

RULE TWO: Short on Words; Long on Action Luke 10:25-37
Second in Four Week Series: Jesus Help Desk

Saint Marks UMC, Charleston, WV
6th Sunday after Pentecost (July 10) 2016

^{10:25} And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” ²⁷ 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.” ²⁸ And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”

²⁹ But he, 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 one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

1. REPRISE – We are on a journey; Christianity is not a spectator sport
This sermon series is about help along the way – that Jesus offered to His disciples then and to us today.
We do not live out of fear; if people can’t accept that message, this is THEIR PROBLEM not yours. Their opinion does not determine your value
2. The lawyer, like so many who "pushed back" on Jesus wanted to play with the law – to run around on that track up in their heads round and round. They wanted to be RIGHT. **They LOVED ideas more than**

they loved PEOPLE. And in today's Gospel, as per usual, Jesus pulled open the trap door below that LAW running track and pulled them down into the REAL WORLD. Jesus was not so much interested in ORTHODOXY (right belief) as He was ORTHOPRAXY (right practice/action). **Jesus loved PEOPLE; they loved ideas.**

3. In today's Gospel, we hear about a short discussion of the LAW and then the lawyer "**wanting to justify himself**" pushes the issue – more definition, more refinement, more running around on the track inside the head. And it ends (after Jesus' story in which the lawyer has to admit something he doesn't want to admit-in fact the lawyer would not even say the word Samaritan" in answer to Jesus' question - only "the one who showed mercy") Jesus says; GO AND DO LIKEWISE
4. *When I was in seminary, we had a new bishop come to West Virginia. In that first year, he made a seminary visit and had lunch with the seminary students from West Virginia. I asked him to give me – not an episcopal ruling, but some advice on a ticklish pastoral issue.*
*I told him how Bill and Sue began dating when they lived in Preston County, West Virginia. Not wanting to upset their parents, who did not approve of their courtship, they went to Garrett County Maryland (the adjoining county and state) to get married. Then they moved to Pennsylvania, to begin their marriage. After awhile, they realized that the marriage had been a mistake, and they got divorced in Pennsylvania. As these things work out, they both ended up moving back to Preston County, West Virginia. And now, I asked (to illustrate this sermon point about our infatuation with things legal, in the church): Tell me, Bishop, are they, after all of that, now **still brother and sisten?***

He looked at me, without a word on his lips, and then just shook his head. Did not even give me an answer, and (I suspect) he wondered “Just what did I get into in moving from Maine to West Virginia?!” I don’t know what you did to irritate him, that same bishop appointed me here shortly before he left

5. We can be soooooo certain about WHAT IS RIGHT. But our CERTAINTY bears no relationship to BEING CORRECT.

I’m reading the book “April 1865” about the Civi War, and found out that shortly before the war ended – even after how slavery had been the primary basis of the breakup of the union, the Confederate States of America (in a last ditch effort to get more soldiers with which to win the war) voted for the emancipation of slaves, if they would serve as soldiers! One Richmond newspaper wrote: How can we do this? It’s what we began fighting about. Now we will reverse our position, just to win! To win what?

6. It’s so easy to be right in our own eyes and then
7. “Child Abuse” is a term not coined until 1960. Prior to that time, whether or not a person brat their children, and physically harmed their children – this was seen as a PRIVACY ISSUE – I have a right to do with what lives in my own household. The state does not have right to tell me what to do with my own children. **We can be soooooo certain about WHAT IS RIGHT. But our CERTAINTY bears no relationship to BEING CORRECT**
8. This past week – in Dallas. Flashback for me to Belfast – to a time when I was there, in the beginning of this century, this millennium ... call a cop and then gun him down.

9. **We've got to love**, Jesus says.

The Kingdom is at hand

We have to be the lamb lying down with the wolf

10. We CAN and we MUST love our neighbor ... even when they are "wrong"

11. Look at tear off sheet – how do YOU respond:

SERMON NOTES

A. There has been a terrible (one in a century force) downpour and flooding. A nearby town has been practically destroyed, as well as other towns in your state. Which of the following will you do?

1 ___ Watch the news about it on CNN, Fox, or MSNBC even though you finally realize that you have not seen anything new reported in quite some time; you keep watching in hopes of seeing something new.

2 ___ Give money through your church to help disaster relief

3. ___ Participate in discussions (in person or by internet, etc.) as to whether global warming is/is not responsible for this.

4. ___ Volunteer to do laundry of bed linens and towels, and to make snacks, for flood relief volunteers who will be staying in the church overnight for the next several weeks.

B. There has been yet another terrible act of violence in an American town. Which of the following will you do?

1 ___ Watch the news about it on CNN, Fox, or MSNBC even though you finally realize that you have not seen anything new reported in quite some time; you keep watching in hopes of seeing something new.

2 ___ Participate in discussions (in person or by internet, etc.) as to whether gun control should/ should not be enacted, and/or which political person/group or terrorist group is responsible for this, and/or which political person/group will be most helpful in preventing future incidents.

4. ___ Volunteer to do children & senior relationship building in church project (www.umc.org/what-we-believe/church-pen-pals-seal-generation-gap)

C. Which answer in A & B will actually do the most good?

D. Which answer in A & B would Jesus want you to do?

12. It's not easy. I can (and sometimes do) get angry with how the world around me acts. I am often incited by people who simply don't care. My anger has YET to improve any situation ... other than drive my blood pressure up
- One time – when a woman in the “helping profession” treated my mother badly, I was “irritated” and let her know my dissatisfaction. She said to me (who was wearing my “dog collar”) “I can't believe that you are a minister and act like this.” To which I said, “And I can't believe that you claim to be someone working in a profession meant to help people.” The supervisor came out and told the clerk that she was wrong, and told her to do what I had requested.
- I was embarrassed. (Even though I just KNEW that I was right.)
13. It's tough, BUT you and I can do better.
We MUST do better.
14. Settling the score ... living in fear ... living in righteous indignation ...
these are not the ways of the kingdom.
15. Say little, love much. The children are watching.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.