forth on the world over the last 2,000 years as they have established hospitals and homes for the blind and the mentally weak and many other acts of mercy toward all of humanity- saved and unsaved.

Sadly, many people today actually believe that it was Government that initiated these things. But that simply isn’t true. It was the Church that has a glorious history of opening its arms to the very

people who despise its teachings because the cornerstone of the Church is that God's Love ultimate prevails over Man's hatred.

But back then- the idea that any self-respecting Jew would come to the aid of a Gentile in distress would be unthinkable. The social and religious pressure against such an individual would be more than he could bear. He would be ostracized in his local synagogue and shunned in the market place for even speaking to a Gentile- much less helping him.

So when Jesus spoke about "Loving your enemies" and "Turning the other cheek"- things we find so wonderful as believing Christians today- the Jew of that day considered this kind of talk to be jibberish and foolishness and made Jesus to be very unattractive to them.

The Truth of the matter is that the average Jew of the 1st Century didn't want to love his enemies- he wanted them to die. He didn't want to turn the other cheek- he wanted God to damn the pagans.

So that is the way the Command, "Love your neighbor as yourself," was misunderstood back in Jesus' day and how Jesus responded to it.

But now we need to turn to the modern misunderstanding of this very same concept popularized by the modern cult of self-esteem. And the difference between the two is that the old error of the 1st Century Jew hinged on the word "**neighbor**" while the modern error hinges on the phrase "**as yourself**."

What we have to try to grasp is that the interpretation of the Divine Command, "**Love your neighbor as yourself**," has two assumptions about the phrase, "...as yourself."

1. The phrase "**as yourself**" is wrongly *assumed* to be a secondary Command rather than a Statement. In other words- it is wrongly assumed and wrongly taught in many, many quarters of the modern Church that Jesus is calling people to love themselves first so that they can then love others to the same degree that they love themselves.
2. This "self-love" which Jesus is demanding here is wrongly *assumed* to be equivalent to the modern notions of "self-esteem", "self-acceptance", and having a positive "self-image" or some other psychologically oriented concept.

And the proponents of this interpretation put these two assumptions together like this:

Not everybody has high self-esteem. Therefore, the *first* task in obedience to Jesus' Command here is to put forth effort to acquire and maintain a healthy high self-esteem about yourself so that you can then fulfill the second half of the Command, to love others as you now love yourself.

But is this what Jesus was really saying in the Commandment, "**Love your neighbor as yourself**"? No it was not. But these two assumptions hang together and they depend on each other- so let us look at them together to see if the Biblical Text bears them out.

Now first of all- using the Greek grammar of the Biblical Text here- it is linguistically *impossible* to think about the phrase "**as yourself**" as being a secondary Command with any degree of honesty. You simply cannot get there from here- without just making it up. And when you supply the necessary verb- the Commandment clearly reads in the original Greek language:

"You shall love your neighbor as you in fact *already* love yourself."

In other words, Jesus is *not* teaching and He is *not* calling for any effort here to build up or to acquire "self-love". He is *assuming* that it already exists. In other words- Jesus is agreeing with all the Biblical Truth that we have discovered in the last two weeks that while lost and fallen Man *does not* and *cannot* love God or the things of God- they *do* love self and they *do* love sin (darkness) as a natural and normal function of their depraved nature.

So Jesus did *not* say and He did *not* believe that there could be any human on earth who didn't already love himself. This was, for Jesus, a given with all of humanity. In other words- this is what all lost people do- we love self and we love darkness- automatically- without being taught and without acquiring the ability from anyone or anything at some later point in our lives.

As we have already discovered- we love self and sin *naturally* and *normally*- precisely because the Original Sin of Adam radically and negatively ruined our natures. And this theme runs through all of Scripture. For example- the Apostle Paul taught how normal and how

natural and how prevalent it is for people to love themselves in **Ephesians 5:29** when he said

for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it...

So fish swim and birds fly and people love themselves. And they love themselves and they love sin to the *exclusion* of loving God or the things of God. And this is what Theologians call, “Total Depravity” or “Radical Ruination”.

Now when the Christian Church teaches that the Spiritual Death of Fallen Man is “Total” we do *not* mean that everybody is as bad as they *could* be. No, the manifestation of the “deadness” of Man’s soul differs from one person to the next. While we are ruined from making ourselves “good”- we can always be worse than we are.

What we *do* mean by using the word, “Total” to describe Fallen Man’s Spiritual Death is that every area of the nature and the being of Adam (and all those who came after him) is now utterly “dead” to both the “Person” and the “Will” of God. Adam’s loving fellowship with God is completely broken and he is alienated from the Life of God and as a “dead man” Adam is now both *unable* and *unwilling* to love or serve God. As a result of Adam’s Sin- all of the characteristics and qualities that God had Sovereignly infused into Adam at his creation- that he enjoyed and possessed and used- have now been *radically* and *negatively* ruined. All of them- including:

- his will
- his desires
- his loves
- his longings
- his plans
- his thoughts
- his joy
- his actions

So every area of Man’s existence is now *completely* fallen, *completely* sinful, and *completely* dead. Fallen Man has no spiritual life.

There is no area of Man's "being" that has remained unaffected by The Fall and there now exists within Man the complete absence of any "good", "righteousness", or "purity". Fallen Man is now "all evil" - all the time.

Genesis 6:5

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

This spiritual "deadness" in Man is "total" in five main expressions:

1. Spiritual Death is *Total* in that it Affects Every Human
2. Our Rebellion and Hardness Against God is *Total*
3. In His Fallen Condition- *Everything* that Man Does is Sin
4. Man's *Inability* to Submit to God and Do "Good" is *Total*
5. Our Rebellion is *Totally* Deserving of Eternal Damnation

1. Spiritual Death is Total in that it Affects Every Human

1Kings 8:46b

... there is no man who does not sin...

Psalms 143:2

**And do not enter into judgment with Your servant,
For in Your sight no man living is righteous.**

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

1John 1:8&10

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

2. Our Rebellion and Hardness Against God is Total (Absolute/Complete)

Romans 3:9-18

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

10 as it is written,

"THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

11 *THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,
THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;*

12 *ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME
USELESS;*

*THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,
THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."*

13 *"THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,
WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,"
"THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS";*

14 *"WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS";*

15 *"THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,*

16 *DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,*

17 *AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN."*

18 *"THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."*

John 3:19-21

19 *"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.*

20 *"For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.*

21 *"But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."*

Apart from the Sovereign Grace of God- Fallen Man has no delight in the Holiness of God and possesses no glad submission to the Sovereign Authority of God.

3. In His Fallen Condition- Everything that Man Does is Sin

Romans 7:18

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not.

Romans 14:23b

... whatever is not from faith is sin.

Hebrews 11:6-7

And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

4. Man's Inability to Submit to God and Do "Good" is Total

John 3:5-7

5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

Romans 6:17&18

17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,

18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Romans 8:5-9

5 For those who are according to the flesh (lost people) set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit (saved people), the things of the Spirit.

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,

8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

Ephesians 2:1-5

1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

5. Our Rebellion is Totally Deserving of Eternal Damnation

Ezekiel 7:3-4

Now the end is upon you, and I will send My anger against you; I will judge you according to your ways and bring all your abominations upon you.

Romans 1:32

and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Ephesians 2:3

Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

And just as a physically dead man is utterly unresponsive to any natural stimuli- so too- the spiritually dead Man is now *absolutely unable* to respond to God or the things of God. So *spiritually* speaking- Man is stone, cold, dead.

And so ultimately- Man's greatest need is not money, power, education, opportunity, earthly possessions, love, companionship, or even family- but what Man lacks the most and what Man needs the most is- "life". Until Man can live again- until he can be spiritually reborn- nothing else will happen.

John 1:12&13

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,

13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 3:3-8

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "**Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**"

4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"

5 Jesus answered, "**Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**"

6 "**That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**"

7 "**Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'**"

And the irony is that the very thing which Man is so utterly lacking and what Man needs the most is the very thing that Man *cannot* provide for himself. Dead people *cannot* provide Spiritual Life for themselves. Dead people cannot even have the capacity to know that they *need* Life- much less actually provide that Life.

Therefore any Spiritual Life, any Spiritual Stimuli, any Spiritual Action which will provide or initiate or produce the needed Life for a spiritually dead man must come *externally*- from *outside* the one who is dead- precisely because- by definition- within the dead- there is no Life.

So theologically or spiritually speaking- unless and until God Sovereignly and Graciously and Mercifully initiates, provides, and produces new Life inside the dead fallen and sinful Man- *no one* will ever:

- ✓ Have the cognizant knowledge that he is spiritually dead
- ✓ Awaken to his *need* for new Life
- ✓ Believe that the new Life is found in Jesus
- ✓ Voluntarily seek or desire or choose to obtain that Life

Dead people cannot know anything, they cannot desire anything, and they cannot initiate any action or choice whatsoever. So a very

important part of understanding the radical and negative impact that The Fall had on Mankind from a Biblical standpoint is to first know that The Fall caused Man to be spiritually dead.

- Not spiritually *sick*- but spiritually dead
- Not merely *impaired*- but dead
- Not simply *hindered*- but dead
- Not just *uninformed*- but dead
- Not only *separated*- but dead
- Not just *sinful* and *evil*- but dead

“Spiritual death” means that Man no longer has any “Spiritual Life” in him. So “Spiritual Death is the absence of any “Spiritual Life”. So as a result of The Fall- Man no longer has the abilities or the attributes of someone who is spiritually “alive”. Therefore he *will not* love and serve God because he has no desire or *ability* to do so- he is spiritually dead.

So the dilemma with true Biblical Salvation is that unless and until Man repents, believes the Gospel, and trusts in the finished Work of Jesus Christ- he cannot receive Spiritual Life and be saved. But if Man is now spiritually dead- how does he do that? How do dead people hear the Gospel? How do dead people believe the Gospel to be true? How can a dead Man choose to repent? How do dead people voluntarily choose to exercise their will and trust in the finished Work of Jesus Christ? Dead people are both *unable* and *unwilling* to do *anything*.

So now we can see that Salvation is much more profound than a simple “choice” made voluntarily by fallen Man. Because of the deadness of his mind and heart and soul- lost and unsaved and fallen Man is unable and unwilling to ever make such a choice. So for anyone in this spiritual condition- Salvation is a gracious and Sovereign Act of God.

If Man is as fallen as the Bible teaches that he is- then absent that Sovereign and Gracious Act of God to powerfully and supernaturally overcome the inherent deadness of Man’s soul- nobody would ever hear and understand the Gospel, nobody would ever believe the Gospel, nobody would ever be convicted of sin, nobody would repent, nobody would ever trust in the finished Work of Christ, and nobody would be saved.

So I hope you can see that being Fallen is much worse than simply we now engage in sin. Being Fallen is a “state of being” in which all of Mankind now possess no Spiritual Life. So the real problem with this lawyer here in **Luke 10** is that he doesn’t have any spiritual life.

Spiritual Death is Universal

Ephesians 4:17-20

17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

Now this Passage teaches that the normal and natural condition of all Mankind since The Fall is that we are now:

- ✓ Mentally futile
- ✓ Darkened in our understanding
- ✓ Excluded from the life of God
- ✓ Ignorant
- ✓ Hard Hearted
- ✓ Callous
- ✓ Sensual
- ✓ Impure
- ✓ Greedy

Let’s examine this passage closely:

Ephesians 4:17&18a

17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

18 being darkened in their understanding...

Notice first that this passage addresses “**Gentiles**” which under the Old Covenant referred to non- Jews. But as the completed Revelation of

God came through the New Testament- the term, “**Gentiles**” took on a more *spiritual* connotation to describe “unbelievers” or those who are outside the Covenant of God. In other words it was used to describe lost and unsaved people. So this passage refers to the lost and unsaved people of the world- both Jews and Gentiles.

The Apostle Paul teaches here that while the mind of spiritually dead people may be able to accomplish great things in Science, Architecture, Medicine, etc.- nevertheless- the fallen mind is “**futile**” and the understanding of lost people is “**darkened**”. So lost and unsaved people are categorically devoid of Truth and their minds are filled with many sinful lusts, vanities, false beliefs, and contradictions.

And when these fallen people desire to be “religious” or “spiritual” by and through their own fallen capabilities- outside of true Salvation through Jesus Christ- the end is always ridiculous and destructive, it *always* brings forth false religions and cults and inane human philosophies, and these efforts *never* lead *anyone* to Truth and Salvation.

Ephesians 4:18b

... excluded from the life of God...

Before The Fall- Adam enjoyed perfect and unhindered fellowship with His Maker. Adam had a close and a loving relationship with God. After Adam chose sin over God and fell- God withdrew His Favor and not only expelled Man from the Garden- but expelled Man from God’s Own Life giving Presence. This state of being whereby humans are *alienated* from the Life of God extends to every single human born after The Fall. Man is now *incapable* of obtaining Spiritual Life unless and until God Sovereignly and graciously rescues him.

Ephesians 4:18c

... because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

It is very important that we understand that the “**ignorance**” Paul teaches here that all fallen people have- is the result of the “**hardness of their heart**”. So this ignorance is *self-imposed* and it is sustained by Man’s willful and ongoing rebellion.

Fallen Man is now naturally and normally hostile to God and the things of God and has no desire to know Him or His Will. This **“ignorance”** of Man is the result of fallen individuals *voluntarily* closing their minds and hearts and eyes and *refusing* to consider God- thus Man is fully complicit in this **“ignorance”**.

Ephesians 4:19

and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

The result of unsaved people continuing to willfully refuse to see and obey God is that this spiritual death within them deepens and darkens even more every day until fallen Man becomes completely **“callous”** to all spiritual Truth and Virtue. Thus Man naturally falls even further into a *counterfeit* spirituality and a *false* salvation which involves **“sensuality”** (the manifestation of the five natural senses rather than the Spirit) which in turn works **“every kind of impurity with greediness”**.

In this dark and fallen state- no human would/could ever voluntarily turn to the Lord for Salvation unless and until God would Sovereignly intervene to rescue fallen Man.

So while lost people are capable of laughing and raising children and building bridges and experience human love and even producing humanly “noble” and “honorable” deeds- they cannot (in their dark and fallen condition) ever in any capacity desire or carry out a move toward God or a search for Truth without the Sovereign Power of God the Holy Spirit enabling and empowering them.

So now we know a little more about what it means to be fallen and why this lawyer was so wrong about his concept of eternal life. And we also see just how impossible Salvation is to inherit or earn or deserve by and through the acts of sinful human beings. And that serves to show us just how amazing and magnificent God’s Grace really is. And now next week- Lord willing- we will examine this amazing parable of “The Good Samaritan” and see what the Lord says there.

Let’s pray.