

Have You Heard the News | Three Shifts (Luke 10.25-37)

Examine our hearts and lament

- The scribe was trying to “justify himself,” that is, to vindicate himself before God on the basis of his own behavior. How are you tempted to do the same? In what ways are you tempted to point to things you have done in order to avoid carefully considering if and where you might be failing to love God and your neighbor faithfully?
- The way that the lawyer attempts to justify himself is by limiting those he is called to love.
 - How do we do the same thing? How do we try to get out of loving certain people?
 - Who are you most tempted to try to get out of having to love?

Educate ourselves to better stand with our neighbors who need our compassion

Mike took some time to explain the difference between racism, prejudice and implicit bias. Racism is using one’s power or influence to harm, demean, or oppress others because of their race. Prejudice is forming a prejudgment of a person based on their race, gender, or religion without getting to know them first. Implicit bias are the assumptions and understanding you have of the world based on your experience of it. While the first two are wrong, the last one is not. It is just something that we need to be aware of because it can prevent us from being able to reach a place of mutual understanding with others.

- While most of us have never been guilty of racism, we all struggle with some form of prejudice.
 - How have you experienced prejudice?
 - Have you ever realized that you were being prejudiced? What did it look like to work through it?
 - How do we learn to recognize prejudice in our own hearts?
 - How do we work through our prejudices?
 - Is there an area of prejudice in your own heart that God is currently revealing to you? How is he doing that?

- For the scribe, he went from identifying with the hero (in his own mind) to identifying with the victim (in the parable) who needs to be rescued. What is worse for him is that he is being rescued by someone he despises: a Samaritan!
 - Can we stop thinking of ourselves as being in the position of the hero to empathize with victims of injustice, to try and feel the weight that they would feel?
 - Have you ever entered into the life or world of someone who was a victim of social injustice? If so, how did that affect you?

Endure as long as the fight lasts

- How should Jesus' example, in both his mercy towards sinners and willingness to confront evil, shape the way we view our response to injustice and pain in our community?
- Biblical justice is giving what is due, whether punishment or care. Righteousness is living in right relationship, first with God and then others. If we were all living righteously we would not need to seek justice, because injustice would not exist. Right relationship with God necessarily should lead to social righteousness.
 - What does it look like for us as the people of God to be more concerned and involved in pursuing righteousness and justice in our world?
- Jesus' parable focuses on showing mercy to those in need as an expression of love, rather than bringing the robbers to justice.
 - While both enforcing justice and caring for the victims are things that the state and institutions often do, how can we as individuals practically participate in and support these both at the same time?