

Because God's Grace Extends to the Whole World, Christians May Not Remain Content While Much of the World Lies Half Dead in the Road

"What lies at the heart of the story [of the Good Samaritan] is the clash between two opposing views of what it means to be the people of God," Deacon Don Hughes said in his sermon Sunday.

"The Jews who wanted God to be the God of Israel only, used the law to define his neighbor," Deacon Don continued. "His neighbor was his Jewish neighbor—when it was convenient, of course. They took exception to Jesus' teaching that Israel's God is the God of Grace for the whole world.

"This point warrants our attention," he said, and then quoted Bishop N. T. Wright of Durham:

What is at stake here, then and now, is the question of whether we will use the God-given revelation of love and grace as a way of boosting our own sense of isolated security and purity, or whether we will see it as a call and challenge to extend that love and grace to the whole world. No church, no Christian, can remain



"Christ in the House of Martha and Mary", the subject of this Sunday's Gospel reading, is purported to be by Vermeer (1632-1675) and is displayed at the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh. The painting "appeared out of the blue" about 1900, and is likely an Italianate copy of a work by a minor Italian master, not Vermeer. It "can be considered spurious", says Web Gallery of Art, which copyrights this image.

content with easy definitions which allow us to watch most of the world lying half-dead in the road.

The religious lawyer who had asked Jesus what to do to inherit eternal life tried "to win a point," Deacon Don said, by then asking a definitional question, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus turned it to "a moral and ethical theme" and posed a situation which placed "compassion on one hand and personal safety on the other," said Deacon Don, quoting Martin Luther King as follows:

If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me? If I don't stop to help this man, what will happen to him?

"Love for our neighbor is an unselfish, loyal and benevolent concern for the good of someone else, from our closest associate to the suffering refugee and everyone in between," Deacon Don said. "Jesus makes no allowance for bias or prejudice in any form. Neighborliness knows no bounds and must (p.2→)

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Sundays

10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service

11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation

11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion

6:00-7:00 p.m., July 22 & 29: Unscripted evening prayer meeting

Thursdays: 5:30 p.m.: Evening Prayers. 6:00 p.m.: Singing & discussing hymns.

Readings, 7/22: Gen. 18:1-14; Ps. 15; Col. 1:21-29; Luke 10:38-42. **7/29:** Gen. 18:20-33; Ps. 138; Col. 2:6-15; Luke 11:1-13.

Prayer Emphases: El Salvador; Conservative Baptist Association; Eastmont Community Church, Wenatchee, WA, and the Rev. N. Dale Cook; Faith Christian Ministries; parishioners on Joretta Drive.

(Sermon, cont'd.) proceed from an attitude of spontaneity and self-forgetfulness. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer puts it, "Neighborliness is not a quality in other people; it is simply their claim on us. We have literally no time to sit down and ask ourselves whether so and so is our neighbor or not. We must get into action and obey; we must behave like a neighbor to him." Our Samaritan friend chose the way of dangerous selflessness and compassion. "Now let us go and do the same." "

C.S. Lewis on Christian Perfection: "(W)e must not be surprised if we are in for a rough time." When some of a Christian's bad habits have been corrected, he may expect things then to go smoothly, only to be disappointed when "illnesses, money troubles, new kinds of temptation" come along. Why now? "God is forcing him on, or up, to a higher level," toward what He wants us to be.