

Today's scripture reading isn't something that we haven't heard. We hear about this one all the time. The story of the Good Samaritan. It's one that people are like, why would you talk about this one? We all know this one, we all know this. One of my friends told me that this week. He said we know the Good Samaritan. We know we should be doing right for everybody. We should be taking care of everybody. We know that. Talk about something else. I am like okay, why? And he said to me. What do you mean, why? Okay. Well, if you know it, then why aren't you doing it? He's like, of course I am. Okay. What do you say? What do you mean? What do you do? You're living the life? You're being righteous, you're talking to God. You're praying regularly. You're doing all these things. But how does that make you Good like this Samaritan?

He says, well, I'm talking to you. It's like I don't like you at all. I'm like well Good. That's one thing. That's a good point in this. The man walking down that hill more than likely would have been a Jew and he'd been going to Jericho. And the Samaritan and him would not have liked each other. When growing up. I always thought Samaritan meant stranger. I didn't know that it meant something else. It never occurred to me that it meant something else. Hearing this story, I always thought it meant a stranger. Now, I know the Samaritans and the Israelites hate each other.

When I talk about this with Wednesday, I tell her it's kind of like Iowa State fans and Iowa fans. They have a lot of the same beliefs. They have a lot of the same support. They have a lot of the same friends, everything else but there's something between the two of them that they just don't get along. That makes sense to her.

So why wouldn't that make sense everywhere else? You know, these Samaritans are people that they're just like the Jews. They worship the same God, they read from the same Bible, they do a lot of the same things, but they don't like each other.

So If we all knew this story, why do we choose to do the other side of it? We choose to be like the difference between the Israelites and the Samaritans, than we choose to be the Samaritan. When you live in a big city, there are parts of town you openly avoid. That's like just road. There are parts that you do not want to be seen at. You don't want to be near, you don't want to do anything, and if you see anybody hurt laying on the side, your first instinct is that's fake. That they're lying there, they're not hurt waiting for you. They're going to jump you when it comes time. So you intentionally walked to the other side of the street. You intentionally avoid them. You essentially avoid these parts of town, at all cost.

But we shouldn't. It's easy for us sitting here in a little small town, Madrid, to think if I see somebody hurting on the side of the road, I'm going to stop and help. And nine times out of ten we will. But we do it because we know them. We might not know them personally; we might just recognize them. But we're not helping real strangers.

My friend, he writes a check every week to somebody. Sometimes it's his church. Sometimes just different programs in the area. And he counts that as being a good samaritan because he doesn't know the people that it's going to. He doesn't know who he's helping, He just knows that he's helping somebody. And I tell them that's a great thing. Because all of these organizations need help. I am like, but you know the organization, so does that make you a Good Samaritan? If you know that Greater Love needs help, If you know that Tiger Tots needs help because we have kids who can't afford to go there and they're going to have to leave. So you give them money to help them out. If you know, kids aren't eating at the school because

they can't afford their lunches, and you pay some of that off. Is that being a Good Samaritan or is that just doing the right thing because that's what we're supposed to do.

It's a hard question. We know we want to be the Good Samaritan, We want to help people, we want to do things that are in our best interest and in their best interest. We want to show God's love to everybody. But we do it when it's convenient for us. We do it when we are in a position that we know it's safe. That we know the money is going where we want it. That we know that we are defending and supporting our own beliefs.

But what about that man in the ditch? What about his beliefs? He might be different from us. He might think that somebody doesn't need what they need. Now he might think that the kids at school don't need to have their money paid for or have their meals paid for because their parents can do it. He might think that Greater Love doesn't need any more help. They got clothes on the shelves they're not giving away. They don't need more clothes, They've got food on the shelves that they can give away indented and rusty. I kid. They're not that bad. Linda would never let something like that go out. But it's the example, The food bank, they're giving away things. These are all going to people that can work for themselves, right? That's what some people believe, Right?

Now, we're in a world that is completely divided on so many issues. We need to cut spending. We need to increase spending. We need to, I'm going to stop there. We need to be doing different things. Some people think one thing, somebody thinks something else. We never agree fully on everything. We rarely take the point of view of somebody else, and we focus on what we believe is in everybody's best interest. But that's not the point of the story. The point of the story is to share God's love. To treat everybody like we want to be treated. To live a day in their shoes might help us do that, but we all can't do that. But what we can do is continue to share God's love and help and support the best way that we can. By being, but not always being so much like us. Let us pray.