

Dover

Daily

DEVOTIONALS

Growing
Together in
God's Word!

Dover Daily Devotions

The sermon on Sunday introduced a series on the Parables of Jesus, focusing specifically on the Parable of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:25-37. It began with a prayer for understanding and application of the lessons within the parable. The sermon then explored the context of the passage, highlighting Jesus' challenge to the traditional view of righteousness and salvation, emphasizing that salvation is a gift from God, not earned through deeds. We delved into the concept of loving God with all one's heart, soul, and mind and redefined the idea of a 'neighbor' to include all people, irrespective of background or status. The characters of the parable – the traveler, priest, Levite, and Samaritan – were examined to illustrate the depth of Jesus' teaching on compassion and love that transcends social and racial boundaries. The sermon encouraged us to live out the message of the Good Samaritan in our daily lives, actively showing God's love and compassion to all, and we concluded with a prayer to embody this spirit in their actions and interactions.

Monday: The Mystery of the Incarnation

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" - Luke 10:25, ESV

Devotional:

"Anyone who thoroughly understands the mystery of the incarnation may say to the lawyer, "If you were skillful in the law and in the meaning of its hidden teaching, you would not forget who he is you try to tempt. You thought that he was a mere man, only man, and not God who appeared in human likeness, knows what is secret, and can look into the hearts of those who approach him. In many ways Emmanuel is depicted to you by the shadowing of Moses. You saw him there sacrificed as a lamb, yet conquering the destroyer and abolishing death by his blood. You saw him in the arrangement of the ark, in which the divine law was deposited. In his holy flesh he was as in an ark, being the Word of the Father, the Son that was begotten of him by nature. You saw him as the mercy seat in the holy tabernacle, around which stood the seraphim." He is our mercy seat for pardon of our sins. Yes, and even as man he is glorified by the seraphim, who are the intelligent and holy powers above. They stand around his divine and exalted throne." - Cyril Of Alexandria

Discussion and Reflection:

The lawyer in Luke 10:25 asks Jesus, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Reflect on your own life and spiritual journey. How often do you find yourself seeking to 'do' something to earn God's favor or salvation, rather than resting in the grace and love of God? What steps can you take to shift your focus from 'doing' to 'being' in God's presence?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we are humbled and awed by the mystery of the incarnation, Your Son, Jesus Christ, who became flesh and dwelt among us. May this understanding transform our relationship with You, deepening our faith and trust. Teach us to rest in the knowledge that our salvation is not something we can earn through deeds but is a gift of Your grace through Jesus Christ, our mercy seat. Forgive us when we falter, and remind us of Your never-ending mercy and love. May we live each day in the light of Your grace, sharing Your love with those around us. We give You thanks and praise, knowing that You are always with us, guiding, loving, and nurturing our souls. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Tuesday: Love God and One's Neighbor

He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." - Luke 10:26-28, ESV

Devotional:

With these verses belongs the text that exposes those who seem to themselves to be experts on the law, who keep the letter of the law but disregard its spirit. He teaches that they are ignorant of the law from its very first chapter. He proves this immediately at the beginning of the law. Both the Father and the Son proclaimed and announced the sacrament of the divine incarnation, saying, "You shall love the Lord your God" and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The Lord said to the lawyer, "Do this, and you shall live." He who did not know his neighbor, because he did not believe in Christ, answered, "Who is my neighbor?" Whoever does not know Christ does not know the law either. How can he know the law when he is ignorant of the Truth, since the law proclaims the Truth? - Ambrose

Discussion and Reflection:

Contemplate the difference between following the letter of the law and embracing its spirit. In what areas of your life might you be adhering more to the letter rather than the spirit of God's teachings? How can you align your actions more closely with the underlying principles of God's law?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, grant us the wisdom to discern the spirit of Your law, going beyond mere compliance to embrace the depth and breadth of Your love. May our lives reflect a genuine commitment to living out these commandments, demonstrating Your love in all our interactions. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who exemplified the perfect love for God and neighbor, we pray. Amen.

Wednesday: All People Are Our Neighbors

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" - Luke 10:29, ESV

Devotional:

Some think that their neighbor is their brother, family, relative or their kinsman. Our Lord teaches who our neighbor is in the Gospel parable of a certain man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho.... Everyone is our neighbor, and we should not harm anyone. If, on the contrary, we understand our fellow human beings to be only our brother and relatives, is it then permissible to do evil to strangers? God forbid such a belief! We are neighbors, all people to all people, for we have one Father. - Jerome

Discussion and Reflection:

How do you define 'neighbor' in your daily life? Does this definition align with the inclusive and universal perspective presented by Jesus in the parable? What steps can you take to expand your understanding and practice of neighborly love?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, You have commanded us to love You with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Lord, open our hearts to truly understand the depth and breadth of this command. Help us to see every person as our neighbor, transcending boundaries of family, kinship, and familiarity. Teach us to love without prejudice or limitation, reflecting Your boundless love in our actions and thoughts. Where our love falls short, fill us with Your grace to extend it further. Where our understanding is limited, enlighten us with Your wisdom. Help us to be instruments of Your peace and love in a world that deeply needs it. May our lives be a testament to the love we have for You and for all Your children. Strengthen us in this mission, and may our love be a beacon of Your presence in this world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Thursday: One Parable - Four Perspectives

Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where

he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'

- Luke 10:30-35, ESV

Devotional:

There are four attitudes displayed in the parable of the good Samaritan

- 1. The Robbers: What's yours is mine if I can get it.*
- 2. The Priest: What's mine is mine if I can keep it.*
- 3. The Innkeeper: What's mine is yours if you can pay for it.*
- 4. The Samaritan: What's mine is yours if you need it."*

- Tear Fund

Discussion and Reflection:

The priest and Levite, despite their religious roles, chose to pass by the injured man. Reflect on times when you might have avoided helping someone in need, possibly due to fear, prejudice, or inconvenience. What motivated your decision, and how can you prepare yourself to respond differently in the future?

Prayer:

We confess, Lord, that too often we walk by those in need, caught up in our own concerns or fears. Forgive us for the times we have acted like the priest or the Levite, choosing convenience and safety over love and service. Instill in us a spirit that is brave and compassionate, willing to cross societal boundaries and personal comfort zones to show Your love to those who are hurting. Grant us the wisdom to use our resources, time, and talents to help others in a way that honors You. We thank You for Your grace and mercy and for the example of selfless love demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ. It's in His holy name we pray.

Friday: Inheriting Eternal Life

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" - Luke 10:25-26

Devotional:

If we speak of eternal life, and the way to it, in a careless manner, we take the name of God in vain. No one will ever love God and his neighbor with any measure of pure, spiritual love, who is not made a partaker

of converting grace. But the proud heart of man strives hard against these convictions. Christ gave an instance of a poor Jew in distress, relieved by a good Samaritan. This poor man fell among thieves, who left him about to die of his wounds. He was slighted by those who should have been his friends, and was cared for by a stranger, a Samaritan, of the nation which the Jews most despised and detested, and would have no dealings with. It is lamentable to observe how selfishness governs all ranks; how many excuses men will make to avoid trouble or expense in relieving others. But the true Christian has the law of love written in his heart. The Spirit of Christ dwells in him; Christ's image is renewed in his soul. The parable is a beautiful explanation of the law of loving our neighbor as ourselves, without regard to nation, party, or any other distinction. It also sets forth the kindness and love of God our Savior toward sinful, miserable men. We were like this poor, distressed traveler. Satan, our enemy, has robbed us, and wounded us: such is the mischief sin has done us. The blessed Jesus had compassion on us. The believer considers that Jesus loved him, and gave his life for him, when an enemy and a rebel; and having shown him mercy, he bids him go and do likewise. It is the duty of us all, in our places, and according to our ability, to succor, help, and relieve all that are in distress and necessity. - Matthew Henry

Discussion and Reflection:

In the context of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, how do we often resemble the lawyer, seeking to justify ourselves? How can we cultivate an attitude of humility and selflessness in our approach to God's commandments?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, instill in us the spirit of the Good Samaritan, to see beyond our prejudices and to act with compassion and mercy. Guide us to love our neighbors as ourselves, reflecting Your boundless love in our daily actions. May we embody the lessons of Your parables in all we do, serving others with the grace and kindness You have shown us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Saturday: Love For Christ As Neighbor

Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise." - Luke 10:36-37, ESV.

Devotional:

Since no one is closer than he who tended to our wounds, let us love him as our Lord, and let us love him as our neighbor. Nothing is so close as the head to the members. Let us also love him who is the follower of Christ, let us love him who in unity of body has compassion on another's need. - Ambrose

Discussion and Reflection:

How does the example of Christ inspire you to be a better neighbor? In what ways does your relationship

with Christ influence your interactions with others, especially those in need?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the profound lesson of the Good Samaritan, taught by Your Son, Jesus Christ. We are reminded through this parable that to be a neighbor means to show mercy and compassion to all, regardless of their circumstances or our differences. Lord, grant us the courage and the heart to love as You have commanded. Help us to see beyond our biases, to break down the barriers that divide us, and to reach out in love and kindness to those who are hurting, marginalized, or in need. Teach us to follow the example of Your Son, who showed us the ultimate meaning of neighborly love through His life, death, and resurrection. May we be inspired by His love to act with compassion, to give selflessly, and to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those around us. We ask for Your wisdom and strength to "go and do likewise," living out the call to love our neighbors as ourselves. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.