

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

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

Chapter 10- Luke 10:29-37

203- Who is My Neighbor?- Part 2

May 26, 2013

Luke 10:29-37

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.**"

To the Glory of God

Recently I heard a Pastor of a very large and prestigious Church in another state preach about this Parable that Brother Andy just read to us. And this man said two things that stood out:

- The Fall of Adam was nothing more than a huge misunderstanding
- To fulfill the requirements of this Parable- we need to spend time with the beggars that we see at the red lights and take some time to talk to them and get their names before we drive off

Now I will probably never have a church as large as this man and I will probably never be known as a prestigious pastor- but I hope you know that this sermon today will *not* be along those lines.

Now we are right in the middle of examining a very familiar Parable of Jesus- “The Parable of the Good Samaritan”. And there are two major aspects of this Parable that stand out:

- ✓ Who is my “Neighbor”?
- ✓ How do I manifest love to my “Neighbor”?

Now I want to try to tackle the second one first and then go back to the first one- because I really do not believe that most people today understand the word, “Love” very well. You see- we live in a time when the word, “love” can mean anything from enjoying macaroni and cheese to rooting for a favorite football team to how you feel about a spouse; a nation or even God.

So the word, “love” is way overused in our culture and therefore it has lost its truest meaning. For example- a man says that he “loves” a woman when he uses her for his own sexual gratification and treats her with disrespect. But that isn’t love- it is self-centered abuse. So when did self-centered abuse become equal with love?

Conversely people say that they love God when they live in open and blatant rebellion to clear and repeated Commands of Scripture with no remorse and no conviction- even when confronted by kind and caring people. And that isn’t love either- it celestial high treason against God. So when did rebellion against God become equal with love?

So I think that a short primer on the best concept of love from Scripture is needed. Now in the Bible- there are basically four kinds of love described:

1. God’s Love
2. Man’s love for God

3. Man's love for people
4. Man's love for things

And all four of those loves are expressed in both the Old and New Testaments. And so I would like to go over this with you.

Now as we have discussed over the last several weeks- Man's love for God is special; it is unique; it is rare; it is not normal or natural. For any human being to actually love God consists of that person operating counter-intuitively against the normal and natural flow of his fallen nature and the desires of his unredeemed flesh. Therefore Man's love for God is a gift; it is a miracle. Man's love for God is:

- A. Something that must first be initiated by God
- B. Something that grows by virtue of both the Will of God and the Power of the Holy Spirit

Now as we have discovered- God's Love toward Man is not like that at all. God's Love is constant- it does *not* grow- God's Love toward Man was full and complete from before the foundation of the world when God willfully chose to "set it on" Man. And that of course is the fullest definition of the word, "foreknowledge".

Sadly, many people today take the word, "foreknowledge" and they break it down into two words:

- Fore- meaning first or before
- Knowledge- meaning to know

... and they come to the shallow conclusion that when God foreknew someone- He simply "knew ahead of time" something about them. But in reality- when you dig deeper into both the Hebrew and Greek- the words that were translated into English as: "foreknowledge" means more than that God simply *knew* before- but that:

God *loved* before

So there was a moment- way before they were ever born and way before God ever created the Universe- that the Triune Godhead of God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit decided to *set His*

Love on certain elected individuals- based on nothing that they did or did not do and the finality of that Love would be that- at great Cost to Himself- God would purchase their souls so that all throughout the eons of eternity these people would have the privilege of:

Knowing and loving and enjoying God forever

And all that effort is called, “God’s Love”. So that is a summary of God’s Love and Man’s love for God. But the other two kinds of love are human love that is directed from person to person that this Parable of the Good Samaritan talks about here and love that is directed from a person to things. And when directed toward things- love means: *enjoying or taking pleasure in those things*.

But we must understand that love towards other people is much more complex than that. You see, loving other people *can* mean that we simply enjoy the other person and that we take pleasure in their company and in their personalities and looks and achievements, etc. But there is *another* aspect of interpersonal love that is very important in the Bible. There is the aspect of love for people who are *not* attractive and who are *not* virtuous and who are *not* productive- which is what Jesus was talking about in this Passage.

And in this case- “love” is not a delight in what a person already is- but a deeply felt commitment to helping them be what they can be or what they ought to be. And so by definition- this kind of love demands time and attention and labor.

And this is the kind of love where there is great misunderstandings and powerful disagreements and where there is not always the desired results and where there may not even be any gratefulness for the effort- which is why this kind of love is so rare. Yet what is amazing is that Man’s love for things and both dimensions of Man’s love for people are richly illustrated in the Bible.

But it is my contention this morning that we *cannot* and we *should not* get our best idea of how we are to love from secular movies or worldly songs or even other human examples- but that we should look to Scripture. And it is also my contention that in order to fully comprehend the three kinds of love that Man has- so we can fully understand this Parable- we need to first understand the one single kind of Love that God has.

Now right here in this Passage that Brother Andy just read to us- Jesus agreed with and said that the greatest Commandment of all was,

Luke 10:27b

... 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 the second Commandment was,

Matthew 22:39

Love your neighbor as yourself

And then He said in **Matthew 22:40:**

On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets

... meaning that these two Statements are the entire Counsel of God. Therefore if a person understood and obeyed these two Commandments- he would understand and fulfill everything God wanted to reveal to Man and he would rightfully inherit eternal life.

Of course- as we have discovered- it is precisely because we are all sinners and are fallen that no human being born of woman has either the desire or the power to love God like this or to love people like this either. And so as much as we might try; as hard as we might push to obey and to love and to do good- we fail to love God perfectly and continuously and we love others only to the extent it is convenient or beneficial.

And of course that leaves all of us- rich or poor; educated or uneducated; cultured or uncultured; man or woman; old or young as nothing more than a transgressor of the law- a sinner- who is in need of a Savior Who *was* sinless and Who *did* love God and people like this; a Savior Who perfectly and continuously obeyed the Law in thought, word, and deed 24 hours every day and seven days every week- to forgive us and impute to us His very own spotless Righteousness.

So even though many people look at the OT as being just a bunch of rules and rituals- everything in the Old Testament- when properly

understood- aims to transform men and women into people who fervently love God and their neighbor. So let's examine first:

God's Love from the Old Testament

Now you can tell what a person loves by what he devotes himself to most passionately. What a person values most is reflected in his actions and his motivations. And it is plain throughout the Old Testament that God's highest Value and His greatest Love- is His Own Name; His Own Reputation; His Own Glory.

So as strange as it sounds to us who live in the 21st Century who are obsessed with self- and the development and the fulfillment of self- God's *highest* Love is reserved solely for Himself- and not us. God loves God better and more fully than He loves anything or anyone else. And what we have to try to grasp is that it is correct and proper for the ultimate focus of God's Love to be Himself and not us.

In other words- it is true that God loved us and so He saved us. That is a true statement- but you cannot stop there. You must then finish the thought and say that God loved us and so He saved us so that by saving us- we would know and love and enjoy God forever. So ultimately God's Love for us is tied in with His devoted Love for Himself and His Own Glory.

If God loved us as an end to itself- then the focus of God's Love would be on us and not Himself and that would make God to be an idolater and He would then cease to be God. But because the ultimate focus of God's Love is the Glory of His Own Name- then God is free to love us- to that end.

In other words- God is the most glorious and most beautiful and most valuable and the most important Being in the Universe. And nobody knows that better than God knows it. And so the best thing that God can give to us is not good health or a new car or a new wife or lots of money or even good health- but the best thing that God can give to us is- Himself.

But sin has separated us from God and so in order for God to give us Himself- He must first condescend as a Man and take on flesh and live a sinless life-perfectly fulfilling the Law and then die a horribly brutal death to satisfy the Justice of God against our sin and rise again

to seal the victory over hell, death, and the grave. And all of this is called, “God’s Love”.

But because we are fallen and do not want God and cannot obtain God by and through any act of our own volition- even after God has done all this- God must forcefully *impose* Himself unto us in a Sovereign Act to change us so completely that we now love God and the things of God and have the ability to serve Him. And all of that is called, “Grace”.

And in that transformed state- we are now able and willing to know and love and enjoy God forever. And so that is why I tell you that the ultimate focus of God’s Love is not us- but Himself.

Now as you read and study the Bible closely- you begin to see an amazing connection between God’s Love and God’s Glory. The Old Testament is filled with Verses and Passages that display the great Passion that the God of the Bible has for His Own Glory- which is the underlying reason behind all of God's Actions- including Salvation and Creation. And this great Passion is expressed primarily in three statements or phrases found throughout the Scriptures:

- ✓ For My Glory
- ✓ For My Name's Sake
- ✓ So they will know that there is none like Me in all the earth

And as you continue to study the Holy Scriptures- you see how these sacred pages reveal how God *manifests* His Absolute Sovereignty throughout His Creation on a practical level:

- ✓ Through the *Ordering* and *Governing* of His Creation
- ✓ By *Imposing* Morality On Mankind
- ✓ In the *Distribution* of His Mercy

So for example- from the very beginning of Israel’s history to the end of the Old Testament era- God was moved and motivated by this great Love that He has for Himself and the Passion that God has to be known and feared and loved and adored and worshipped.

For example- God said through the golden tongued prophet in **Isaiah 43:7** that He created the nation of Israel for one reason:

... for My glory,

And again God spoke of Israel this way in Isaiah 49:3:

Isaiah 49:3b

... You are My Servant, Israel, In Whom I will show My glory.

So when God delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt and preserved them in the wilderness for 40 years- it was because He was acting for His Own Name's Sake. Please turn with me to read **Ezekiel 20:9-14:**

9 "But I acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they *lived*, in whose sight I made Myself known to them by bringing them out of the land of Egypt.

10 "So I took them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness.

11 "I gave them My statutes and informed them of My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live.

12 "Also I gave them My sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them.

13 "But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness. They did not walk in My statutes and they rejected My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live; and My sabbaths they greatly profaned. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them in the wilderness, to annihilate them.

14 "But I acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, before whose sight I had brought them out.

When God drove out the other nations from the Promised Land of Canaan- according to **2Samuel 7:23**- He was **“making himself a name”**. And finally at the end of the Old Testament era- after Israel had been taken into captivity in Babylon- God plans to have Mercy and save His people and in **Ezekiel 36:22, 23, &32**- He said:

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.

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!"

So from these texts and hundreds more like them- we can see how much God loves His Own Glory and how deeply committed He is to preserving the Honor of His Name.

And what we have to grasp is that this is not evil or unseemly of God to do this. On the contrary- God's very Righteousness *depends* on Him maintaining a full allegiance to the infinite Value of His Own Glory. And this is seen in the parallel phrases of **Psalm 143:11**,

For the sake of Your name, O LORD , revive me. In Your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble.

God would cease to be Righteous if He ceased to love His Own Glory on which His people bank all their hope.

Now follow me on this. Since God delights so fully in His Glory- which is the summation and totality of all the particularities of His moral Perfections- it is to be expected that He delights in the *reflections* of His Glory throughout the Universe that He has created.

For example- according to **Psalm 11:7; Psalm 33:5; Psalm 37:28; Psalm 45:7; Psalm 99:4** and **Isaiah 61:8**- God loves Righteousness and Justice. And according to **Psalm 51:6**- God also “**desires truth in the innermost being**”.

But above all of this- God's Love for His Own Glory involves Him in an eternal Commitment to the people of Israel. The reason this is so is that an essential aspect of God's Glory is His Sovereign Freedom in choosing to bless the undeserving. So it isn't because the Jews are easy to work with that he loves them or because they are tender and loving or because they are faithful and dependable. No God loves those He has chosen or the glory of His Own Name- even when they do not love Him or serve Him.

So having freely chosen to establish a Covenant with Israel- God glorifies Himself in maintaining a loving Commitment to this people.

The relationship between God's love and his election of Israel is seen in the following texts:

1. In **Exodus 33**- when Moses wanted to see God's Glory- God responded that He would proclaim His glorious Name to Moses. So an essential aspect of God's Name and His Identity was given in the phrase found at the end of verse 19:

Exodus 33:19b

... I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.

In other words, God's Sovereign Freedom in dispensing Mercy on whomever He pleases is integral to His very Being as God. It is part of His Name; It is part of Who God is; It is part of His Glory. It is the Love of God. And it is important for us to grasp this Self-identification of God because it is the very basis of the Covenant that He established with Israel on Mount Sinai.

So God's Love for Israel is *not* some dutiful Divine Response to a Covenant but rather, the Covenant is a Free and Sovereign Expression of Divine Mercy or Love on underserving sinners.

2. We read in **Exodus 34:6&7** how God identified Himself more fully before He reconfirms the Covenant:

6 Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."

So the entire Mosaic Covenant from where we get the two Commands to love God and love our neighbor was rooted in God's free and gracious Love for the Glory of His Own Name. So therefore- it is wrong to say that the Mosaic Law is any more contrary to Grace and Faith than are the various Commands found in the New Testament.

The Mosaic Covenant demanded a lifestyle that was consistent with the merciful Covenant that God had established- but it also provided forgiveness for sins and thus did not put a man under a curse for a single failure.

The relationship which God established with Israel and the Love He had for her was likened to that between a husband and a wife. And this is why Israel's later idolatry is sometimes called adultery- because she goes after other gods.

But in spite of Israel's *repeated* unfaithfulness to God- He declares in **Jeremiah 31:3**:

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.

So God's Love *required* God to forcefully draw them so that they would know Him and love Him and enjoy Him forever.

At other times, God's Love to His people is likened to a father for a son or a mother to her child. For example God said in **Jeremiah 31:9**-

With weeping they will come, And by supplication I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters, On a straight path in which they will not stumble; For I am a father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn.

... and then God said in **Isaiah 49:15**

Can a woman forget her nursing child And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you.

However, the Love of God for Israel did not exclude severe Judgment upon Israel when it lapsed into unbelief. The destruction of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria in 722 B.C. and the captivity of the Southern Kingdom in Babylon in the years following 586 B.C. show that God would not tolerate the unfaithfulness of His people. **Proverbs 3:12** says:

For whom the LORD loves He reprove, Even as a father *corrects* the son in whom he delights.

Now God's Relationship to Israel as a nation did not mean that He had no dealings with individuals nor did His treatment of the nation as a whole prevent Him from making distinctions among individuals. The Apostle Paul taught in **Romans 9:6-13** and **11:2-10** that already in the Old Testament **"not all Israel was Israel."**

In other words, the Promises of God's Love to Israel did not apply without distinction to all individual Jews- but only those who were elected to Salvation.

So clearly- God's Love is not directed equally toward all. In its full saving effect- the Love of God is enjoyed only by

...those who hope in his steadfast love.

Now this does not mean that God's Love is no longer free and unmerited. It is. Because on the one hand, the very disposition to fear God and obediently hope in Him is itself a Gift of God and on the other hand- the appeal of the saint who hopes in God is not to his own merit, but to God's faithfulness that He shows to the lowly and humble who have no strength and can only trust in His Mercy.

So the full enjoyment of God's Love is always conditional upon an attitude appropriate for receiving it- which is a humble reliance upon God's Mercy:

Psalms 37:5

Commit your way to the LORD , Trust also in Him, and He will do it.

Man's Love for God in the Old Testament

People tell me all the time that they love God and my only response is, *"That's great. But if you love God- then you will follow after God- not perfectly- but honestly"*. So another way to describe the stance which a person must assume in order to receive the fullness of God's loving Help is that the person must love God.

Psalms 145:20

The LORD keeps all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy.

Psalms 5:11

But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You.

Now these texts and others like them are simply an outworking in the life of the stipulations laid down in the Mosaic Covenant. God said to Moses in **Exodus 20:5b&6:**

5 ... I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

So since loving God was the first and all-embracing condition of the Covenant Promise- it became the first and great Commandment in the Law:

Deuteronomy 6:4&5

4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

So we have to understand that the love that Man has for God is not a service done for God so that we can earn His Benefits- and neither is it a “work” done for God to deserve His Mercy. No, our love for God is a glad response to the gift of Love that God first gave to us- as the Apostle John taught in **1John 4:19** when he said:

We love [God], because He first loved us.

Our love for God is an admiring acceptance of His Commitment to work for those who trust Him. So the Mosaic Covenant begins with a Declaration which holds great promise for Israel:

Exodus 20:2

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

So the Command for us to love God is a Command to delight in Him and to admire Him above all else and to be content with His Commitment to work mightily for His people.

So unlike God's Love for Man- Man's love for God is a *response* to what God has done and will do on our behalf. And in its best and highest expression- man's love for God eventually becomes the all-consuming Passion of our lives.

Man's Love for Man in the Old Testament

So if a person truly admires and worships God and finds fulfillment by taking refuge in His merciful Care- then his behavior toward his fellow man will reflect the Love of God.

Now it is true that initially when God said in **Leviticus 19:18**:

You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

... He was talking about another Jew. But then in that same Book and same Chapter- in **Leviticus 19:34**- God also said:

The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.

And it is important for us to know that the "love" commanded here relates to both outward deeds and inward attitudes.

Leviticus 19:17&18

17 You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him.

18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD .

Now we must acknowledge that to love your neighbor as yourself does *not* mean to have a positive self-image or high self-esteem. It means using the same zeal, and ingenuity and perseverance to pursue your neighbor's happiness as you do your own.

Now you may not want me to say this- but if love among men is to reflect God's Love- then it will have to include the love of our enemies, at least to some degree. For God's Love to Israel was free, unmerited and slow to anger- forgiving many sins that created enmity between Him and His people. And His Mercy extended beyond the bounds of Israel. Therefore, we find many, many instructions all throughout the OT to love our enemy.

But this "enemy-love" must be qualified in two ways:

1. In the Old Testament- God's Way of working in the world had a political dimension which it does not have today. The Jewish people were a distinct ethnic and political group and God was their Law-Giver, their King and their Warrior in a very direct way. Thus, for example, when God decided to punish the Canaanites for their idolatry He used the Jews to drive them out. This obedient act by Israel cannot be called "love for their enemies"- even though it was correct. We should probably think of such events as very unique in redemptive history in which God uses His people to execute *His* Vengeance on a wicked nation. Such instances should *never* be used today to justify personal vindictiveness or so-called "holy wars" since God's Purposes in the world today are not accomplished through an ethnic political group on par with Israel in the Old Testament.
2. The other qualification of this enemy-love is required by the Psalms in which the psalmist declares his hatred for men who openly and repeatedly defy God. The psalmist's hate is based on their defiance against God and is conceived as virtuous alignment with God's Own Hatred of unrepentant evildoers. But as strange as it may seem- this hate does not necessarily result in vengeance. The psalmist leaves that in God's Hands and even treats these hated ones kindly.

So there may be two ways to understand this hate or this absence of love from the OT. On the one hand, it could sometimes represent a strong opposition toward the wickedness that seeks the destruction of another person. That would be called, "Righteous Indignation".

But on the other hand, where there is a will for destruction expressed in OT Scripture- it may represent the God-given certainty that that particular evil person is beyond repentance with no hope of Salvation and therefore is under the just Sentence of God expressed by the psalmist.

Man's Love for Things in the Old Testament

Now there are a few instances in the Old Testament of simple, everyday love of things. For example- **Genesis 27:4** says that Isaac loved a certain meat. **2Chronicles 26:10** says that Uzziah loved the soil. **Psalms 34:12** says that many people love life.

But usually when love is not directed toward persons it is directed to virtues or vices. For the most part, this sort of love is simply an inevitable fruit of one's love for God or rebellion against God.

On the positive side, **Psalms 112:11** says that there is love for God's Commandments. **Psalms 119:97** says that there is love for God's Law. **Psalms 40:8** says that there is love for God's Will. **Psalms 119:140** says that there is love for God's Promise. And **Psalms 40:16** says that there is love for God's Salvation.

According to **Amos 5:15**- men are to love the good and hate the evil. According to **Zechariah 8:19**- men are to love truth and peace. **Micah 6:8** says that we are to love Mercy. And **Proverbs 4:6** says that we are to love Wisdom.

On the negative side, in **Micah 3:2** we find people loving evil. In **Psalms 4:2** we find people loving lying and false prophecy. In **Hosea 9:1** we find people loving idols. **Hosea 12:7** talks about people who love oppression. **Psalms 109:17** reveals people who love cursing. And in **Proverbs 20:12** there are people who love laziness. **Proverbs 1:22** shows us people who love foolishness. **Psalms 11:5** talks about people who love violence. And **Isaiah 1:23** talks about people who love bribery.

In short, the OT reveals that many people do what **Hosea 4:18** says and they

... dearly love shame.

... which according to **Proverbs 8:36** is the same thing as loving death.

So the sum of the matter is what King Solomon wrote in **Ecclesiastes 5:10**- that genuine satisfaction is not to be had in setting our affections on anything but God. And that is how the four kinds of love is manifested in the OT or under the Old Covenant.

And this is what this lawyer had in mind when he came to Jesus to trap Him. This man had been trained and schooled in this understanding all his life. And for some reason- this man thought that Jesus would either say or do something that would expose His God hating Law rebelling heart. But nothing could be further from the Truth.

Instead, Jesus asks this man what the law said about this subject and when the man correctly quoted the OT verses- Jesus agreed and basically told this man that the only thing he had to do to “inherit” eternal life was to love God perfectly and continuously in thought word and deed 24 hours every day and 7 days every week and to love his neighbor to the same extent and with the same degree of care and concern that he loved himself.

In other words- what Jesus was telling this man is that all he had to do to be saved was to be sinlessly perfect. That’s all. And if he did that- if he did love God perfectly and continuously and if he did love his neighbor as himself- he would be saved and spend all of eternity in God’s Presence.

Now hear this closely. The reason why this man could inherit eternal life if he loved God and people like this was because by doing this- this man would have developed his own personal righteousness through his obedience to the law to the point where he qualified as being “Righteous”.

And by obeying and not failing- he wouldn’t need any forgiveness. So this- in a nutshell is the very essence of Salvation. Salvation involves two parts:

- ✓ The Forgiveness of Sin- because the person who is trying to obey the law- fails.
- ✓ The Imputation of Righteousness- because simply being forgiven isn’t enough.

You see, in order for any human being to go to Heaven and stand in God’s Presence- he needs to be just as Righteous as God Himself is

Righteous. It isn't good enough to be a nice guy; it isn't good enough to have tried- but failed. It isn't good enough to have put forth effort. If the person is not just as Righteous as God Himself is Righteous- he cannot go to Heaven.

So this leaves us with an amazing problem. We need both forgiveness and Righteousness- precisely because we have failed to walk perfectly before God and have sinned and need to be forgiven and because we have sinned- we are no longer righteous- but we are un-righteous.

So we have two choices here:

- We can get up real early and stay up real late and work hard all day long to do and say and think and be exactly what the OT Law tells us to do and by perfectly and continuously loving God and other people- we can develop our own personal righteousness to the point where we reach the stage of spotless Righteousness
- We can fall on the Mercy of God to forgive us of our many sins and we can receive the unblemished Righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith.

So both of these problems were provided for by Jesus. Through His shed Blood- our sins are forgiven and through His sinless Life- the spotless Righteousness that He literally earned by loving God perfectly and continually and by loving others as Himself- is imputed or credited to us by the agency of faith alone.

And we obtain all of this glory by simply placing our faith and our trust and our confidence in the finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. So that is what is going on here with Jesus and this lawyer and so, Lord willing, I will get into the four kinds of love from the infinitely better perspective of the New Testament and the meaning of this parable next week.

Let's pray.