

Luke 10:25-37 Good Samaritan
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Homily 153
De. 30:10-14, Col. 1:15-20

It is something very near to you, already in your mouths and in your hearts; is it only for you to carry it out."

So what is already in our mouths and in our hearts? Well if I told you that up front we would not need an 8-minute homily on it then would we. You say, "Would that be such a bad thing? Just give us the answer so we can get on with Mass." But the homily is part of the Eucharistic liturgy, for some of us homilies once a week are the only chance we take to do scripture study and unfortunately some think the shorter the better.

Think with me, in the first reading from Deuteronomy Moses says you don't need the Law, you know already what you are to do. In the Gospel parable Jesus says to the lawyer who is trying to test him, I will not give you the answer but I will tell you a story, then you tell me who is your neighbor. The readings today are about being tested, love, neighbor compassion, and call to go and do likewise.

Let's stop for a moment to answer the bigger question, why do so many of us pray yet so few of us do not do scripture study? Perhaps we see bible study as "study", and we all remember that school and study. So we say, Deacon, just give me the answers so that I can pass the quiz of life without studying. I can't do that, if I did you wouldn't have to work at it and without working at it you won't learn to apply it. Besides I cannot come up with your answers they are personal and are different depending on where we are in our needs. I cannot tell you what scripture says to you, I can only give example what it could be saying. I can't help you cheat on God's test. You need to get to know the greatest teacher, Jesus Christ. He is one of those great teachers who holds office hours, 24/7. It is very sad from my experience doing my masters degree that so few students take advantage of direct contact time with the professor. Why is scripture so important. Do you want to know about the meaning of your life? YES! Do you want to know why certain things happen in your life? YES! Do you want to know why some people do bible study? YES! Do you want to know how you could be happier? YES! Do you want the answers to the challenges in your daily life? YES! Do you want to know how to make better decisions? YES! YES! YES! Scripture study about scripture study, is it about getting our questions answered? Is it about conversing with Christ. Jesus Speaks, are you getting the message. Jesus inspired Luke so that we would have a way to hear the word, to hear him tell us stories and encourage us to ask him solid questions. Jesus says to ask him for understanding, for wisdom, not just for things first. Many have found that when we ask for understanding of what is happening to us, we tend to ask less for the things of this world.

So let's bring question to these scripture readings. Let's ask for example why we don't hear him or why we don't see him at work in our lives? What do we hear? You are looking in the wrong place he says in the reading today. It is not out there, I am speaking to you in your heart, as Moses said, you have only to carry it out. Jesus says get

to know me and you will get to know yourself. At this very moment we are the full potential of what we will ever be. You were created with all your potential in tact. Christ confirms that there is no new revelation, it is all in how we use it to get to know Jesus for through him are the answers to life. Through him is everlasting life.

So what question could I ask of parable of the good Samaritan? Why are neighborhoods no longer neighborhoods? We are not communities like the olden days when grandma knew everyone in the neighborhood. We don't know our neighbors anymore? We have gone global but there is not global neighborhood except when it comes to aggression they we all seem to get together to fight for freedom for the rest of those in the neighborhood.

I don't know how he would answer that question for you but the answer I received is that you have to be a good neighbor to have good neighbor. Good neighbor is not about the quality of the neighbor but about me as neighbor. It is not about the character of the one next door rather it is about my neighborly character. Be a neighbor first he responds, "Go and do like wise for all are you neighbor even those Samaritans."

So what are we called to do as a result of these scripture readings?

First, become a good neighbor, we all remember the disciple of this gospel reading, Fred Rogers, Mr. Rogers Neighborhood. Remember the theme song. *It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood, A beautiful day for a neighbor. Would you be mine? Could you be mine? I've always wanted to have a neighbor just like you.* Define what it means to be a good neighbor so that you find good neighbors. There a truth of life that like people come together, those who love discover people who love, those who give of themselves find those who give of themselves. The opposite unfortunately is also true.

Second, take time for scripture study. So often people say, "If I only know the will of God. If it were only clear what he wants of me, I would be willing to do it. Things are so complex and God's will is difficult to discern." But God says that he is not complex when we go to Jesus for the answers. It is as simple as the parables, the stories he shares. We will never get the answers in 8 minutes about understanding the word of God. Jesus the teachers has student office hours 24/7 you are just to busy doing your thing to find out what is his thing. Take advantage of the series here at St. Olaf, Jesus Speak. If you want to know more about it and you can't come on Wednesdays following the noon Mass. Connect with Sister Joan Tuberty or myself and we will personally get you access to the process. The sessions are being recorded.

Third, as Jesus spoke to us today. Go forth and do likewise. Go forth and be the good neighbor.

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