

Abounding Love.

Text: Luke 10:25-37

Suggested Hymns:

Tan: 609, 381, 344, 286, 324

Ade: 609, 258, 381, 344, 816

- 1) Is a Christian ministry
- 2) Is of deeds
- 3) Is not limited to immediate needs
- 4) Is a ministry to all
- 5) Is the proof of faith

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 10:25-37, ²⁵ *And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"* ²⁶ *He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"* ²⁷ *So he answered and said, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.' "*

²⁸ *And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."* ²⁹ *But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

³⁰ *Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." ³¹ "Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² "Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.*

³³ *"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴ "So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ "On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' ³⁶ "So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" ³⁷ And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Alice J Nichols wrote the following verse

The Lord Christ wanted a hand one day
To do a loving deed;
He wanted two feet, on an errand for Him,
To run with gladsome speed.
But I had need of my own that day;
To His gentle beseeching I answered, "Nay."

This simple verse, so true of mankind, stresses what often happens with Christians. Abounding love is a virtue that in our day, with its many problems and interests, receives a great deal of lip service, and yet is so often overlooked and neglected. The topic for today's address is *Abounding Love*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Abounding Love Is A Christian's Ministry

This discourse by our Lord, which revolves around the pivotal thought of fulfilling the Law (which fulfilment is love) and in which, in a touching parable, our Lord contrasts true neighbourliness and cold indifference, is vital teaching for us all, because it is the portrait of the Christian's ministry upon this earth.

The instruction is for all of us, because it was spoken "*privately*."¹ It was addressed not only to the Twelve Disciples, but to those who were near our Lord, who were under His teaching, influence, and touch, and therefore also to us.

Having in these days of grace received so much from Divine Love: the Saviour, Jesus Christ, physical blessings beyond our largest expectations and the light of heaven-born truth in the Word, we ought to be aware of the happiness within our reach, conscious of the opportunity, like the Lord of Love, to live out the Law by doing good.

Do we know how much joy is available to us? We know the mysteries of the Kingdom. We know all the good that God has done and is doing. But are we aware that at hand is the opportunity to translate religious truths into moral

principles? These are the truths which lead to the Kingdom of God. These truths are to help us to minister to people everywhere.

This ministry is no impossibility. For us all, this priesthood is no improbability. It was conceived in the heart of God. It reached its earthly fruition in the ministry of the Son of God. The pattern is before us all. It will be carried on as you and I realise that we are never so much like our Master as when we have consideration for, and compassion upon, those who are more hopeless and helpless than ourselves. *“Abounding love”* is the Christian’s ministry.

In this ministry we are living a life that is above the commonplace mentality. To serve our neighbour and Jesus Christ is to live to the fullest. We are part of the royal priesthood, a chosen, and privileged people. We have an honour that is comparable with, and not at all unlike, that belonging to the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament disciples.

Scripture says in John 13:35, ³⁵ *“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

2. Abounding Love Is Of Deeds

“Abounding Love” does not stand still, but acts. It is more than a sympathetic feeling within us. It is a driving force within us that shows more than just an interest in people. It wells over and moves into action.

We must not accuse the lawyer, with whom Jesus discusses the Law and its fulfilment, of trickery or evasiveness. We do, however, acknowledge that the priest and Levite *“who passed by on the other side”* failed to act.

But let us consider for a moment all three personalities. There was no absence of knowledge of the spiritual or unfamiliarity with the Word of God. All three people, the Priest, the Levite and the Samaritan, certainly showed evidence of an interest in the pressing problem of the moment. But, unfortunately for *“him who fell among the thieves,”* and more unfortunately for themselves, they were not certain just how to apply practically their learning and faith, or they lacked the willingness to do so.

We now contrast the Priest and Levite with the Samaritan. In the eyes of the world the Samaritan had no compelling obligation. National and religious

differences created a wide gulf between him and the victim. However, the Samaritan had two assets that were essential to demonstrate abounding love.

Firstly, he had the means. He was prepared for a long arduous journey. Now, when he came upon a person whom he could help, he had the material equipment that the moment required. Secondly, and more importantly, he had the will to help. He had in his heart, burning brightly, the proper spiritual attitude and response. You see, he was well equipped spiritually. That came not of himself. It was heaven-born.

In the hands of the Christian, you and I, today have all these assets. We read in Galatians 6:10 that we are required *as we have opportunity, [to] do good to all*. Our God, by the Holy Spirit, has sanctified us. The seed of willingness is within us. We have the Word of God, which so many people need and which we ought to share with them. In our lives there is so much prosperity. The paths where God has led us *“drip with abundance.”*²

We all have incomes or pensions. Today we are living more prosperously and amid greater abundance than most other people in the world. All we need to effect our ministry of abounding love is the will to help, the will to share, the proper kind attitude of the heart, which, though not of men, but of God, is often smothered by the selfishness of our hearts. To see such a ministry, our Saviour’s life is an ample inspiration.

3. Abounding Love Is Not Limited To Immediate Needs

Our abounding love is never limited by the immediate need of the moment. The Samaritan did more than cleanse and bind up the victim’s wounds. He did more than set him on his beast and take the unfortunate man to somebody else.

We note that he provided for the man’s future needs by supplying the money to do so. Furthermore, he underwrote with a pledge of sincere care, the obligation and discharge of further help of love.

So often we respond to an emergency door collection, *“to help out,”* or deliver a *Christmas Cheer basket*, and so we feel that the obligation is fulfilled. What happens to the need when the last cold, hard crust of bread has been eaten? And what about the tomorrow when the unfortunate person confronts another crisis in his life?

Abounding love will not stand still in the face of suffering. It will not mock with the cry, “*Who is my neighbour?*” but will show itself in deeds. It will show itself in sympathy and help, the limits of which will be measured by the abounding love of God, who gave His dearest and best, His only-begotten Son, as His gift to men — to all people.

4. Abounding Love Is A Ministry To All

For love to be truly abounding, it must minister to all people. It knows and leaves no room for prejudice because of race, religion, social or economic status.

If we abound in love, we will share our Christ and have compassion on all, not only on those to whom we feel immediately and directly obliged, as some do. Maybe sometimes we have heard of churches and people, or even think ourselves that, “*They are not our own,*” or, “*I am looking out for my own.*” Thus, in some strange way, by some devious thinking, we think that we have justified ourselves and have sought to evade a responsibility.

Neither will abounding love be hindered by consideration of personal convenience. It would have been easier for the Samaritan to remain on his beast and to ride on. Surely it was not convenient to get off his animal among the brambles and thicket of the roadside, to lift the battered body on the beast and to trudge on, leading beast and burden to the inn. But the joy and inward satisfaction of loving in deed and in truth was more than compensation for the inconvenience and hardship.

For Jesus the real question is not who is my neighbour but how does one prove oneself a neighbour to others. Being a neighbour is more important than legally defining the term “neighbour.” Jesus makes this hated Samaritan a model for true neighbourliness. The Samaritan is one of the “*little children*” to whom has been revealed the hidden wisdom of God. He sees beyond the racial divisions of this world to the will of God which tells us to love the neighbour whoever that neighbour might be.

This is a parable which shatters the values of the Jewish religion as practiced by the experts of the law and the Pharisees. The priest and Levite are pictured in a bad light, but the Samaritan outcast becomes the example of love.

Neither did the Samaritan expect anything in return. Scripture tells us in Luke 6:27-36, *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.* ...

³² *“But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ “And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ “And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back.*

³⁵ *“But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. ³⁶ “Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.”*

This shows us that we are to show our faith in Christ through love and mercy to others just like our Heavenly Father is merciful *and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*³

5. Abounding Love Is the Proof of Faith

There can be no question that we say with conviction and courage, *“I believe.”* We acknowledge that Jesus Christ is our only Saviour and that in Him alone, is full atonement and reconciliation with the heavenly Father. By faith in His name we go forward with hope in the pilgrimage toward the gateways of glory. But is ours a living faith?

That which is alive must show life. We read in James 2:17, ¹⁷ *Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.* So our faith, like a good tree, must bring forth good fruits — the various manifestations of love.

Nobody would dare to question your love of Christ whose name you bear. Nobody none would presume to judge you. But in the quiet of your heart you ask, *“Since I can never repay Christ in deed, shall I not pour forth that love and gratitude upon others, for whom also He died and whom He loved as much as me?”*

There are so few ties that bind us together in this world. We have so little in common. There is nothing so strong and demanding as that love of others, whom we ought to love as *“I have loved you.”*⁴

When you and I show abounding love to other people, are we not showing our gratitude for Heaven’s abounding love as revealed in the Saviour’s wounds?

Thus we leave our seat at the Cross, the token of love in the lives of men, the pledge of love to the world. And Jesus who is Love looks down and in gentle tone speaks to us in His Word "*My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*"⁵

The early church saw in the Good Samaritan none other than Christ Himself. Nobody else had so perfectly fulfilled the commandment of love. Faith in Jesus is the way to eternal life, a faith which shows its life by love for God and the neighbour.

Let us close with the words of the hymnist,⁶

Our God is love, and all His saints
His image bear below;
The heart with love to God inspired
With love to man will glow.

2

Teach us to love each other, Lord,
As we are loved by Thee;
None who are truly born of God
Can live in enmity.

4

So may the unbelieving world
See how true Christians love;
And glorify our Saviour's grace,
And seek that grace to prove. Amen

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Luke 10:23

² Psa. 65:11

³ Matthew 5:45

⁴ Rev. 3:9

⁵ 1 John 3:18

⁶ Hymn 370