

Good morning! Driving in to work last week, I listened to a story on the news that, according to some poll, more than eight million American drivers admitted to engaging in some kind of aggressive driving during the past year. In order to qualify as “aggressive”, the person had to have yelled at the other person, got out of the car and confronted the other person, or intentionally struck the other person’s vehicle with their vehicle. Amazing and frightening, right? I had an experience last year where a man in a pickup truck chased me for about ten miles past several exits, yelling at me and trying to get me to pull over. I still don’t know what I could have done to him but whatever it was, he was pretty mad about it! How are we to get along with people in this world of aggressive drivers and angry people? This morning, let’s look together at a familiar passage and see what Jesus has to say about this:

And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?” And he answered, “You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself.” And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.” But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” **Luke 10:25-29**

What follows this passage is Jesus telling the parable of The Good Samaritan. You remember the story, right? A man was walking from Jerusalem to Jericho and was attacked by robbers and left by the side of the road. A priest came by and crossed the road rather than help. The same was true of a Levite. Finally, a Samaritan man came along and rescued the victim. I love this because Jesus---always a provocative story-teller--- was intentionally jarring His listeners. Remember, in most of their stories the Samaritans were the villains, not the heroes. They hated the Samaritans and now Jesus was telling them a story where their own religious leaders were the bad guys and a Samaritan was the *good* guy! At the end of the story, Jesus asked, “*Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?*” and the lawyer answered, “*The one who showed mercy toward him.*” Jesus said to him, “*Go and do the same.*” Do you remember the question this lawyer had asked Jesus? His question had been, “*Who is my neighbor?*” Jesus didn’t answer that question; instead, He taught the man how to *be* a good neighbor. And how are we to be good neighbors? By showing mercy, even when---or maybe *especially* when---it costs us something. When was the last time you were a good neighbor to someone? Maybe today can be your day. Ask God to help you to be more aware of the needs of people around you today. The world needs more good neighbors!