The parable of the *Good Samaritan* is probably one of the most well-known and often read parables in the Bible. There are many characters whom we can identify ourselves with. At times we might identify ourselves as the fallen victim of such robbery, abandoned by the roadside waiting for some good Samaritan to come and rescue us. Or we might be the robbers who lurk around, waiting for our next victims who happened to be at the wrong place and at the wrong time. We may be like the high priest or the Levite who chose to look the other way while ignoring those who are in need around them.

When the young lawyer asked the question, “*What must I do to inherit eternal life?”,* he was more concerned about his own salvation and at what price? What earthly things he must give up in order to earn his salvation? Can he still keep what he owns and still receive the eternal life from God? But the problem is, you cannot really have both. It’s either or, and the choice is up to us!

Like he always did, Jesus turned someone’s question into a teaching moment. Jesus made his point across by telling the parable about the Samaritan. While doing so, he invited us to a much harder and deeper question concerning our allegiance and our relationships with God and with others, as Jesus referred to us the *Great Commandment* of *“You shall love the Lord your God with* ***all your heart****, with* ***all your soul****, with* ***all your strength****, and with* ***all your mind****[[1]](#footnote-1); and* ***love your neighbor as yourself****.[[2]](#footnote-2)”*

These are not simple conditions for us to meet. What does ALL mean? I’m sure this young lawyer knew what the right answers were to his own question, at least what he would like to hear. He was just testing to see how Jesus would respond. In spite of his head-knowledge, the young lawyer failed when it comes to his heart-knowledge, and **living out what he confessed with his mouth.** He failed in practicing what he preached. What does our ALL mean when we say that we would love our God with ALL of our hearts, ALL of our soul, ALL of our strength, and ALL our mind? God demands nothing less than our fullest effort.

How many times have we felt guilty when we are confronted with situations, unwilling to help others who have demonstrated needs for help. We would come up with various excuses (we don’t time, we don’t have enough people, we don’t have enough money…etc. etc.) but when in reality our own sense of apathy has overshadowed the needs of others.

Instead of being the “good” Samaritan, we’ve become the self-righteous priest and the Levite who looked the other way and continued on with our own lives, minding our own business as usual. It’s someone else’s problem because I had nothing to do with it. Someone else committed the crime, it’s not my fault. But how often have we seen it, known about it, but done nothing about it.

As the parable goes, a man fell victim of a vicious crime. He was robbed, stripped, beaten and was left half-dead by the roadside. The priest and the Levite passed by, but they kept on walking, pretending he wasn’t even there, while the man was profusely bleeding on the ground. Perhaps they were more concerned about getting themselves spiritually uncleaned by touching another man’s blood. Maybe there were in a hurry to get to their events in the midst of their busy schedule? Excuses, excuses, excuses.

Then came along the Samaritan…the Samaritan of all people, who would become the saving hero in the story? When the Samaritan was “***moved with pity****”* and had compassion towards the victim. He didn’t care what race, ethnicity, or nationality of the victim was, the Samaritan went out of the social norm, his comfort zone, and helped the man who was in need. He had every excuse and every right NOT to help, but he chose to walk the harder path…the one that he would probably be reprimanded for later on. But he went ahead and did it anyway.

 Now, undoubtedly this was a parable that Jesus told to make his point across, but the situation can very well happen in our everyday lives. Our modern day journey of life between Jerusalem and Jericho can also be a winding and treacherous one. It is filled with dangerous predators, lurking around the curve waiting for their next victim. This **road trip was not meant to be travelled alone.** We need companions and fellow friends to journey together in order to overcome these adversities and challenges in life.

 Not only do we need to look out for ourselves, but we also need to lookout for those who have fallen victims of due to society’s systemic abuses and neglects…. especially those who are the most vulnerable and those who are marginalized – women, children, seniors, the sick, the poor and those who are people of color. Regardless of what their backgrounds, faith affiliation, culture, language of whatever, we are all called to be co-habitants and neighbors to one another. **These are the people whom God has placed in our lives and to whom we exemplify God’s love and mercy to…because these too are our neighbors.**

 In these post-modern days, many Christians and ethicists found ourselves in a moral dilemma of knowing “what’s the right thing to do” vs. the actual “doing it”. We feel that we have a moral responsibility to do and to say what we think is right, but saying it and doing it are often two different things. **We need not only talk the talk, but we must also walk our talk as well.**

We’ve allowed ourselves to be caught up in our own lives. We’ve ethically and morally failed like the priests and the Levites. We’ve belittled others and thought that we’re more superior than the others. We’ve devalued the lives of others and made them transparent and meaningless. We’ve focused upon OUR own privileged lives and OUR own needs instead of others.

Well, we don’t need to look far for examples of this, especially this week with the events happening in Louisiana, Minnesota and Texas. Apparently some lives are worth more than the others solely because of their race, ethnicity and country of origins. We may lift up the situations and all the victims and their family in our prayers, watched the news coverage on TV, or read various postings and comments across social media on the Internet, but **is that ALL** that we can do? How is God prompting us to respond in the midst of all of this chaos and madness today? What is the “Christian” thing to do? Do we turn the other way and keep walking and pretend like nothing has happened? Or do we drop everything and care for the one who is wounded and laying there dying?

When we have failed to extend God’s love and mercy to one, we’ve failed to do the same to all. As the scripture tells us, when one member suffers, we all suffer together; and when one member rejoices, we all rejoice together.[[3]](#footnote-3)  We’ve become the priests and the Levites who turned our faces and walked the other way. **We have been victimized by the social norms of apathy and self-centeredness that have stripped us and robbed us of our personal relationship with God. We have been beaten and wounded by the evils and contaminated influences of racism and classism in this world, while neglected to show God’s love and mercy to the neighbors all around us.** As Jesus said, “***the one who showed mercy are the good neighbor. Now go and do likewise***.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

 **This journey of faith is more than a winding road between Jerusalem to Jericho, it’s a lifelong spiritual journey towards peace, reconciliation and justice.** As the Apostle Paul reaffirmed our calling through the early church of Colossus, that we as disciples of Christ are to ***lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to God, and to bear fruit in our every good work and to grow in the knowledge of God.[[5]](#footnote-5)***

The parable of the “Good Samaritan” is more than just a moral teaching about lending helps to someone in needs. It’s about how we relate to one another in humility and love, instead of prejudice and hatred. It’s about expanding our horizon of the Kingdom of God that is already here and is yet to come. **It’s about unveiling our social blindfold that we’ve been covered with, breaking down our stereotype facade and hostilities of divides among those who are different from us.** It’s about taking a stand when we see acts of injustice happening around us in this world. It’s about stretching our limitations, going out of our comfort zone, going the extra mile beyond what is expected of us. But **is this “ALL” that we can do? Have we given our ALL in ALL, when Christ asked us to “love the Lord our God with ALL of our hearts, with ALL of our souls, and with ALL of our strengths and with ALL of our minds, and LOVE our neighbors as ourselves?**

In closing, I would like to share with you the words from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on his speech on violence, hate, and love. It may seem like we’ve read this just yesterday. But unfortunately we’ve found ourselves once again in situation where evil continues to exist and prevail over our lives. How relevant his message still rings in our ears and echo in our hearts 60 years later today? Is this ALL that we can do?

***"The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral,***

***begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy.***

***Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it.***

***Through violence you may murder the liar,***

***but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth.***

***Through violence you murder the hater, but you do not***

***murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate... So it goes.***

***Returning violence for violence multiples violence,***

***adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars.***

***Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.***

***Hate cannot drive out hate: Only love can do that."*** -MLK, Jr.Through violence you may murder the hater,
but you do not murder hate.
In fact, violence merely increases hate.
So it goes.

Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars.

Darkness cannot drive out darkness:
only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Through violence you may murder the hater,
but you do not murder hate.
In fact, violence merely increases hate.
So it goes.In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *Deuteronomy 6:5* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Leviticus 19:18* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *I Corinthians 12:26* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Luke 10:37* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Colossians 1:10* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)