

A Good Samaritan

I woke up last Thursday morning, Karen and the girls were heading for WNY to visit friends and pick up our older daughters at Houghton College. The snow was about 6-8 inches deep and very, **VERY** heavy to shovel – I didn't make it long before I just gave up! That was my first mistake. As I looked down the driveway toward the entrance to the street, I saw how the very capable city plow truck had buried the entrance in about a foot to foot and a half of wet, icy snow. So, I thought to myself, *"I just gun it through this mess and shovel later tonight when I get back home from the office."* That was my second mistake...

You can probably guess what happened – Yeah, that's right, I got stuck at the end of my driveway with half the car in a lane of traffic and the other half in the driveway. So, I did what any good "winter driver" would do, I began to "rock" the car back and forth, you know, between reverse and drive to try to get the car "unstuck..." Okay, that's now my third mistake (do you see a pattern developing here?) When that produced nothing but smoking tires and a spike in my frustration/anxiety meter, I decided to go get the shovel off the front porch and try to dig my way out...

I dug, I dug, I dug and dug some more – Hopped in the car and thought, *"There, that ought to do it!"* But, NOOOOOOOO, I'm still stuck!! So picture this scenario going on for the better part of say half an hour, as cars pass by and people kind of just look at me and I know what they're thinking, *"Ha! What a moron! Getting stuck at the end of his driveway – He should have shoveled out first!"* Hey, hindsight's always 20/20 and I don't need an "armchair quarterback" to tell me what I should-of, could-of, ought-to have done!

Meanwhile, I guy in pickup truck whose being plowing several driveways passes by, stops, backs up and he sticks his head out the window and says those three heavenly words I've been dying to hear from somebody, *"Need some help?"* Yes! So he jumps out of his truck, fishes in his tool chest for a towing strap, hooks us up and pulls me out in 2 seconds flat! I just spent 30-45 minutes rocking, shoveling, etc and he pulls me out in 2 seconds – Wow! I thank him profusely and off he goes to plow some more...

As I'm heading into work, the parable of the Good Samaritan plays out in my head...

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus.

“Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

He answered: “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, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’”

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” (Luke 10:25-37)

I thought to myself: “How many cars passed me by, had to swerve to avoid hitting me, but no one stopped to help me?” And then, the thought came more penetrating to my heart, “How many times Mark do you stop to help people who need help?”

How often do we act like the first two people in the Good Samaritan story instead of the third? How often do we “assume” everything is ok? How often do we pass up an opportunity to be a servant to those around us?

God calls us to be servants. It is a major theme throughout the Gospels and the New Testament. In fact it was the very essence of who Christ was.

“...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:28)

And the words of Jesus to the expert in the law echo even now as I write this for you: *“Go and do likewise...”*

Have a blessed day loved one – And don't be quick to hurry past someone in need of help, why not stop and offer to help!

Be Strong, Be Courageous, Be Fearless – and remember...

Christ **IS** All!
Pastor Mark