

5th Sunday after Pentecost July 14, 2019

Proper 10(15) or 4th Sunday after Trinity

Year C – the Gospel of Luke

Lutheran

Living the ^ Lectionary

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
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<http://revbickers.blogspot.com/2013/07/the-good-samaritan-luke-1025-37.html>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 845 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not listed
“Where charity and love prevail”

“Omer Westendorf, (*translator*) one of the earliest lyricists for Roman Catholic liturgical music in English, died on October 22, 1997, at the age of eighty-one.

Born on February 24, 1916, Omer got his start in music publishing after World War II, when he brought home for his parish choir in Cincinnati some of the Mass settings he had discovered in Holland. Interest in the new music being published in Europe led to his creation of the World Library of Sacred Music, initially a music-importing firm that brought much of this new European repertoire to U.S. parishes. Operating out of a garage in those early years, Omer often joked about the surprised expressions of visitors who stopped by and found a wide range of sheet music in various states of “storage” (read disarray)...

Using his own name and several pen names, Omer composed numerous compositions for liturgical use, though his best-known works may be the texts for the hymns “Where Charity and Love Prevail,” “Sent Forth by God’s Blessing,” and especially “Gift of Finest Wheat.”... liturgicalleaders.blogspot.com/2008...”

- https://hymnary.org/person/Westendorf_O
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udEA6igfbs8> St. Lorenz Evangelical Lutheran Church & School 140 Churchgrove Road, Frankenmuth, MI
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fogRWqYogsE> Different melody. “lyrics added so you can sing along” [drolas94](https://www.youtube.com/user/drolas94) Published on Feb 17, 2011
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTbnOall7oA> Guitar and voice. [Chris Brunelle](https://www.youtube.com/user/ChrisBrunelle)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUxZ6HU2Lr0> Piano + choir sung in Latin Oklahoma State University Seretean Center Concert Hall November 10, 2011

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001
by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](http://www.crossway.com)

O.T.– “I am the LORD your God. ⁵ You shall therefore keep my statutes...”

Psalm – “As for me, I said, “O LORD, be gracious to me;”

Epistle – “giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance...”

Gospel – *“What is written in the Law? How do you read it?”*

Leviticus (18:1-5), 19:9-18; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Amos 7:7-17 or Deuteronomy 30:9-14 (Next week: Genesis 18:1-10a(10b-14); RCL, Amos 8:1-12 or Genesis 18:1-10a)

“The book of Leviticus is a minefield full of topics that nobody wants to talk about in church: animal sacrifice, blood-sprinkling, moldy walls, oozing sores, gashed flesh, “a swelling or an eruption or a spot” (Leviticus 14:56), and bodily emissions of any kind.

Here in Leviticus 19, the lectionary has managed to find a few relatively continuous verses that should not make your liturgist squirm or blush to read aloud in Sunday worship. Before we think about these verses, though, it will be helpful to consider all that is left out before, after, and in-between these lines from Leviticus 19...

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3165
[Cameron B.R. Howard](#) Associate Professor of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.

Leviticus 18:1-5 Unlawful Sexual Relations (See verses 6-30 to understand the reason for this section title.)

18 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, I am the LORD your God. ³You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes. ⁴You shall follow my rules^[a] and keep my statutes and walk in them. I am the LORD your God. ⁵You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.

- a. [Leviticus 18:4](#) Or *my just decrees*; also verse [5](#)

“Verses 1-5 thus serve as the preamble to the stipulations, the regulations which are to follow. In this message I wish to focus on the message of the preamble, for it is the basis for the laws which are to be given and of God’s demand that they be kept. In verses 1-5 one phrase is repeated three times: “I am the LORD (your God).” The importance of this statement can hardly be overemphasized. It provides us with a vital clue to the structure of this paragraph. Three crucial statements are made, each of which is concluded with the statement, “I am the LORD (your God).”

- <https://bible.org/seriespage/12-obedience-obligation-being-owned-leviticus-181-5> Robert L. (Bob)Deffinbaugh ... is a pastor/teacher and elder at Community Bible Chapel in Richardson, Texas,

Leviticus 19:9-18 Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

⁹“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. ¹⁰And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.

¹¹“You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another.

¹²You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

¹³“You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. ¹⁴You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

¹⁵“You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. ¹⁶You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life^[a] of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

¹⁷“You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. ¹⁸You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

a. [Leviticus 19:16](#) Hebrew *blood*

“...The text is interesting to us because our Lord uses it to teach us how we are to live as his children in this world. Verses 9–18, especially, help us think through what it looks like to “love your neighbor like yourself.”[1] It is important to remember that while both the OT text “love your neighbor as yourself” and not loving as God asks—primarily, they are both given to people whom God has redeemed and brought into his kingdom by grace, people who have a relationship with Yahweh and to whom Yahweh has made his promises. Therefore, the words are meant to help us understand what kind of people we are to be, now that we belong to Christ. What are our lives to look like and how can they best reflect Christ? It is from this perspective that Leviticus 1–2, 9–18 have something to teach us.

Endnote

[1] Luther also makes the point that texts like Leviticus 19:9–18, are relevant to us, not because Moses gave the law but because its content, like the Ten Commandments, has been written into the hearts of all men...”

- <https://concordiatheology.org/2014/02/epiphany-7-•-leviticus-19-1-2-9-18-•-february-23-2014/> Timothy Saleska in *Homiletical Helps*

Psalm 41; RCL, Psalm 82 or Psalm 25:1-10 (Psalm 27:91-6), 7-14; RCL, Psalm 52 or Psalm 15)

“To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. This title has frequently occurred before, and serves to remind us of the value of the Psalm, seeing that it was committed to no mean songster; and also to inform us as to the author who has made his own experience the basis of a prophetic song, in which a far greater than David is set forth. How wide a range of experience David had! What power it gave him to edify future ages! And how full a type of our Lord did he become! What was bitterness to him has proved to be a fountain of unending sweetness to many generations of the faithful...”

- <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/treasury-of-david/psalms-41-1.html> David Spurgeon

O LORD, Be Gracious to Me

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

41 Blessed is the one who considers the poor!^[a]
 In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him;
 2 the LORD protects him and keeps him alive;
 he is called blessed in the land;
 you do not give him up to the will of his enemies.
 3 The LORD sustains him on his sickbed;
 in his illness you restore him to full health.^[b]

4 As for me, I said, "O LORD, be gracious to me;
heal me,^[c] for I have sinned against you!"
 5 *My enemies say of me in malice,*
"When will he die, and his name perish?"
 6 *And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words,*
while his heart gathers iniquity;
when he goes out, he tells it abroad.
 7 *All who hate me whisper together about me;*
they imagine the worst for me.^[d]

8 *They say, "A deadly thing is poured out"*^[e] *on him;*
he will not rise again from where he lies."
 9 *Even my close friend in whom I trusted,*
who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.
 10 But you, O LORD, be gracious to me,
 and *raise me up*, that I may repay them!

11 By this *I know* that you delight in me:
 my enemy will not shout in triumph over me.
 12 But you have upheld me because of my integrity,
 and set me in your presence forever.

13 **Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
 from everlasting to everlasting!**
Amen and Amen.

- a. [Psalm 41:1](#) Or *weak*
- b. [Psalm 41:3](#) Hebrew *you turn all his bed*
- c. [Psalm 41:4](#) Hebrew *my soul*
- d. [Psalm 41:7](#) Or *they devise evil against me*
- e. [Psalm 41:8](#) Or *has fastened*

Cross references: [Psalm 41:9](#) : [Cited John 13:18](#)

“This psalm closes Book I ... and gives evidence of that closing function. The opening words, **“Happy (Blessed) are those...”** reach back to link up with the beginning of Book I, in Psalm 1:1. Psalm 1 described happiness in terms of the delight that comes from studying the scriptures. Psalm 41 speaks of the happiness that results from helping the poor. Considering these two psalms as “bookends” for Book I can be a reminder that biblical religion includes both immersion in the scripture and involvement in the problems of the poor.

The central part of the psalm is a *prayer*, addressed to the Lord and exhibiting elements typical of the lament... The **requests** in verse 4 and 10...frame a **“they” complaint** in verses 5-9. Verses 11 and 12 **affirms** the psalmists trust in the Lord’s ongoing help, while verse 13 functions to wrap up Book I on a note of praise...”

- *Psalms Westminster Bible Companion*, Pages 136-7, James Limburg; Westminster John Knox Press, copyright 2000

Colossians 1:1-14; RCL, the same reading (Colossians 1:21-29; RCL, Colossians 1:15-28)

This text seemingly consists of the rather mundane opening of Paul’s letter to Christians living in the town of Colossae.

There is more at work in the text, however, than one might gather from an initial, cursory reading...

...in the letter’s opening the author of Colossians has anchored the audience’s past, present, and future in God’s salvific activity in Christ. We are no longer imprisoned in darkness. We now experience the liberating effect of forgiveness as well as understand and enact God’s will through our conduct. We have been promised a future inheritance that already exists for us in heaven because we have been made God’s holy people...”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1737 [Richard Carlson](#) Professor of New Testament, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Gettysburg, Pa.

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

²To the saints and faithful brothers^[a] in Christ at Colossae:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, ⁷just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your^[b] behalf ⁸and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

⁹ And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹² giving thanks^[c] to the Father, who has qualified you^[d] to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- a. [Colossians 1:2](#) Or *brothers and sisters*. In New Testament usage, depending on the context, the plural Greek word *adelphoi* (translated “brothers”) may refer either to *brothers* or to *brothers and sisters*
- b. [Colossians 1:7](#) Some manuscripts *our*
- c. [Colossians 1:12](#) Or *patience, with joy giving thanks*
- d. [Colossians 1:12](#) Some manuscripts *us*

“EPAPHRAS: AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

In Colossians 4:12 the apostle Paul describes Epaphras as “a servant of Christ Jesus”. He is mentioned only three times in the New Testament – in Colossians 1:7-8; 4:12-13 and Philemon 23. He was a native of Colosse and a zealous worker for the Lord; through his ministry many of his fellow-countrymen had been converted, and thus the church at Colosse had been founded. In this church, as well as in the assemblies at Laodicea and Hierapolis, Epaphras exercised a pastoral and a teaching ministry (Colossians 4:12-13).

1. EPAPHRAS WAS A BELOVED FELLOW-WORKER

In Colossians 1:7 the apostle describes Epaphras as his “dear fellow-servant”. There was a special reason for referring to him in this way. At the time this epistle was written Epaphras was with Paul in prison, and he had visited Paul to seek his advice and counsel concerning errors which were creeping into the church at Colosse. But he did not only seek help, for without doubt he gave much help to Paul, comforting him and ministering to him in a number of different ways. What a great privilege it was for Epaphras to minister to God’s honoured, suffering apostle, and how natural that Paul should feel a deep affection for Epaphras!...”

- <https://www.wordsoflife.co.uk/bible-studies/study-8-epaphras-an-example-to-follow/> David and Mary Tucker have been directing WORDS OF LIFE MINISTRIES for 19 years and oversee the continued printing and distribution of the Bible study notes and the upkeep of this website

“Was Paul just undisciplined or did his writing get away from him?

Or did he dictate this letter so quickly and with such enthusiasm that his secretary (likely Tychicus, 4:7) didn’t think about punctuation and sentence structure? You see, after a brief salutation (Colossians 1:1-2), this epistle launches into a long, run-on sentence that stretches from 1:3 to 1:14, and then adds on a poem (Colossians 1:15-20) for good measure. The

preacher is advised to avoid such monster sentences while embracing and proclaiming the breathtaking scope and depth of what Paul here writes.¹

Let me suggest a hermeneutical principle: *Always read the New Testament with Old Testament eyes.* Or to shift the metaphor, always hear the New Testament with the ears of Hebrew scripture. Of course allowing the lectionary to shape our worship and our preaching is already living by this hermeneutical principle.

So as we begin to read this passage from Colossians what Old Testament allusions or echoes might we immediately begin to notice? And how might attending to those connections deepen our reading and our preaching?

Let's begin with the metaphor of 'fruit.' Paul employs the metaphor three times in the span of four verses. "Just as [the gospel] is *bearing fruit* and growing in the whole world, so it has been *bearing fruit* among yourselves ... " (Colossians 1:6). And then he prays that the community would "lead lives fully worthy of the Lord ... as you *bear fruit* in every good work ... " (Colossians 1:10). Isn't it lovely that our reading from Deuteronomy today (*RCL reading*) employs the same metaphor? Torah obedience, the text assures, "will make you abundantly prosperous in all your undertakings, in the *fruit* of your body, in the *fruit* of your livestock, and in the *fruit* of your soil" (Deuteronomy 30:9)...

Beyond the happy serendipity of the metaphor occurring in two of our texts for today, might we "fruitfully" investigate this relationship more closely? Might it be that when Paul, a Jew deeply embedded in the narrative and symbolism of the Hebrew scriptures, employs a metaphor like "fruit" there is a whole wealth of allusion to be unpacked? In the biblical imagination fruitfulness is always connected to faithfulness while disobedience and idolatry invariably results in fruitlessness. But what is this fruitfulness that we are talking about? Evoking a covenantal shalom that permeates all of life, our reading from Deuteronomy refers to the fruitfulness of our bodies, our livestock, our soil. This is a familial, procreative, agricultural, and ecological fruitfulness...

Paul's prayer for the community mirrors the purpose of his letter. He prays that they "may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, *so that* you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:9-10). That is also Paul's agenda in this epistle. It is, if you will, a catechetical text. An epistle for deepening knowledge, wisdom and understanding. But the goal is not to acquire abstract theological information. No, this is a transformative knowing, rooting this young Gentile Christian community ever more deeply in the story of Jesus understood through the narrative of Israel. Without growing in such knowledge, without being more deeply shaped by this story, the community will be barren, devoid of good fruit. No wonder the psalmist this week prays, "Lead me in your truth, and teach me" (Psalm 25:5).

Again, Paul evokes the story of Israel in the language that he uses. Employing metaphors of covenant and election, he calls his listeners to give "thanks to the Father, who has enabled [or 'called'] you to share the *inheritance* of the *saints* in the *light*" (Colossians 1:12). And he clearly understands redemption in Jesus in terms of the exodus tradition when he concludes our passage with language of being "*rescued* from the power of darkness and transferred ... into the *kingdom* of his beloved Son, in whom we have *redemption, the forgiveness of sins*" (1:13-14).

Notes:

¹These commentaries on Colossians will assume Pauline authorship of this epistle.

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2924 [Brian J. Walsh](#) Christian Reformed Campus Minister, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

Double Secret Reverse Proclamation

“...What we have in Colossians 1:1-14 is a rhetorical reversal. The gospel is not proclaimed in order to equip and elicit a response, rather, the fruits of the Christian life are declared (not exhorted but declared) in order to proclaim the gospel in reverse. What has already been proclaimed is reclaimed in order to praise the Colossians' faithful living, faithful living which is only possible because faith has been quickened by the word which has already been preached and presumably heard and, by the power of the Spirit, received through faith. This may be confusing. This is something of a mystery. This may well elicit the occasional stupid question or foolish effort. But above all it is "the word of the truth of the gospel." Let those whose ears have heard, hear again...”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=683 [Karl Jacobson](#) Senior Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Minneapolis, Minn.

Luke 10:25-37; RCL, the same reading (Luke 10:38-42; RCL, the same reading)

“In the Lukan context, the parable of the Good Samaritan is prompted by a dialogue between Jesus and a lawyer...”

The meaning of the parable in a larger Greco-Roman context is illuminated by relating the Samaritan's act of compassion with the virtue of philanthropy as practiced in the ancient world and as it would have been understood by an ancient audience. Of course, that such virtuous philanthropy is exhibited by a Samaritan and not the pious Jewish layperson would have come as a surprise to the lawyer listening to the story in Luke (and no doubt to Jesus' Jewish audience)...”

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2912 [Mikeal C. Parsons](#) Professor and Kidd L. and Buna Hitchcock Macon Chair of Religion, Baylor University; Waco, Texas

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 10th Chapter”

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

²⁵ And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He (*Jesus*) said to him (*the lawyer*), **“What is written in the Law? How do you read it?”** ²⁷ And he (*the lawyer*) 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.” ²⁸ And

he (*Jesus*) said to him (*the lawyer*) , *“You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”*

²⁹ But he (*the lawyer*), desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ 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. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii^[a] and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” ³⁷ He said (*the lawyer*), “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him (*the lawyer*), *“You go, and do likewise.”**

- a. [Luke 10:35](#) A denarius was a day's wage for a laborer

*Cited from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

Background and situation: Part of the text is Markan (12:28-33). (See the parallel in Matthew 22: 35-38.) The parable of the compassionate Samaritan is a Lukan addition however. Luke takes the Markan core, which is focused on the Great Commandment, and reweaves it into an introduction for the parable.

In terms of its placement within Luke, the text follows upon the mission of the 70/72 (1-20) and Jesus' rejoicing and prayer of thanks (21-24). The lawyer's approach and questions occur in the presence of the 70/72 and possibly others as well.

One should keep in mind Deuteronomy 6:5--"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might"--as well as Leviticus 19 and Leviticus 21. Leviticus 19:18 contains the injunction to "love your neighbor as yourself." In Leviticus 19:34, the "alien" is included: "you shall love the alien as yourself." Leviticus 21: 1-3 says no priest "shall defile himself for a dead person among his relatives." Consider also Daniel 12:2 for the first use of the phrase "eternal life."

Text: Jesus had been exulting with the 70/72 at the return of their mission (21-24) when a lawyer (*nomikos*) approaches Jesus. Typically, the word "scribes" is used instead of "lawyer." Indeed, the Markan source calls the person a "scribe." (Matthew (22:35) changed this to "lawyer," the only use of "lawyer" in Matthew's gospel.)

Luke refers to lawyers six times. The scribes--scriptural lawyers, you might say--had been Temple-based. With the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, the scribes lost their

position. At the time of Luke's writing, c. AD 85, the "scribes" had probably evolved into "lawyers."

Then, as now, the presence of a lawyer indicates that complications are about to arise. Lawyers worry about exactitude and the definition of terms. Luke tells us that the lawyer is "testing" Jesus with his question about how to attain "eternal life." The concept of "eternal life" was rather new within Judaism--see Daniel 12--and was frequently debated in the time of Jesus..."

- https://www.progressiveinvolvement.com/progressive_involvement/2010/07/lectionary-blogging-luke-10-2537.html Posted by John Petty

My name is Elazar, and I am a Samaritan. You may be surprised to hear that because many people think we live only on the pages of the Bible. However, there are still several hundred of us living today near Mount Gerizim, our holy mountain in the region still bearing the name of our forefathers, Samaria. Technically, we are Palestinians and we actually have a seat in the Palestinian parliament. We are confined to our compound by the Israeli authority and because of security concerns, people of the outside world have little access to us and we have little access to them.

We have been in this area since at least the 6 th Century B.C. and have endured centuries of hatred and persecution. Our home is the ancient Shechem where the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms split after King Solomon's death... After the Judeans returned from their exile in Babylon, we were not regarded as worthy to help them rebuild their heritage. We kept our allegiance to Moses' Torah and established our own temple on Mt. Gerizim. We never accepted the rest of the books which Jews and Christians today regard as their Bible or Old Testament. For these reasons, we were often regarded as outsiders and renegades.

Down through the centuries we were persecuted by Jews, who destroyed our sanctuary in 170 A.D., by Muslims, who called us atheists, and by Christian crusaders, who took our city as their second capitol and called it Naples (now corrupted to Nablus)... "

- <http://www.theologie.uzh.ch/predigten/archiv-6/040711-4-e.html>
A Sermon by David Zersen President Emeritus, Concordia University at Austin, Austin, Texas

"Who is my neighbor?" the man asks. And his hope is that Jesus will say something to the effect (in Frederick Buechner's wonderful embellishment), "Very well: henceforth a neighbor (hereafter referred to as the party of the first part) shall be defined as meaning a person of Jewish descent whose legal residence is within a radius of no more than three statute miles from one's own legal residence, unless there is another person of Jewish descent (hereafter referred to as the party of the second part) living closer to the party of the first part than one is oneself, in which case the party of the second part is to be construed as the neighbor to the party of the first part and one is then oneself relieved of all responsibility of any kind to the matters hereunto appertaining."

Well, if you are looking for a loophole to maintain the fiction of your perfect love for God and neighbor, then that type of reply would help a great deal indeed. The people who would then count as your neighbors would be restricted to a handful of folks whom you already know

and probably also already love. But to state the incredibly obvious, that is not the answer Jesus gave. Jesus does not give a legal definition but instead tells a story...

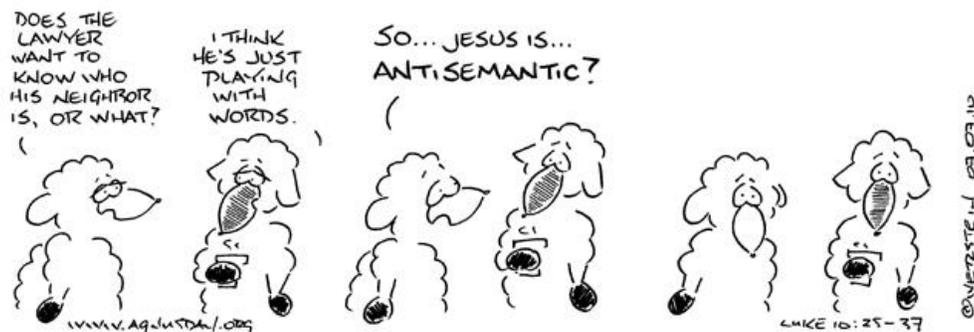
Now at this point you assume that Jesus will say, "You asked who your neighbor is, and now I'm telling you: your neighbor is that anonymous man in the ditch." That would make sense for Jesus to say that. The man had asked, "Who is my neighbor" and so Jesus shows a faceless and nameless crime victim as his parabolic answer to that question.

But take very careful note: that is *not* what Jesus says.

Instead, Jesus turns things around and asks, "Now, which of the three passersby acted as a neighbor **to** the mugging victim?" This is a subtle shift in emphasis, but it packs a wallop! You see, we tend to think like this lawyer: we think that what we need to do is scan the society around us to see who *out there* counts as my neighbor. But here Jesus says that figuring that out is less important than making sure that *you yourself* act as a neighbor to everyone you meet. Who those other folks out in society are, how they treat you, what they look like, whether or not they seem like folks with whom you have some stuff in common is not nearly so important as making sure that whoever *they* are, *you* are **their** neighbor.

"Who is my neighbor?" the lawyer asked. In the end Jesus says, "Nevermind that: are *you* a neighbor?" Of course, the two questions are related: the implication of the parable is that indeed, everyone is my neighbor and that is why I must be a good neighbor to them. But the shift in emphasis in verse 36 reveals again Jesus' desire that we become bearers of love everywhere we go. If our hearts are full of grace, mercy, compassion, and love (for both God and everyone else), then we won't ask, "Who is my neighbor" because it won't matter: the question becomes irrelevant if you are yourself already *being* a neighbor..."

- https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-10c/?type=the_lectionary_gospel Scott Hoezee



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"...The lawyer had asked, "Who is my neighbor?" The question assumes a discourse on who, exactly, is "one who is near" and who isn't. At what point can we say that "neighbor" stops and "stranger" begins? Who, exactly, am I obligated to love?

Jesus ignores that question. Instead, he tells a story of an enemy--an enemy who, through his merciful actions, becomes neighbor. If a Samaritan may become neighbor to a Jewish man, and the lawyer is enjoined to be like the Samaritan, then anyone may be neighbor. It is not a question of where to draw the line, but rather of erasing that line entirely."

- https://www.progressiveinvolvement.com/progressive_involvement/2010/07/lectionary-blogging-luke-10-2537.html Posted by John Petty