

Palimpsest* (pa • limp • sest)

Week of **November 14, 2021**
25th Sunday After Pentecost

Sermon: A Future With Hope
Scripture: Luke 10:25-37

Your Notes

Sermon Supplemental Reading

Today more than ever before men of all races and men of all nations are challenged to be neighborly. The call for a good neighbor policy on the part of the nations of the world is more than an ephemeral shibboleth, it is the call to a way of life which will transform our almost cosmic elegy into creative fulfillment. No longer can we engage in the luxury of passing by on the other side. Such folly was once moral failure; today it can lead only lead to universal suicide. The alternative to a world of brotherhood to match its geographical neighborhood may well be a civilization plunged into an inferno more devastating than anything Dante could ever envision. We cannot long survive living spiritually apart in a world that is geographically one. As you leave this place of worship my friends go out with the conviction that all men are brothers, tied in a single garment of destiny. In the final analysis I must not ignore the wounded man on life's Jericho Road because he is a part of me and I am a part of him. His agony diminishes me and his salvation enlarges me.

– King, ML. (1961) “On Being a Good Neighbor”

Expanding on a 28 November 1960 outline titled “The Goodness of the Good Samaritan,” this sermon draft hews closely to George Buttrick's themes in his lecture on the Good Samaritan. King lauds the Samaritan's altruism, which enabled him to look beyond “accidents of race, religion and nationality” and applies the parable's message

* A Palimpsest is: 1: writing material (as a parchment or tablet) used one or more times, 2: something having unusually diverse layers or aspects apparent beneath the surface

Your Notes

to race relations, acknowledging that laws “may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless.” To effect true change, King submits, “Something must happen so to touch the hearts and souls of men that they will come together because it is natural and right.” Finally, in a passage deleted from the published version, he commends his readers to “go out with the conviction that all men are brothers, tied in a single garment of destiny.”

- Notes from King, ML. (1961)
“On Being a Good Neighbor”

A first century audience, Jesus’ or Luke’s, would have known the Samaritan represented a despised “other.” But I think they also would have understood that the lawyer would not empathize with the priest or Levite. They represented differences within Judaism related to function, class, observance and biblical interpretation. The only character left through which to enter the story is the one who has no identity except life-threatening wounds. The lawyer understands Jesus’ point, according to the gospel narrative, that when you receive life-saving mercy, “otherness” ceases and we experience instead our common humanity. The lawyer perceives – and so do we – who your neighbor is and what it looks like to be a neighbor. Jesus’ final words, “go and do likewise” parallel the command following the lawyer’s first question, “do this and you will live.”

- Salmon, M. Lecture, UTS-Twin Cities

Questions

- What does it mean to you that Martin Luther King, Jr. preached at our church?
- How are we being good neighbors now?
- What does our future with hope look like?