

Lent Wednesday 2
March 26, 2014
Poulsbo
Pastor Alison Shane
Luke 10:25-37

Last week we asked the question, “Where are we called to share our faith,” to which the answer among the people gathered was, “Yes.” Today we ask this question, “Among whom do we share our faith?” The answer to this question is also, “Yes.”

But there can be more explanation. In Luther’s explanation to the Lord’s Prayer in the Small Catechism, many of the petition explanations follow the formula, “God does this without our praying for it, but we ask in this prayer that God may include us.” The same can be true for these questions of sharing faith. Among whom should we share our faith? We should certainly share our faith with all people at all times, but we should pay special attention to some of our neighbors.

Who is our neighbor? As illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan, our neighbor is the one who currently needs us the most. If you are a parent, the neighbor who needs you the most is your child. Your child is a gift from God, given as a joy and a responsibility. As a young child, this small neighbor is completely dependent upon you. This is your “must serve” neighbor. This is the neighbor who most needs to both hear and receive from you the love and grace of God in Jesus. God is working faith in them, but God works it through word and deed. God is relying on you to provide that. Deuteronomy 11:18-21 says, “You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem* on your forehead. ¹⁹Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. ²⁰Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, ²¹so that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.”

You can visualize your neighbor priorities in a series of concentric circles. If you have children, they are in the center circle. These are the ones most dependent on you to share your faith. Your second-nearest neighbor is your spouse, if you have one. Sharing your faith with your spouse. Then your neighbors and coworkers and church community. Then your extended family and your community. Then the county, state, nation, world. Who is in each circle for you? What happens when a need out here eclipses a need in here?

How you share your faith with all these different neighbors is what we’ll talk about next week. But just for a moment, let’s think about the differences.

How do you share your faith with your inner circle?

How do you share your faith with the next circle?

The next?

Paul pointed out last week that sharing our faith in our workplace is going to be different from sharing our faith with our best friend. I mentioned two weeks ago that listening is the first step in sharing our faith. Listening to your neighbor gives you a better idea of where they are so that you can enter the conversation there. Listening to your neighbor also gives you an idea of which neighbor has migrated to the center. Listening to the person you meet in the shop or serving you at a restaurant or tucking in at bedtime allows you to live your life of faith proclaiming constantly the love of God in Jesus, love that serves, that forgives, that heals.

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