



Loving my neighbor displays  
my true devotion to God

Luke 10:25–28

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- To understand the Good Samaritan, we must understand its context.
- The story is sandwiched between Jesus' sending the 72 disciples on mission and the account of Mary and Martha.
- Luke is weaving theology of the Spirit into the ministry of Jesus and the story of salvation, particularly focusing on the inclusion of the Gentiles, the lost, the poor, the weak, the sick and the marginalized.
- The focus is on the love of God and love of neighbor.

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- In John, Jesus says our love for other people is how the world will know we are His disciples (John 13:35).
- The way we treat other people is what makes our faith tangible, what shows whether our faith is real instead of just lip service.
- The lawyer asked Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”
- He was looking for a checklist, as do students who look for the minimum work they have to do to pass a class.
- But the fact is, we cannot do anything to earn eternal life.

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- The lawyer understood the law correctly. When Jesus asked him what the law said, he summarized it the same way Jesus did in the other Gospels – love God and love your neighbor.
- The question was, did he really do it?
- Starting with the Ten Commandments – the first four are about loving God, the last six about loving your neighbor. The rest of the OT laws just flesh out those two ideas in practical application.
- If you love God and love others, you will follow the rest of the laws.

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- Love isn't a religious checklist. It's a way of life.
- It's "easier" than a religious to-do list and at the same time much harder.
- No one on earth really loves God, much less others, with their whole heart, soul, mind and strength. So if this were a checklist type of work to get us into heaven, none of us would make it.
- When we accept Christ, God gives us a new heart and His Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26–27) so we can love others the way that Jesus loves us (John 13:35).

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- As John described so eloquently in his letter, we cannot say we love God and hate one of His children (1 John 4:19–21).
- Because God is love, those who know God will love others. If you do not love others, you do not really know God (1 John 4:16–18).
- The law of God is love and the love of God is an others-focused love, a love defined by self-sacrifice (Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:10).
- Love is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:8–10).

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- When we love our neighbors, it shows our love for God.
- When Peter told Jesus he loved Him, Jesus responded, “Feed My sheep” (John 21:15–19).
- In the parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus said, “As you did to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:31–46).
- How we respond to our neighbor is directly connected to how we walk with God. The question is, are we living out the law of love?

Loving my neighbor tangibly  
displays God's love for people

Luke 10:29–35

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- The lawyer was looking to justify himself, to prove to Jesus that he had loved his neighbor, that he was worthy of eternal life (verse 29).
- In Hebrew thought, a neighbor was a fellow Israelite.
- In the ancient world, as with many around the world today, there was often a strong sense of division between “my people,” those to whom I have a responsibility, and everybody else.
- As Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, human love typically says to “love your neighbor, and hate your enemy” (Matthew 5:43).

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- Jesus's disciples were no different in their attitude toward Samaritans.
- In just the previous chapter, the disciples had asked Jesus if He wanted them to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans (Luke 9:51–55).
- But in both the Sermon on the Mount and in this parable, Jesus blew that belief completely apart.
- It may be the human attitude, but it's not the attitude of God or His disciples.

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- The lawyer was asking “who is my neighbor” in an attempt to create boundaries, to limit who he “had to” show love to in order to obtain eternal life.
- He was like the student wanting to know the minimum to pass, his heart attitude was showing.
- Maybe if he kept the definition of neighbor narrow enough, he could justify himself, prove he deserved eternal life.
- But people who truly love God don't ask who they “have to” love.

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- Jesus intentionally chose the greatest enemy of the Jews – a Samaritan
- Instead of the Samaritan being the one who was attacked and in need of help and asking the lawyer whether or not he should show him love, in Jesus' story the Samaritan the person is the one who showed God's love, who was the good neighbor.
- Jesus flipped the question around asking, "Who is my neighbor?" (Whom do I have to show love to?), Jesus asked, "Who was the neighbor?" (What does it mean to show God's love to a neighbor?).

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- The lawyer was asking the wrong question. The question we should be asking ourselves isn't who our neighbor is. Everyone in the world is your neighbor.
- The question is, what does it look like to be a good neighbor? We shouldn't ask, "Whom do I have to be loving toward" but "How can I show God's love to everyone, every day, in every way?"
- Just as He did in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said if you want to be like God, you have to love those who love you and those who hate you – your tribe and your enemies (Matthew 5:43–48).

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- The people who were supposed to be God's representatives here on earth, a priest and a Levite, did not show the love of God to the man who had been beaten and abused.
- But the Samaritan, whom the lawyer wouldn't have considered a real follower of God because he was half-Gentile, loved the man the way that God would have.
- Why didn't they stop? (1) They were on their way to the temple to do the "real work" of serving God, and (2) to touch a beaten body would have made them ritually unclean.

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- Jesus' point was clear. Following God's law – what you “need to do to obtain eternal life” – is not about observing religious ritual or cleanliness or piety. It is about loving people.
- Not just saying you love people, but showing love in action. In this way, the parable is a beautiful depiction of the lovingkindness of God toward mankind, who are beaten and broken and in need of mercy.
- The parable never mentions the ethnicity – or any other background information, for that matter – of the man in need.

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- Our God reaches out to the marginalized, the poor, the dishonorable, the sinner, the outcast and those in need.
- Jesus didn't worry about whether the leper or the bleeding woman were ritually unclean when He touched them to heal them. He made them clean.
- Jesus didn't worry about the legalistic rules of the Sabbath. He healed people no matter what day it was, because the Sabbath was made for man as a picture of the eternal wholeness and rest we will have in heaven.

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# Loving My Neighbor

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- When we reach out to our neighbors in love, no matter who they are or where they are coming from, even the very least and the last, we show the love of God for the world (Matthew 25:31–46).
- The lawyer was trying to create limits for who he would love, but God places no limits on His love.
- God loves the entire world and does not desire that anyone should perish (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9).
- No one is outside of the love of God.

My neighbor is anyone who has a need

Luke 10:36–37

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# Neighbor in Need

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- Jesus used a style of ancient rhetoric that asked probing questions to lead students to discover the truth for themselves rather than just telling them the truth.
- In the case of this parable, it was totally obvious who the neighbor to the man in need was. There could be no denying it.
- Notice that the lawyer didn't answer with "the Samaritan."
- He didn't comment on the identity of the man who acted like a neighbor or those who didn't. He simply said, "The one who showed him mercy."

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# Neighbor in Need

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- The story took place on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, a 17-mile journey that was very rocky and lined with caves that made good hideouts for robbers and bandits.
- It was notoriously dangerous, so this scenario would have been pretty common.
- Whether to help or to walk by may have been a regular choice for someone such as this lawyer. Jews were required by the law to offer *tzedakah* (justice / charity) to those in need.

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# Jerusalem to Jericho Road

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# Neighbor in Need

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- Isaiah said that Israel would be redeemed by their acts of *tzedakah* (Isaiah 1:27).
- The prophets and Proverbs tell us acts of *tzedakah* are more acceptable to God than sacrifices (Proverbs 21:3).
- The law also requires that *tzedakah* be done generously, not with a begrudging heart (Deuteronomy 15:10).
- This was what Jesus was most concerned about, the attitude of our hearts.

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# Neighbor in Need

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- This was also one of the things Jesus criticized the religious leaders for missing.
- They followed the tithing laws so carefully that they divided a tenth of their spices to give, but they completely missed the “more important matters” of the law, the *tzedakah* (Matthew 23:23–24).
- The Samaritan fulfilled all aspects of the *tzedakah* – financial giving, physical help, and most importantly, a heart of compassion (verse 33).

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# Neighbor in Need

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- The Samaritan was moved with compassion. This Greek word is the same one used when Jesus was moved with compassion for those who were sick, those who were grieving the death of Lazarus, and the people of Jerusalem who had been abused by their religious leaders.
- The Samaritan physically cared for the man. He approached him, in direct contrast to the priest and the Levite passing by on the other side. He didn't worry about ritual purity or what would be considered proper behavior.
- Even though he clearly had somewhere to go, even though it was an interruption in his schedule, he took the time to stop and help the man.

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# Neighbor in Need

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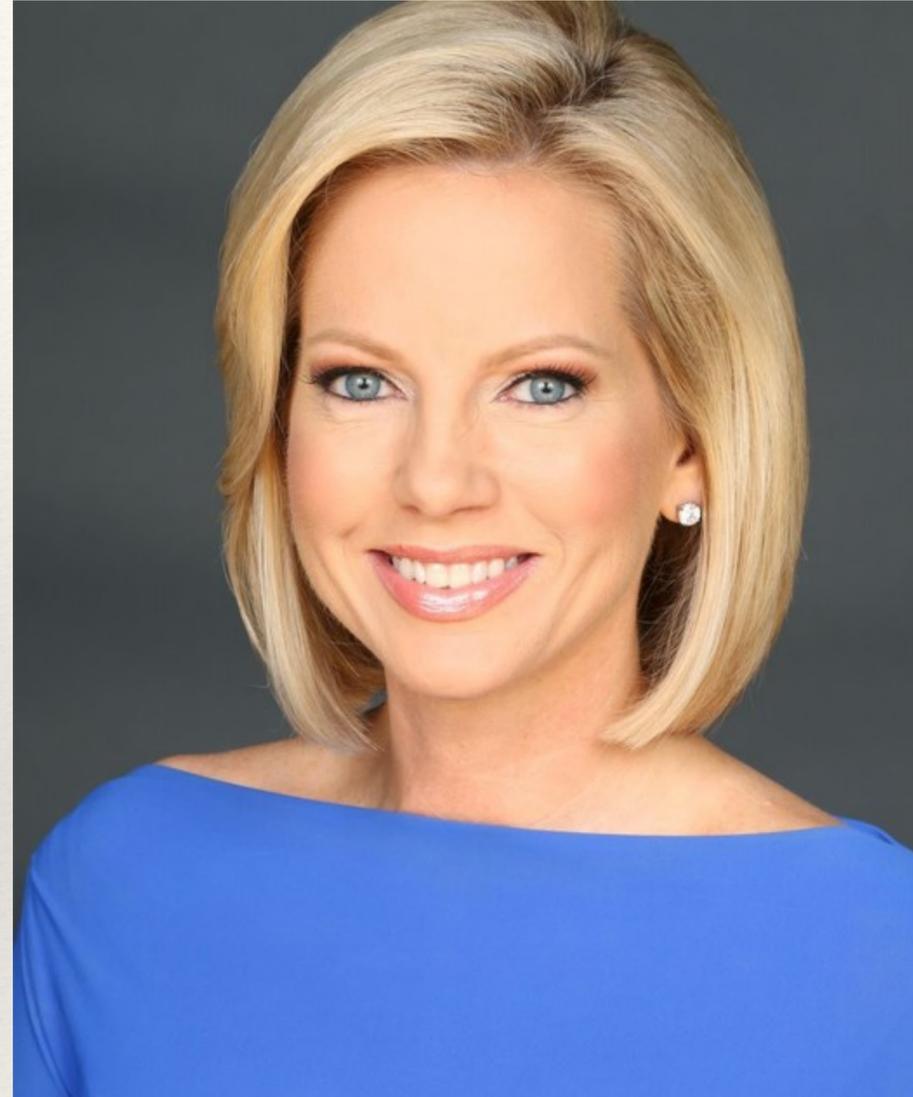
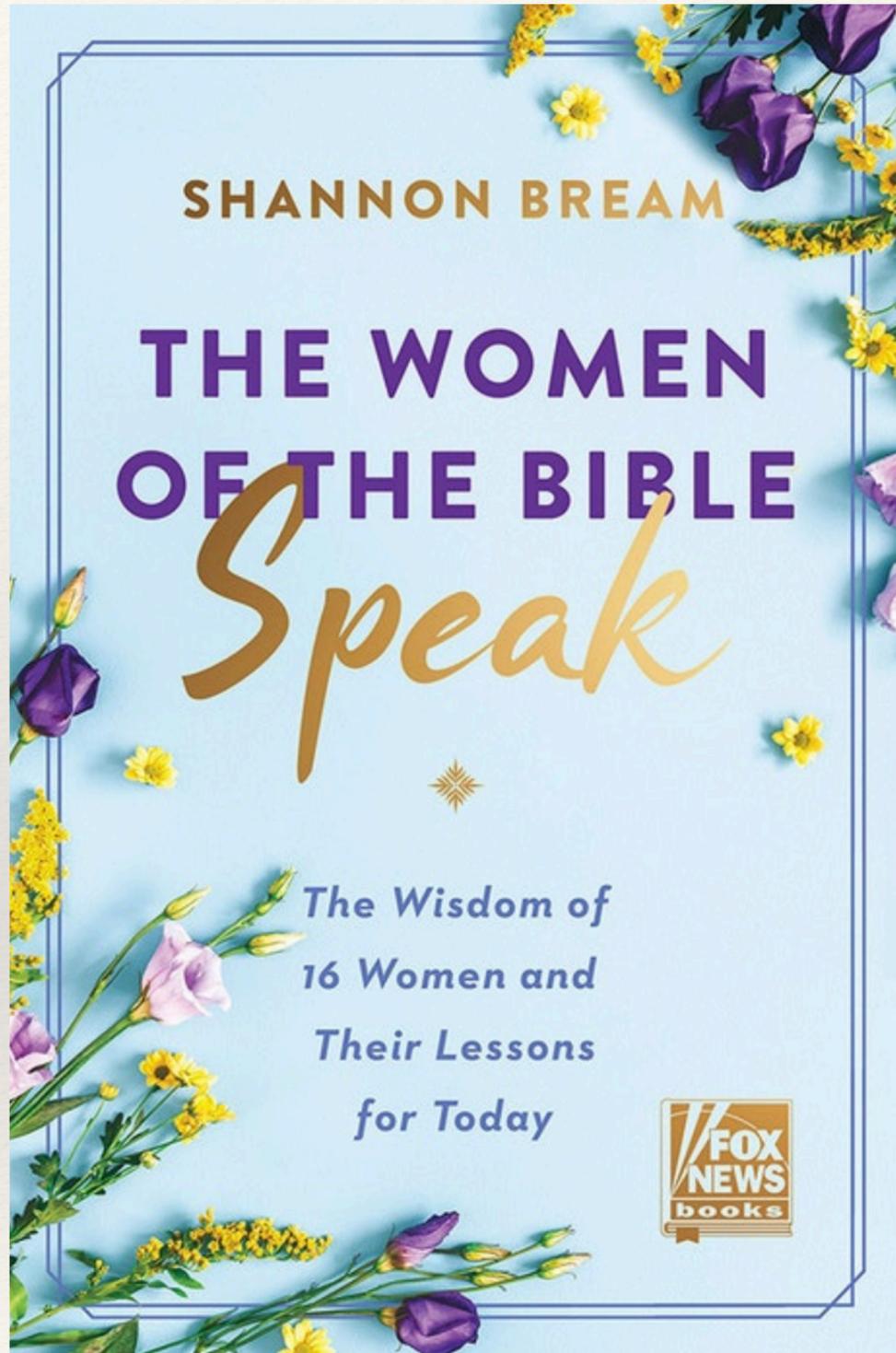
- He personally bound up the man's wounds and anointed him with oil and wine. This would have not only been for medical reasons; anointing is also a religious act of setting someone apart for service to God.
- He laid him on his own animal and brought him to an inn, paying for his stay. The amount he gave the innkeeper would have covered a stay of about three and a half weeks, time to fully recover.
- He promised to repay whatever else the innkeeper might spend to care for him. This a beautiful picture of true selfless love in action.

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# Neighbor in Need

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- The only character in the story of whom Jesus didn't mention any identifying details is the man who was in need.
- He didn't say whether he was Jew or Gentile, poor or rich, religious leader or sinner. He was just "a man," representative of all people.
- It doesn't matter who the person in need is.
- Believers are called to show tangible love in action, with a heart of compassion like Jesus, to anyone and everyone who is in need.



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# Women of the Bible Speak

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- Sarah and Hagar: Women of the Covenants
- Rachel and Leah: Sisters and Rivals
- Tamar and Ruth: Outsiders
- Deborah and Jael: Women of Valor

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# Women of the Bible Speak

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- Hannah and Miriam: Speaking God's Truth
- Esther and Rahab: Unexpected Heroes of Faith
- Mary and Martha of Bethany: Two Pathways
- Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene: Witnesses to the Gospel

SHANNON BREAM

THE WOMEN  
OF THE BIBLE  
*Speak*

*The Wisdom of  
16 Women and  
Their Lessons  
for Today*

