



## WEEKLY STUDY February 11-17, 2024

(Use this guide to individually or with a group dive deeper into this week's sermon.)

### Children's Sunday

**Our entire service on Sunday was led by the children of Belle Meade United Methodist Church.**

**Our scripture this week is: Luke 10:25-37**

"A legal expert stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to gain eternal life?'

Jesus replied, 'What is written in the Law? How do you interpret it?'

He responded, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.'

Jesus said to him, 'You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.'

But the legal expert wanted to prove that he was right, so he said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'

Jesus replied, 'A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He encountered thieves, who stripped him naked, beat him up, and left him near death. Now it just so happened that a priest was also going down the same road. When he saw the injured man, he crossed over to the other side of the road and went on his way. Likewise, a Levite came by that spot, saw the injured man, and crossed over to the other side of the road and went on his way. A Samaritan who was on a journey came to where the man was. But when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. The Samaritan went to him and bandaged his wounds, tending them with oil and wine. Then he placed the wounded man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day, he took two full days' worth of wages and gave them to the innkeeper. He said, 'Take care of him, and when I return, I will pay you back for any additional costs.' What do you think? Which one of these three was a neighbor to the man who encountered thieves?' Then the legal expert said, 'The one who demonstrated mercy toward him.'

Jesus told him, 'Go and do likewise.'" (CEB)

- 1) This week as we saw all the children participating in leading – through bells, song, acting, speaking – I was aware of how much these services help the children of our church realize their church cares about them and values them. Through the years when I was working at The General Board of Discipleship, I was often asked to come to a church and evaluate their children's ministries. Each time I asked to interview children as part of my evaluation. I always asked them these questions, "Do you think your church likes having children in the church?" And "How do you know?" I got to hear from their perspective what it meant to be valued – or not – in their church. For adults who grow up in church, we carry these messages from childhood with us all the rest of our lives.

**Question: As a child, did you feel that you were a valued part of your church? What experiences did you have for leading in worship like the children of our church experienced this Sunday?**

- 2) Our sermon was given by three of the fifth grade girls: George Massey; Rachel Bridges, and Clara Perry. Each one offered their reflection on the scripture passage we call “The Good Samaritan.” In her message, Clara reminded us that we are created in God’s image. She said this passage helps to know we are to prioritize others and she offered the advice of asking questions and listening instead of assuming we know another’s need. She also talked about how, in her class at school, they have a kindness chart. Each day they are encouraged to do acts of kindness for others and report those to one another.

***Question: Reflect on the past few days of your life. Were there times when you provided acts of kindness to others? In what ways have you stopped to listen and learn of another’s need?***

- 3) Rachel was our second speaker. In her comments, she helped us reflect on choices. Each of those who saw the wounded man made a choice about how they would respond. Rachel reminded us that February is Black History Month, and particularly at this time in the year, we reflect on the teachings of Martin Luther King, Jr. Rachel noted that for Martin, faith was more than a belief. Faith was paired with action for change. She told us “God is in everything and in everyone.” And she challenged us to act for change.

***Question: Consider our church, our community, our state, our nation, our world. Where do we need to pair belief and knowledge with action? What can we do individually for change in the world?***

- 4) Georgia was our final speaker. She reminded us that we can see ourselves in each of the characters in Jesus’ parable. She reminded us that all are equal in God’s eyes and all are love. Sometimes we are the one who has been robbed. And she’s talked about being robbed when another person steals our light and our hope. Sometimes in the way we act and talk to another, we steal their light. Sometimes we are the samaritan that acts out of goodness for and with others. Sometimes we are those who pass by perhaps pretending we don’t see the hurt. Listening to Georgia, I thought how easy it is for me to consider myself as the wounded one, and how much harder it is to consider myself as one of the other characters. And certainly, I would like to always see myself as the one who helps, but I have to acknowledge that isn’t always the case. How we view ourselves often influences what actions we will take.

**Question: In the Good Samaritan, which character is the one you most often identify with? How does that influence your actions? Reflecting on the story, what is God’s call to you to remember in your daily actions?**

**Prayer:** (Our prayer this week is the Spoken Benediction from Sunday's service)

"God of love, give us a deep love for you so that we can see the world as you see it, feel the compassion you feel, and be a people whose lives mediate your love to others. Open our eyes that we might see what the Good Samaritan saw. Grant us the insight to see the need in others, the wisdom to know what to do, and the will to do it. Send us forth, that we might not cross the road from human need. Help us see your love at work in this world, that we too might go and do likewise. Amen"

**Weekly Challenge:** Challenge yourself to daily do acts of kindness. Challenge yourself to daily notice the needs of others. At the end of each day, reflect on the needs you noticed and the actions you took.

*(Weekly study guide prepared by Rev. MaryJane Pierce Norton)*