

Sermon Title: **“Good Samaritan”**

Bible: **Psalm 82 & Luke 10:25-37**

When: on Sunday, July 10th, 2022

Where: about 30 people (plus YouTube streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

O Lord, we all come together to you. Please receive all of us in your mercy and in your grace. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Today’s Gospel reading of Luke is one of the most famous parables, which is the parable of the Good Samaritan. Who is the Good Samaritan? Which one is he, the one who needed help or the one who helped the needy? There was a man who traveled from Jerusalem to Jericho. He might have been a Jew, perhaps returning home after a Jerusalem temple service. He was in big trouble. He was left alone half dead on the road. Unfortunately, a priest passed by. A Levite passed by, too. Both the priest and the Levite were those who worked at the temple. We might try to excuse them, because they were not allowed to touch a bloody body, due to concerns about impurity, according to their law. But in this parable, that was not mentioned. Now, a Samaritan came along and helped the one in need. At that time, any Samaritan was regarded as an outsider. In the Jewish views of that time, the Samaritans were neither Jews nor Gentiles. Because they were in between, they were not welcomed. But this outsider

Samaritan helped the one in need. The Samaritan not only gave first-aid, but also took care of him again and again. This led us to call the Samaritan, who was an outsider, who was in between, as the GOOD Samaritan.

2. Psalm 82

The parable of the Good Samaritan is a very beautiful story. It inspires us to help those who are in need. It is just like Psalm 82. "Give justice to the weak and the orphan, maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." I believe that when we are able, we try to help those in need. The spirit of the Good Samaritan is still in us and in our church. Actually, the action is also in us. Even during this challenging time, we are not stopping helping others. While we take care of ourselves, when we are able, we try to help others. I am so thankful and blessed to be a part of this church, hands and feet of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

3. Jesus' Question? Or Answer?

I would like to share one interesting thing around the parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus shared this parable, because of a question, "Who is my neighbor?" To love the Lord and to love our neighbor is the most important commandment to be a Christian. The relationship with God and the relationship with the people is in the cross. We love our Lord, right? Or at least, we know and experience that God loves each one of us, right? Thanks to God's love and grace, we want to love our neighbors. God's love and grace is overflowing. Then, who is our neighbor? Those who are in need? Just like the one whom the Good Samaritan helped?

The lawyer, or an expert in the law, perhaps a teacher of the Bible asked this question of Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” Then, Jesus shared the parable of the Good Samaritan. After this parable, Jesus asked back, “Which of these three, a priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan, do you think, was a neighbor to the man in need?” The answer was the Samaritan. The Samaritan was the neighbor. But somehow, the answer in the Bible was not the Samaritan but “the one who showed him mercy.” Perhaps, it was because the Samaritan was so unwelcome or such an outsider at that time. Interestingly, Jesus’ question changed the definition of neighbor. The neighbor is not the one who is the object of kindness and compassion, but the one who gives help.

Sometimes, in our church life, it is not easy to love one another. What I mean, between us, because we are different. It might be easier to help others in need. I believe that there is no question of helping those in need. What we need is to discuss how to help them. But when it comes to ourselves, sometimes it is not easy to love ourselves, because we are different, because we cannot understand each other, or because we might be in between or somewhere else. As a church, sometimes it is not easy to love one another, even if we are doing the same ministry. When we are doing our ministries for others, the one next to us is our neighbor. This neighbor needs our love as well. Jesus might invite us today to love our church members more and more, because they are our neighbors, too. Who is your neighbor? Who is the Good Samaritan who needs your love?

Closing Prayer

O Lord, when we love you, please help us to love others. When we love others, please help us to love ourselves, too, because we are also our neighbors. Please pour out your love and grace to be overflowing in us and through us. In Jesus' name. Amen.