

4th Sunday after Trinity July 10th, 2022

Luke 10 25 – 37,

Teach us your ways O lord and we will walk in your truth

‘What is the right thing to do’?

Given the news this week and how things have unfolded this question is most relevant, but I am not going to examine the week’s news here this morning.

We all make decisions on how we view things and then decide what actions we take. Those actions are drawn upon from the lessons taught during our upbringing, on our Christian teachings from Sunday School, church and home from our life experiences and learning and then we come to a conclusion with our conscience and our own integrity. If you like we make decisions that make us *‘sit easy in our own skin’*.

In our story of The Good Samaritan

The lawyer wanted a comprehensive answer to his question of ‘who is my neighbour’ but Jesus responded with a story. A story we all know well.

It was not that the priest and Levite weren’t good men and didn’t offer charity to those they knew, it was the stranger that showed he could offer help and charity to a fellow human and an outsider at that. It is the model of practical charity. He saw the need; he felt the pity and he did something to remedy the situation.

The first step in love is to notice people, to pay attention to them. In doing this we recognise the existence and needs of people beyond ourselves. The next step is to feel with them. Compassion means to share feeling. The priest and the Levite saw the beaten victim but moved in the other direction because their perception of love and neighbourliness was confined to a very small minority of their own people. If we don’t engage with the feeling it doesn’t lead to practical action. The Samaritan acted with compassion and generosity and that name has ever since been associated with practical charity. The charity the Samaritans use the name and practice to its full effect.

It is amazing how many excuses we can find to avoid helping somebody in need. The answer to my opening Question is another question 'are we showing God's mercy to all and anyone who needs it'?

If we were asked to give examples in our world today of neighbourliness, we may draw on the examples from the recent pandemic. How we came together to help others that were vulnerable and isolated. Or just point to the amount given to our local foodbank or Caring hand in the Vale.

I will finish with a story:

God asked the angels where he would stay so that people might enjoy his presence. 'In the heavens reached by prayer which pierces the clouds' suggested the first angel.

'In distant shrines reached by dedicated pilgrims' said the second.

God thought that these suggestions might be beyond most people.

So, a third angel said 'Let them find you in the people they meet every day'

Brilliant said God, 'Let's do it'.

How can we love the God we cannot see, if we don't love the people whom we do see? Charity begins at home and with each of us individually. Amen

Dear Lord,
when life is difficult,
when we are confronted by dilemmas,
when we are not sure what the right thing to do is,
help us to think not so much of the rules and the like,
but of the people – people like us, people you love,
people who may need our love and care.

Amen.