

be·coming·us

Sermon #1: Students

By Mark E. Moore, Ph.D.

Text: Matt 28:19

Theme: Impacting international students.

Intro: God told us to go to all nations. In a strange twist, just when the church has most mobilized to go, God is bringing the nations to us. God's strategy is not only cost effective; it is brilliant. The average cost of a missionary family from the US is approximately \$40,000. They may work for years before breaking cultural barriers and making their first disciple. Even when they do, they will likely reach the marginalized, young, and poor. Similarly, short-term mission trips are, on average, \$2,500 for each individual and almost never result in long-term community transformation. Is there a better way? What if God would send prospects to our doorstep? What if they were eager to learn our culture rather than us learning theirs? What if they were from the most elite echelon of their own cultures and countries?

I. Did you know?

A. International students:

1. One million foreign students are currently in the U.S., the highest rate in 35 years.
2. 50% of them will be national leaders.
3. 231 nations are here in U.S. universities.
4. Yet tragically, 70% of all international students will study for four years here and not be in one Christian home during that period of time!

B. Demographics:

1. The top six countries that have students who study in the U.S. are: China, India, Korea, Canada, Taiwan, and Japan. They total 56 percent of our international students.
2. The top five host states are California, New York, Texas, Massachusetts, and Illinois.
3. The top fields of study for these international students were: business and management, engineering, physical and life sciences, math and computer science.

II. God's word in our world:

A. Twisted Scripture: [we don't mean we will twist Scripture, but God is doing something new and startling that gives a whole new twist for two passages]:

1. Matthew 28:19, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."
 - a) If you trace the history of missions, you realize that not until the 20th century did the church as a whole take seriously the Great Commission. And even then, most who went were profession clergy.
 - b) That is until the 1980's when a movement began to send strategically gifted Christians around the world for community

transformation: farmers, doctors, lawyers, builders, accountants, and engineers.

- c) Today, God is doing something else new and astounding. Through the American University system, American Christians don't need plane tickets, visas, passports, or shots. We simply need to open our vehicles and dinner tables once a month. It will cost you less than a movie and will give you purpose, global impact, help raise your children with better perspective, and give you experiences and information you could never have had before. How?
Hospitality. That leads to a second passage:
2. Hebrews 13:2 "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."
 - a) The Greek word, philoxenia is made up of two words: Friendship (philos) and Stranger (xenia). When we befriend a stranger, we are following the biblical mandate for hospitality.
 - b) This rare word is only used twice in the NT (also in Romans 12:13), both times it is intended to goad local Christians into helping Christian evangelists.
 - c) In our context, it is exciting to think that our simple acts of hospitality could make evangelists, especially to countries we could not evangelize and at social levels much higher than we will ever infiltrate.
 - d) See this article for a long list of foreign dictators and political leaders who studied in America:
https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/OIE/documents/YED_TERDAYSINTERNATIONALSTUDENTS.pdf .
 - e) Stop complaining about the cost of war if you're not willing to share a meal. Stop complaining about the rise of terrorism if you ignore the foreigner among us. Stop expecting your government to do what only the church of Jesus Christ can.
- B. Forgotten Scripture: Matthew 25:35-40, "I was a stranger and you invited me in'... the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'"
 1. The power of the stranger is their openness to change. They have already demonstrated their willingness to adopt and adapt to a different culture. Christianity is a cultural phenomenon most are interested in. If you are sharing culture rather than overtly proselytizing, they will be far more open.
 2. When people are lonely and out of their comfort zone, they are most appreciative and most open to change. The first 72 hours after arrival and holidays are the most important windows for engagement.
 3. They want a relationship with you not compassion from you. Normal is extraordinary. Foreign students want to know what real life is like since their image is almost exclusively from Hollywood portrayals...God help us!

4. Share a story here of a foreign student who found Christ through local hospitality.

III. Simple and effective strategies that YOU can do:

A. Students:

1. Offer a ride to the store.
2. Help with colloquial English.
3. Invite to join your group to a movie, concert, sporting event, family picnic, or to church. This is all new, frightening, and exciting to them.
4. Bring them home with you for weekends and/or holidays. These are especially lonely times. The act of having them in your home is unbelievably powerful in **most cultures**.

B. Homeowners:

1. Find a person of peace—a current student they connect with, a faculty member, or service provider from your church. If you have no connections through the church, most universities have an Office of International Students who would welcome a host family for international students.
2. Invite a group to dinner once a month. Often inviting two is better since having a friend with them will put them at ease. Remember to ask about dietary restrictions: Muslims and Jews would be mortified if you served pork, and Hindus and Buddhists often feel the same about beef. Your children and pets can be magnetic for making an international feel at home (although it's good to remember that many cultures view dogs as frightening or unclean).
3. Showing interest and awareness of their country goes a long way to establish good will (10 minutes on Wikipedia will do wonders). If you don't know, ask and listen. Have them teach you a couple phrases from their language or cook a dish in your kitchen from their country (after a relationship has been established). By all means, learn to pronounce his/her name correctly.
4. Empty nesters can open their home for study nights, laundry, game nights, and holidays, especially when dorms are closed. Holiday traditions can be powerful, like decorating a Christmas tree or baking cookies. Offer them a gift of a Bible. If you see someone in a local coffee shop who looks like they are struggling with language or culture, offer to help.
5. Share a testimonial from a host family and how it benefitted them.

C. Your church:

1. Organize a group of potential host families.
2. Host a goat roast...seriously. It's a big deal for students to have a "home" cooked meal.
3. Provide a space for them to celebrate important holidays from their culture when they might be homesick. Some Asian cultures observe a Mooncake festival in September or October. Other Asian countries (such as China, Korea, Vietnam, and Mongolia) celebrate the lunar New Year anywhere between December and March on our calendars. Still others (Laos and Thailand) celebrate their New Year in April. Islamic calendars

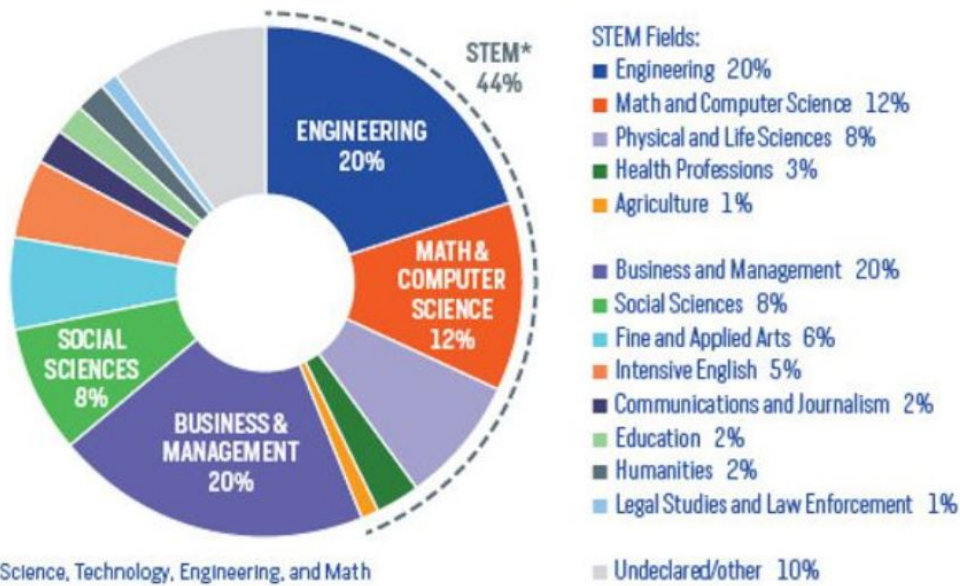
mark the New Year in November or December. Inviting international students to celebrate their holidays gives them hope and may well open a dialogue about Christian celebrations and the good news of Jesus.

4. Share a story here of a church that has had success doing these things to illustrate how easy it is.

D. Take Away:

1. Isaiah 60:3 (ESV) “And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.”
2. This is happening right now. Who’s in? Have a way for people in the church to meet with a key point person from a nearby university and to offer their home as a host family for monthly meals.

FIELDS OF STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



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Sermon #2: Refugees, OT Perspective

By Mark E. Moore, Ph.D.

Text: James 1:27

Theme: Caring for the plight of displaced peoples abroad.

Intro: This message is designed to do three things. First, I want to introduce the plight of refugees in our world today. Second, I want to let God speak His heart on the issue. Third, I want us to imagine together what we can do as a church to provide a loving response. There are two helpful TED Talks that might help frame this message in a global context:

http://www.ted.com/talks/alexander_betts_our_refugee_system_is_failing_here_s_how_we_can_fix_it

http://www.ted.com/talks/melissa_fleming_let_s_help_refugees_thrive_not_just_survive

- I. **The State we're in** [The following website provides excellent graphics.]
 - A. Total displaced, 65.3 million; Refugees, 21.3 million; Stateless, 10 million; >50% are under 18. One in every 113 people on earth are displaced.
 - B. Host nations: Turkey 2.5 million; Pakistan, 1.6 million; Lebanon 1.1 million; Iran 0.979 million; Ethiopia 0.74 million. [The U.S. doesn't even make the top list.] 86% of refugees are in the developing world. No, we are not overwhelmed as a nation.
 - C. Relevant charts, graphs, and data: <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/576408cd7.pdf>
 - D. For photos, sign in to: http://media.unhcr.org/C.aspx?VP3=CMS3&VF=Home#_ga=1.11882932.1210595050.1469128458
- II. **The World God envisions**—Most of us are familiar with the famous statement in James 1:27, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” What we may not be as aware of is that God’s heart for widows and orphans, and particularly those displaced by war and political trauma, is not NT. If we go clear back to the founding documents of ancient Israel, we will see that God’s call to His people to welcome refugees has never changed. Notice how the plight of the widow and orphan is consistently connected with refugees in the Bible, Deut 10:18-19, The LORD your God “defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.” This principle is embedded in every level of government in ancient Israel:
 - A. **National Politics:** Going back to the first national “by-laws” of Israel, God demanded that she treat immigrants and exiles with compassion, even at the threat of death: Exodus 22:21-24 (ESV) ²¹ “You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. ²² You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. ²³ If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, ²⁴ and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children

fatherless.” Nearly identical advice is given in Leviticus 19:33-34, just a few verses after “Love your neighbor as yourself” (v. 18).

1. Notice this follows on the heels of the 10 commandments. This was to be a national characteristic, not an isolated campaign for compassion.
 2. Notice also that the foundation of this command comes from the fact that Israel herself had been a displaced people in Egypt. Israel’s genesis was to mark her genetics.
 3. Is that not also true of America? We began as a nation of immigrants fleeing political persecution and searching for freedom. Our heritage must mark our nature as a nation if we expect to keep God’s hand of blessing. Jesus said, “To whom much is given, much will be required.” We cannot afford a spiritual isolationism. Nor can we trust secular government to adopt the heart of God for displaced peoples. This is the calling, the word, the responsibility of God’s people.
- B. **Religious systems** of compassion: The aliens, fatherless, and widows actually got shares of the tithes along with the Levites: Deuteronomy 14:28–29 (ESV) ²⁸“At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. ²⁹And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.” (See also Deut 16:11, 14; 26:12-13)
1. The priests, because they were consecrated to the Lord, did not share in the allotment of land, but were therefore cared for by the community, providing them with food.
 2. Likewise, the aliens, fatherless, and widows, victims of displacement, were as sacred to the Lord. And though they had no land, they were sanctified by the sacred provision of food.
- C. **Social Prophets** predict destruction of those who oppress the poor: Jeremiah 49:11 (ESV) “Leave your fatherless children; I will keep them alive; and let your widows trust in me.” Malachi 3:5 (ESV) “Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.”
- D. **Summary:**
1. The care for widows and orphans in James 1:27, the purest kind of religion, has its background in the political struggle of aliens and refugees. This ministry is as sacred to God as the priests in His temple!
 2. This issue is not one of private piety, but national priority—not the secular state, but the kingdom of God, inherited from Israel and embodied in the Church. This cannot be a tangential issue.

III. What must we do?

- A. Move from fear to faith.

1. Much of the rhetoric on immigration and refugees has as its background 9/11 rather than the Bible. We are more concerned with securing our borders than our eternity. The theology we just walked through is undeniably biblical. Will you (will we) operate out of national fear or international responsibility? That's our first decision: To be led by fear or faith.
 2. This will mean prioritizing our commitment to be God's people above national or personal interests. Even so, recognize that what made this nation great is its welcome of all people.
- B. Personalize the alien: What if this were you?:
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBQ-loHfimQ> or
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9stzTcqCXU>
1. Our language on immigration and refugees is filled with "other" talk: They, them, Muslim, criminal, terrorist. God uses words like: creation, child, human. They are us! It's not just Israel that was displaced. So was Abraham (Gen 12:10), Isaac (Gen 26:1-3), Joseph (Gen 37:28), Moses (Exo 2:15; Heb 11:27); David (1 Sam 21:10); Elijah (1 Kings 17:7-9); Daniel (Daniel 1:2-4); Jesus (Matthew 2:13-14); Christians (Acts 8:1; James 1:10); Peter (Acts 12:17). They are us! 1 Peter 2:11 (NIV), "Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul."
 2. We also need to recognize that many who are doing the best work in this area will have different (or no) faith backgrounds than you. They may vote differently in the presidential election. Our priority must be platform, not background. If a pagan is accomplishing God's will, am I not obligated to support, partner, and learn from him/her? There are some local and international agencies that we will support and be supported by to address the human need.
 3. Here's what I know, we will never be fully human until we humanize the other. It is in giving dignity that we find our own. Whenever an alien is welcomed, two people are saved—the refugee and the rescuer.
- C. Leverage your influence—You can expect this church to communicate, validate, and promote both internally and externally this dire agenda that breaks the heart of God. As your pastor, I'm asking you to be the voice in the community and in your circles of influence to leverage people's gifts, positions, and resources to support the cause of the poor. Here are some practical ways to help.
- <http://embracerefugees.org/>
1. You could host a refugee to show them around your city. Welcome them to a new culture.
 2. As a local church, we are going to lean into their expertise to guide our conversation and mobilize our resources and efforts to most effectively address the needs of the most vulnerable. Be prepared to join us in a compassionate expression to meet the physical, educational, and emotional needs of a people group living on the edge of existence.

- IV. **Take Away:** We are going to have a time of prayer. Our elders and local leaders are going to be [down front or in a room off the lobby] to meet with those who have experienced similar pain. If you are suffering, we want to listen to your story. We want to come alongside you, and we want to share Christ with you. You need to know, you are a priority to him today and in this place.
- A. This is a helpful handout for your congregation to debunk some common myths: <http://iafr.org/downloads/handouts/10myths/10%20Common%20Myths%20Concerning%20Refugees.pdf>
 - B. This essay is a helpful guide for church leaders wanting to take practical next steps: <http://iafr.org/downloads/handouts/justice-compassion-response/Justice%20and%20Compassion-Responding%20to%20the%20Refugee%20Crisis%20in%20Europe.pdf>

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Sermon #3: Immigrants

By Mark E. Moore, Ph.D.

Text: Acts 8:26-40

Theme: Helping immigrants in the U.S.

Intro: If you had a choice to baptize one person or 500, which would you choose? That was approximately the choice of Philip in Acts chapter 8. He chose one, and I think you probably would agree; he chose the better.

The story of the Ethiopian Eunuch is a simple one. We have a Jewish evangelist, displaced from his city by Paul's persecution. He flees to a region where no self-respective persecutor would chase him—the "ghetto" of Samaria. Philip didn't plan the location as a strategy of evangelism; he just ran for his life. In a surprising twist of fate, he finds himself on the cutting edge of church growth. Literally, he planted the first non-Jewish Christian church. That's impressive for a young man who heretofore was involved in the feeding arm of a senior adult ministry. His fame spread to such an extent that the chief Apostles paid him a visit to authenticate his novel approach to church growth.

He had fame, miraculous power, lots of baptisms, and a stellar reputation. Why would anyone leave that? But he did. He was called by God to pack his bags and head out of town to intersect with a single individual who would ultimately open the Gospel not only to a nation but to an entire continent. So let me ask you again, would you choose one over 500 if you knew the one might well baptize 5,000?

There are still people today, who can be reached to accomplish evangelism on a scale that we ourselves could never imagine. Wouldn't you have loved to have been Philip? To open a door to one person who became a portal for an entire ethnic group? That door is actually open again today in ways that have been virtually impossible for most westerners for centuries.

We know that migration and immigration create openness to the Gospel. And we know that Americans are positioned in a unique space and time to capitalize on this openness as never before. Whether we do or not will be a choice we make. But in order to make an informed decision, let's at least take some time to open up the Bible and see what obstacles we will face if we decide to move forward through this open door.

I. Five reasons why we might miss our own divine appointment

A. We like those who are like us. In other words, God loves the world; we love homogeneous groups.

1. There is nothing wrong with the gravitational pull to individuals and groups that look like us. In fact, they can be great tools for reaching people. After all, Paul always started at the synagogue because they spoke the same biblical language. But homogeneous groups can also be barriers that keep us from a greater opportunity.

2. If we trace the book of Acts, we see how really important to God Gentile evangelism was and how terribly difficult it was for the church.
 - a) Except for Acts 11:19-20, no group or individual chose to leave the comforts of culture to cross a geographic or ethnic line. What about Paul's journeys? Well, they were all prompted by persecution, visions, or trials. Sure he wanted to go to Rome, but remember, he planned on visiting the church there.
 - b) The same is true for Philip. It was persecution that sent him to Samaria and a miraculous call that pushed him to the desert road.
 - c) If we walk from Chapter 6-10, when the first full Gentile accepted Christ, we see a number of steps God took to take us on this journey of Gentile inclusion:
 - (1) 6:1, Hellenistic widows had a physical need that demanded a cultural barrier be broken within the same blood line.
 - (2) 8:4-5, Philip was put on the run by Paul's persecution to reach the half-Jews of Samaria.
 - (3) 8:26, Philip was then miraculously called to the desert to reach a non-Jewish convert called a God-fearer.
 - (4) 9:1f., Paul, the persecutor, is miraculously converted to be chosen as the Apostle to the Gentiles.
 - (5) 9:43, Peter is moved to Joppa to live with a ritually unclean tanner to prepare for a visit to a Gentile's house.
 - (6) 10:9, Peter has a vision of unclean food he is ordered to eat: "Stop calling unclean what God has cleansed."
 - (7) 10:21, Through a parallel vision, the servants of Cornelius show up at that exact moment to take him to Cornelius.
 - d) In short, crossing geographical and ethnic lines is not easy, natural, or simple. It will take a call of God, a man of peace, and an effective strategy.
- B. We avoid change.** The more successful we are, the more we resist change.
1. Philip already had a successful ministry. There was more work for him to do than he could keep up with. God now calls him to get up and leave it when there was clearly opposition from Simon Magus and no way these Samaritans could fend him off without the dominant leadership of Philip.
 2. When things are going well in your ministry, it is easy to justify sticking with what is working. None of us have enough material and human resources to start new ventures when people are already coming to Christ. Why start something new and dilute your energy and resources?
- C. We judge the "other" is "inferior"...**ok, that's not nice to say, so we'll just say, "others are odd." That was certainly true of the Ethiopian Eunuch.
1. The Ethiopian Eunuch had two strikes against him.
 - a) Obviously, he's an Ethiopian. They had been historic enemies of Israel (2 Chron 14:9f). The ancient name of "Cush" (see Isaiah 11:11; 18:1-2; 20:3-5).
 - b) They were dark-skinned foreigners.

- c) They spoke a different language.
 - d) They ate unclean stuff that would make you vomit!
 - e) They are from a faraway place—foreign = fearsome.
2. He was a Eunuch.
 - a) If you don't know what that is, you wouldn't believe me if I told you. Nonetheless, there was a need for Eunuchs in a kingdom lead by a woman...Oh, yeah, that's right, his boss was a domineering woman. You needed the strength of a man for her protection without the possibility of procreation.
 - b) Do a simple Google search in the Bible for the word Eunuch, and you will find how they were perceived. It's not good.
 - c) There's a lot not to like about this guy.
 3. If we are going to love the people God loves, we are going to have to overlook a lot of things we don't like.
- D. We avoid inconvenience.** Surely if it's inconvenient it mustn't be God's will.
1. The Ethiopian Eunuch was on a deserted road heading nowhere. There's no way to double up your efforts to multi-task.
 2. Most ministry with immigrants is inconvenient.
 - a) You often have to leave where you are and what you're doing to go to them.
 - b) They are not always easy to find, and they don't always want to be found.
 - c) There WILL be cultural barriers to overcome; that's an energy drain.
 - d) There may well be a language barrier, which is difficult and awkward, so it's easy to be misunderstood.
 - e) They may not like you anymore than you like them.
 - f) When Philip went out there, he was outnumbered and in danger.
 - g) Your constituents will ask several times if this is really worth the effort.
- E. We assume others don't need what we have.** We have been trained not to impose our culture and values on others.
1. The Eunuch had been up to Jerusalem to worship—surely someone told him about Jesus there.
 2. The Eunuch had a Bible—surely he could read the prophecies about Jesus.
 3. The Eunuch had money to travel and a job—surely he had his own religious values.
 4. There is really no reason to suspect that the Eunuch was even open to the Gospel...except that he was. If you think going to him was hard, think about how much hardship he underwent to find Yahweh.
 - a) He traveled a very long way, probably against his Queen's religion.
 - b) He went to a temple where he was not welcomed and was stopped in the court of the Gentiles, so he could not complete the last 100 steps of a 500 mile journey.

c) He purchased a new scroll that in our economy would be valued at over \$50,000.

II. **What makes this worth the effort?** Let's answer this question by observing two questions asked by the Ethiopian Eunuch:

- A. Question #1: The Ethiopian Eunuch is trying his best to understand Isaiah 53, the most famous passage predicting the death of the Messiah. He said to Philip in Acts 8:34, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" This is the kind of evangelistic opportunity I would drool over. Don't you want that?
- B. Question #2: Acts 8:36 (ESV) "And as they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" Wouldn't you love to share the Gospel with someone so open, so eager, so in love with Jesus that they would dive into the pool rather than being coaxed. You can. Immigrants everywhere are open to the Gospel. Each one? No. But on balance, they are eager for a new start in life. I'm not going to pretend that it won't cost you. I am going to suggest your reward is bigger than you think, for these immigrants will be as open handed with their new found faith as you are with them. What if there is nothing more effective you could do with your life then open the Gospel to a person who becomes a portal to a nation?
- C. Conclude with a life story of an immigrant who freely accepted Christ and had a tremendous impact on people we could never reach.
- D. Like the Ethiopian Eunuch, many immigrants traveled across an ocean to come to where we are, but we will not cross town to meet them. Nations, not individuals, are hanging in the balance.

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Sermon #4: The Parable of the Good Samaritan

By Mark E. Moore, Ph.D.

Text: Luke 10:25-37

Theme: Change the Question from, “Who is my neighbor?” to “Who is neighborly?”

Intro: One of the most famous stories ever told started with a question—not just any question, but the most important question. In Luke 10:25 a religious professional sauntered up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Pretty good, right? The question is good, but the motives were not!

- I. Question #1: The Test - How are we saved?
 - A. Expert in the law
 1. He is an expert in the law; he obviously already knew, or at least had opinions about how to be saved.
 2. Luke reveals his motives with the word test (ekpeirazō). He wanted to trap Jesus in something he said to discredit him.
 - B. Jesus answers the question with a question. This is a particularly Rabbinic form of teaching (it is not avoidance). Rabbis guided the discussion by asking probing questions.
 - C. The answer was a good one. In fact, Jesus agrees. How do we know? Because Jesus gave the exact same answer Tuesday in the Temple the week he was executed (cf. Mt 22:37-40). There too, the question was a trap that he turned on his interrogator.
 1. The answer is a combination of Deut 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. These two verses deal with our vertical and horizontal relationships.
 - a) Deut 6:5, the famous Shema was the John 3:16 of the Jews. It was inscribed on the miniature scrolls of the phylacteries and mezuzahs of today. It was literally the passage they put on their minds, near their heart, and on their doorframes. **“Hear [Shema], O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart [lebab] and with all your soul [nephesh] and with all your might [moed].”**
 - b) Notice that the (1) heart, (2) soul, (3) and strength of the OT was parsed into four in Luke’s rendition: (1) Heart, (2) Soul, (3) Mind, (4) and Strength. What gives?
 - (1) The “strength” of the Hebrew verse was divided for Luke’s Greek readers into mental strength and physical strength.
 - (2) The Hebrew word “me’odh” represents the totality of our resources both mental and physical but also includes our influence, connections, and status.
 - (3) The heart is the center of feelings. It is your emotion that drives your action. The soul represents your energy. It is the life force that jolts you into action. It is the twinkle in

your eye, the pattern in your step, that giddy in your giddy up. Your mind is not so much your intellectual capacity as your will. If you've ever raised a two-year-old and said he has his own mind, you know what I mean. It's not that the kid is so sophisticated as much as he is stubborn. Fourth, our strength represents our resources. It, of course, includes our muscles, but it's much more than that. It is the total force of our resources including our money, our time, and the circle of our influence.

(4) Because we assume in the modern Western world that love is an emotion rather than an action, it's easy for us to feel like we are loving God well without putting into practice what will honor Him best. This kind of division between action and emotion would hardly gain a floating in Jesus' native Israel. If love is an action that can only be adequately expressed through loyal obedience than Deuteronomy 10:12 makes sense, "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul." Let me ask you a question with this verse still on the screen. What is the difference between fearing the Lord, walking in His ways, loving him, and serving Him? The correct answer is nothing! It is not possible to fear the Lord without serving the Lord. It is not possible to love God and not walk in His ways.

2. The Horizontal relationship was encapsulated in Lev. 19:18, to love my neighbor.
 - a) "Do this and you will live." Suddenly Jesus is no longer on trial, but the lawyer is.
 - b) Word of caution: We are not saying that we will earn our salvation by showing compassion to neighbors. Yet neither are we embarrassed to connect tangible actions to demonstrate our faith in Jesus Christ. This is a similar sentiment to the well-known description of judgment that dripped from Jesus' own lips in Matthew 25: "In as much as you have done to the least of these my brothers you have done it unto me."
 - c) This second question becomes the focus of the parable. Why? Because you can't really love God without a tangible and practical application to people around you. 1 John 4:20-21 "Whoever claims to love God, yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister."

- II. Justification: The Justification – Who is my neighbor?
- A. There are two Greek words for neighbor. The more inclusive word is “neighborhood” (perioikos). That’s not what the lawyer used. He used a narrower word meaning “to be near” (plēsios). Thus he is trying to draw the circle as tight as possible.
 - B. Jesus allows it! He is going to allow the lawyer to circumscribe his neighbor in the narrowest possible terms—an 18-inch circle. However, and this is truly brilliant, Jesus’ story will require the lawyer (and us) to bring the circle with us wherever we go! Jesus replied with a parable – literally he “took up” (hupolabōn) a reply. The lawyer threw down a gauntlet and Jesus picked it up.
 - C. Details of the Parable:
 1. This 17-mile stretch of highway was known as “Adummim” the “road of blood” between Jerusalem and Jericho. It was riddled with bandits.
 2. Both the priest and Levite were going down – away from Jerusalem, thus their duties have nothing to do with the situation. They don’t even have that excuse. In other words, they can’t say “I can’t help because it would defile me from priestly duties.”
 3. There is really no such thing as a “good” Samaritan. That title is given by translators of the Bible, but it is not in the text. [For further historical details on Samaritans see the study that follows the outline.] Samaritans were despised by the Jews since they had supposedly intermarried with pagans.
 - a) Interestingly, the text says he had “compassion” on the man. This word is only applied to Jesus in the Gospels outside this passage.
 - b) This is especially shocking after Luke 9:51-56 where James and John are ready to call down a heavenly holocaust on a Samaritan village.
 - c) Taken into Acts 8 we realize what significant ramifications this has for Luke and his theme of inclusion. Listen, this is an important piece of Christian theology to include those we find dangerous, different, and offensive.
 4. We would be wise not to allegorize the details of this story, but they certainly do imply that real love is pragmatically costly with time and money.
 - D. Response: “Which ‘became’ the man’s neighbor?” Notice that Jesus changed the question. The lawyer asked, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus’ question requires each of us to ask, “Who was neighborly?” Remember, the answer to this question answers the original question, “Who will be saved?” Our reaction to our neighbors is a requisite expression of our faith in Jesus Christ.
 1. The lawyer’s response in v. 37 answers both questions (vv. 36 & 25)!
 2. “Go and do likewise” – theology only concludes in praxis. As James would later say, “Faith without works is dead.” Do we really believe this?
 3. Before you answer that last question, let me tell you a modern parable. It is not a make-believe story. This is a modern study by Darley and Bateson, “‘From Jerusalem to Jericho’: A Study of Situational Variables in Helping

Behavior,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 27 (1973): 100-108. They designed a study of 40 seminary students who were asked to give a talk on the topic of occupational careers of seminarians. They were sent to a nearby building to record their talks in a studio. On the way, right in their path, the researchers staged a “victim” who was planted to look like he was a homeless vagabond who needed medical attention. They wanted to see how these seminary students, on route to talk about their calling to be pastors, would react. Would they stop to help or would they walk past? Would they be a Samaritan or a Levite? What is your guess? How many walked past without stopping to help him? Answer: 60% walked past the victim, some even stepped over him to get to the recording studio.

4. You’ve heard a powerful series of messages. I have one last question: Are you going to walk past or will you stop and help?

be-coming-us

Extra Sermon: Samaritans

By Mark E. Moore, Ph.D.

I. Origin

- A. Their name, "Samerim," means keepers (i.e. of the Torah).
- B. Peoples imported by Esarhaddon after the Assyrian captivity of 722 B.C. They intermarried with the poorest of the Jews who were left in the land. They had a commitment both to their own idols and to Jehovah (2 K. 17:24-29). 2 Kings 17:41 betrays their dual commitment.
 1. The Samaritans, however, claim that only 27,290 Israelites were deported according to the figures of Assyrian documents. Thus a sizeable population of Israelites remained and made proselytes of the imported peoples.
 2. Furthermore, Samaritans claim that unfaithful Jews caused Eli to move the sanctuary from Shechem to Shilo 1100 B.C.
- C. Jesus calls them "aliens," Luke 17:18.

II. Causes of Division

- A. The civil war between Rehoboam, son of Solomon (c. 930 B.C.), and Jeroboam and his golden calves (2 Chron. 10).
- B. Rebuilding of the temple (538-516 B.C.)
 1. They pretend to want to help, although Ezra 4:1 calls them adversaries of "Judah and Benjamin."
 2. When they were rudely rejected, they turned to open hostility. Through their complaints to the Persian kings, they delayed the building progress until 519 B.C. under Darius (Josephus, Ant. 11.4.3; Neh 2:10-6:14; 13:28).
- C. Rival Temple; cf. John 4:20 & Josephus, Ant. 11.8.2-4; 13.9:1.
 1. As the tensions between the two groups grew, and as the idolatry in Samaria lessened, the resentment escalated.
 2. In 409 B.C. a certain Manasseh, the son of the High Priest, was expelled from Jerusalem by Nehemiah because of an unlawful marriage. He found refuge in Samaria and through the permission of the Persian king Darius Nothus, he built a rival temple on Mt. Gerezim for the Samaritans. (Josephus, Ant 11.7. 8, is considered by some scholars to be a Midrash on Nehemiah).
 3. An alternate (and more likely) scenario has the Samaritan temple built by the permission of Alexander the Great during his Palestinian conquest 332 B.C.
 4. They rejected the Jewish interpretation of Deuteronomy 12:5-7, 11-14; 16:2; and 26:2, that there be only one acceptable temple to God and that on Mt. Zion. In fact, the Samaritan Pentateuch at Deut. 27:4 has Moses commanding that an altar be built on Mt. Gerezim rather than on Mt. Ebal.
 5. John Hyrcanus leveled the Samaritan temple in 127 B.C. (Josephus, Ant. 13.9:1). When Herod the Great offered to rebuild their temple, they

refused because they learned that he would also rebuild the temple of Jerusalem (Josephus, Ant. 15.8.3–11.1).

- D. This crystallized the animosity between the two groups, and the Samaritans did everything they could to annoy the Jews.
 - 1. They took a pro-Syrian position during the days of Antiochus Epihanes IV (2 Macc. 6:1f.). They, in fact, claimed to be descendents of the Sidonians and fought alongside the Seleucids against the Jews, B.C. 167-164 (Josephus, Ant. 12.5.5).
 - 2. They refused hospitality to Jewish travelers in Samaria (cf. Luke 9:52-53). Thus, most Jews began to cross to the East side of the Jordan when travelling between Galilee and Judea.
 - 3. They had their own Pentateuch, which they claimed was older and superior, and which they claimed to observe more faithfully. They did not consider the other books canonical.
- E. Josephus, Ant. 18. 2. 2. claims that at one time the Samaritans broke into the temple in Jerusalem and defiled it with bones.

III. Jewish contempt for Samaritans

- A. They spurned them as Kin.
 - 1. They constantly reminded them that they were mere Assyrians. As early as Ecclesiasticus 50:25-26 they were lumped together with Idumeans and Philistines as the three greatest enemies of the Jews.
 - 2. Because Samaria was frequently a refuge to Jewish renegades, they considered the Samaritans guilty of Jewish bloodshed.
 - 3. Alexander the Great, c. 332 B.C. rejected their claim to be true Jews and therefore exempt from tribute in the Sabbatical year.
 - 4. Even today there is great reluctance about intermarriage between Jews and Samaritans, and Jews will not allow Samaritans to be buried in the Jewish cemetery at Tel Aviv.
 - 5. Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great and Malthace, his Samaritan wife; this caused significant animosity.
- B. They spurned them as human beings.
 - 1. They considered everything they touched to be like "Swine's flesh" (cf. John 4:9).
 - 2. They did not allow their testimony in court.
 - 3. They could not become proselytes.
 - 4. They were publicly spurned in their synagogues.
 - 5. Jesus was accused of having a demon and of being a Samaritan (John 8:48).
- C. Jesus' dealings with the Samaritans:
 - 1. Woman at the well, John 4:1-42
 - 2. 10th leper, Luke 17:11-19
 - 3. Great Commission, Mt. 28:19-20
 - 4. Parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:30-37

IV. History of the Samaritans

A. Chronology of rulers (From W. Fields, N.T. Backgrounds [Joplin: College Press, 1977], 183).

1. Sanballat I (ruling in 444 B.C., Neh. 2:10)
2. Delaiah, son of Sanballat (c. 410 ff.)
3. Sanballat II (c. 390 ff.)
4. Hananiah, son of Sanballat II (ruling in 354)
5. Sanballat III (c. 335 ff.)

B. Destructions

1. Alexander the Great slaughtered many Samaritans and placed there a large Macedonian colony, 332 B.C.
2. Pontius Pilate massacred some of their number in A.D. 36.
3. Roman emperor Vespasian slaughtered 11,600 Samaritans in the 1st century (Josephus Wars 3.7.32).
4. Hadrian (A.D. 117-138), placed the Temple of Zeus over the ruins of their temple, thus they could not rebuild it.

C. Today there are about 400 Samaritans in Nablus (this has grown from less than 200 earlier this century). They have their own synagogue and Pentateuch. They are hyper-Mosaic.

V. Samaritan Religion

A. Like the Jews they are:

1. Monotheists
2. Avoid all images
3. Loyal to the Law of Moses
4. Hold a strong Messianic expectation, in fact they shared the Qumran (and Christian), interpretation of Deut. 18:18.
5. Accepted orthodox feasts (as did the Qumran community). They celebrate the Day of Atonement, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Sabbath, and Passover, during which they sacrifice lambs. The last vestige of animal sacrifice in the Western world.

B. Unlike the Jews

1. Had a rival Temple at Gerezim
2. Rejected Jerusalem priesthood (as did Qumran)
3. Accepted only the Pentateuch (like Sadducees), as well as their own version of Joshua, which differs considerably from the Jewish version.

C. The Samaritan Pentateuch

1. Changes from the Jewish books
 - a) Emendations of objectionable or questionable passages
 - (1) Pre-flood men never beget a child after 150 years.
 - (2) Anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms.
 - (3) Historically questionable passages
 - b) Alterations for Samaritan theology, hermeneutics, and domestic worship.

- (1) Elohim is connected with plural verbs 4 times (Gen. 20:13; 31:53; 35:7; Ex. 22:9). The Samaritan Pentateuch changes all these to singular verbs.
- (2) The locations of Gerezim is inserted several places in order to justify it as an acceptable place of worship.
- (3) An 11th command is added to the Decalogue--to build a temple on Mt. Gerezim, which they consider the "navel of the world." They believe it was here that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice.

2. Origin

- a) It was inherited by the 10 northern tribes.
- b) It was introduced by Manasseh at the time of the building of the Samaritan Temple on Mt. Gerezim.
- c) Not open to the Western world until the 17th century.
- d) Its text supports the LXX, favored by Roman Catholics rather than the M.T. favored by Jews and Christians.

D. Similarities with other religious groups

1. Qumran

- a) View themselves as "Sons of Light."
- b) Messianic expectations, especially on Deut. 18:18.
- c) Both use very complex solar and lunar calendars.
- d) Neither celebrate Purim or Hanukkah.
- e) Qumranites also used an edited Torah.

2. Christians

- a) Both John and Hebrews appear to have similarities to Samaritan beliefs.
- b) Samaritans have often been very open to Christian evangelism (cf. Acts 8).

3. Islam

- a) Similar view of "The day of Judgment"
- b) Marqah's work (a Samaritan theologian), later reappears in the Koran.
- c) Samaritans often use the varied Moslem slogan, "There is no God but God."