

By Bessie Wilbon

Sunday School Lesson

INTRODUCTION

This lesson underscores our human tendency to voice noble resolve. We sing "All to Jesus I Surrender" when we find it hard to surrender much of anything to Him. We sing "Jesus is All the World to Me" when He sometimes seems to count very little. It seems that the feeling of many people is that all men are equal before God, all are loved by Him, and all should be our concern, but only if they are truly homogeneous with us.

THE LESSON

"A teacher of the law came up and tried to trap Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to receive eternal life?' Jesus answered him, 'What do the Scriptures say? How do you interpret them?' The man answered, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as you love yourself.' 'You are right,' Jesus replied, 'do this and you will live.'" (Luke 10:25-28)

The lawyer was one of the scholars who specialized in the Old Testament law. Probably he was a Pharisee, for members of that sect took great pride in their devotion to the law. He wasn't seeking information. He tempted Jesus. The term tempted is not used here in the sense of a solicitation to sin, but rather as a test of Jesus' wisdom and of His competency in handling the Scripture. Knowing the prejudice of most of the lawyers, we suppose this one was hoping that Jesus would fail the test and be discredited before the listening people.

When Jesus was asked about the requirements for eternal life, He referred to the laws of the Ten Commandments. The fact is the law with its commands was in effect until Jesus died on the cross. By His death, Jesus inaugurated a new age in which men were to be saved through trust in Him. At the time of His death the veil of the temple was torn apart, also showing that a "new and living way" to God was now opened.

The lawyer's answer was a summary of the principal teaching of the law as found in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. There is great power in these words. To love God is so much more than just to respect Him, or be in awe of His might, or to be sobered by His righteousness. To love Him is to appreciate His goodness, His concern for us, His many gifts in the creation of this earth, and above all what He did to reveal Himself to us in the sending of His Son. We should want to do His will, to know Him better. We should desire to please Him and delight in Him. This love should not be halfhearted. It must be vital and vibrant within us. It cannot be just an emotional impulse, but must engage our very best thought. The more our hearts open to God the more His peace, purity, and sensitivity will blossom within us. The more our minds contemplate His works of wisdom and grace the more delighted and enthralled we shall be. This relationship with God is not cultivated in an "isolation booth" where we can hear, see, or communicate with no one but God. All His children are bound up with Him in life, so when John speaks of abiding in "the love of the Father," again and again he stresses how important it is to love our brothers and sisters also.

The lawyer had asked Jesus to define or explain who was his neighbor - that is, whom did the commandment of God say he was to love "as himself?" But the law did not exactly define who is a neighbor, nor did Jesus describe one's neighbor in terms of national identity, racial type, or religious allegiance. He turned the lawyer's thinking from "whom am I required to love, and therefore, help?" to "Who, by loving and helping, showed that he was a neighbor?" Neighborliness is based on opportunity, availability, and compassionate concern. Do we have the opportunity because of various circumstances to be kind and helpful? Do we have the available means to render assistance? And do we have the concern that leads us to act?

It seems so obvious that no argument was possible when Jesus asked which one of the three travelers who saw the wounded man (Luke 10:29-37) was really a neighbor to him. All saw his need and could have done something to relieve that need. But only the Samaritan had compassion on the man and did something to help him. The real obedience to God's command to love was seen in the deeds of mercy that were done by the Samaritan. His religious theory may have been at fault, his social status among the Jews may have been scorned, but his actions are those of compassionate concern - pleasing to God. The Scripture offers persistent stress on the works of love that the believer in God shall carry out.

Through television, other means of communication, and transportation now available to us we are able to know about and help people in remote areas of the world. Jet planes can whisk one almost anywhere in a short time. We can therefore become aware of human need and opportunities for Christian service in many places, and can have a part in filling those needs. It is possible to spend a week or two at mission outposts, serving as electricians, plumbers, carpenters, cooks, nurses, teachers, etc. We can spend some time right here in our own city as volunteers for the Crisis Ministry, the Food Bank, the Crisis Clothing Ministry, the Day Care Shelter for Street People, etc. Needs that may be met by those willing to serve.

One who possesses the spirit of a neighbor, as Jesus described it in the parable of the Good Samaritan, will always find ways and means to help others whenever and wherever we can.

It is not enough to be able to say, "I didn't harm anyone," if one must also say, "But I didn't help anyone either."



Esther Fybrace of Charlotte poses with her retirement plaque and a brick from Highland Junior High School in Gastonia, where she taught for 10 of her 42 years in the education field. Mrs. Fybrace, a home economics teacher, retired in November. (Photo by Audrey Lodato)

Solid Waste Management Plan

A public hearing will be held Thursday night, February 13, at the Environmental Health Department, 1200 Blythe Blvd., for discussion of a proposed solid waste management plan for Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The hearing will begin at 7 p.m.

The hearing will be conducted by the County's Solid Waste Management Advisory Board, an official advisory board to the Board of County Commissioners. The waste management board will submit the proposed plan to the County Commissioners for their consideration and approval on March 3. In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, County government is responsible for solid waste disposal.

Executive summaries of the plan are available in the County Engineering Department, 700 N. Tryon Street, and in the County's

Public Service and Information Department, 720 E. Fourth St. The entire document is available for the public to read at the Engineering Department.

Persons who wish to be heard at the public hearing are asked to call the Engineering Department, 336-3874, to have their names put on the agenda. It is suggested that a written copy of the comments also be provided to the advisory board at the time of the hearing. You are asked to limit your remarks to five minutes. Persons who cannot attend the public hearing may submit their comments in writing to the Engineering Department.

For additional information, contact Cary Saul, County Engineering Department, 336-2713, or Mary McDaniel, chairman of the Solid Waste Management Advisory Board, 597-2307.

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Older Women Issues

As women move on into maturity well-being and health may become a major issue. WomanReach, Inc., UNCC Women's Studies Program, and Community Health Services are jointly sponsoring a lecture, "Is There Life After 40? The Health Issues of Older Women," February 5, Wednesday, at 7 p.m. The lecture will be held at Community Health Services, 1401 E. 7th St. The lecturer will be Dr. Betty Gordon.

The WomanReach Center is a United Way Agency. The facilities are handicapped accessible and services are freely given and freely received. For more information and to register, call a WomanReach peer counselor. Monday - Saturday, from 100 a.m. to 4 p.m., at 334-3614.

Sorority Workshop

Members of the Iota Chapter of the Chi Eta Phi Sorority have recently completed training with the American Cancer Society and are now qualified to conduct workshops in areas of breast, uterine, cervical, lung, and colon-rectal cancers.

Any group or organization interested in scheduling a workshop should call 527-9029 up until 2 p.m. and 399-0205 after 4:30 p.m.

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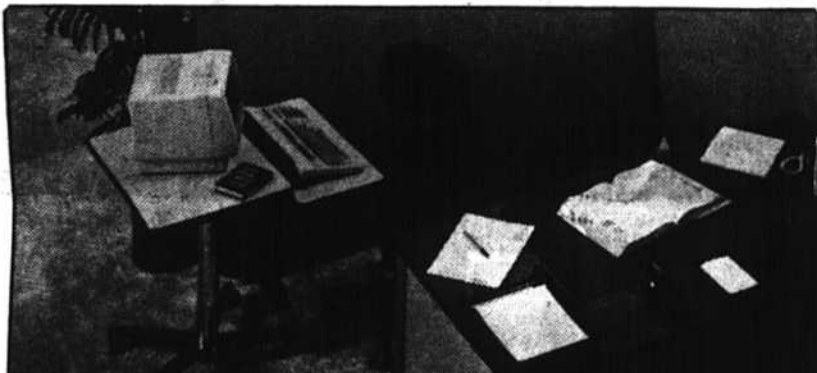
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