

3-B

Lk 10:25-37

Session 6

Author: Festo Kivengere
Place: Conejo Valley, Thousand Oaks, CA
Date: February 10, 1981
Event: Festival of Faith
Theme: Love God-Love Neighbor and Become
Text: Luke 10:25-37

26:00

Index:

p. 1	Opening prayer
p. 3	Paul and Divine Retaliation
p. 4	The Rich Young Ruler
p. 5	The Good Samaritan
p. 6	Discover your neighbor
p. 7	Need Spiritual optics
p. 8	Boy carrying his brother-not a burden
p. 9	FK hated an English Missionary/ blessing for forgiving and forgiveness
p. 11	Burundi young man can't forgive
p. 13	FK forgives Idi Amin

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(Side B)

→ I would ^{like} ~~us~~ to spend a little time in prayer as we open our hearts to the blessed Holy Spirit to guide our intellect, our spirits, our whole person into the presence of the Lord ^{Himself} Jesus, ~~so~~ let us pray.

Blessed Lord Jesus, we happen to be here at your invitation. ~~We~~ are not here by accident Lord, ~~We~~ are here according to your eternal plan of love. You want to do things in these lives of ours, to make us the very people you desire us to be, in this world of yours. Open our eyes that we may see you, and that we may discover one another as we become increasingly like you, by the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, welcome to this Festival meeting. My wife ^I praise God because our participation has not just been, as it were a detached participation. You can't share the things of the Lord, detached or ~~ind~~ detachment, there is something about what we are sharing which draws all of us into the circle. And we praise God for the presence; for your spirit; for your receptivity; and for your encouragement, and of course we bring you greetings from your brothers and sisters in Uganda, in particular, and in East Africa in general. There are wonderful things taking place in many hearts, on that big continent of Africa, (one of the greatest things which is happening on that continent of wars; of coups of revolutions of all sorts of things is that the growth of the christian faith and the hunger

(and the thirst among the citizens in most countries is simply unbelievable. Everywhere you go, you find men and women who hang on every word sometimes when we are preaching back home, and you have got about 6,000, 10,000 people sittid outside because we dont have great facilities, but we have got a beautiful climate, and you find little children, little children between from two to fifteen and so forth, hundreds and hundreds of them, sitting for hours, listening, almost, almost holding their breathe, and sometimes you look at them and you wonder. How it is possible that at that age they could really listen attentively, but we know who creates that kind of atmosphere, it is the Holy Spirit, the life giver. So I hope that, you here in this valley and in the country in your prosperity and in your progress, you will always long for a deeper hunger, a deeper thirst of knowing this wonderful love of Jesus Christ.) The committee which planned these meetings chose a theme, Love God, Love neighbor, Those words sound rather familiar, Love God, if you say that to christians, they wonder why you say it, Love God! Do you have to say that, to christians, don't, isn't that exactly what they learnt at Sunday School time? At the knees of their mothers and fathers if they are christians? May I tell you this, the whole world of your life and may I also add the whole world of our problems actually hangs on those words, Love God, Love Neighbor. **If** these were true in the church, if these short words were a living reality among christians you would never have had apartheid in South Africa. You would never have had tensions which break our hearts, our homes, the misery, the suicides, the murders they all tell one story, that Love God, Love Neighbor. These are not taking place in the history of the human race. Yet here and there, in the hearts of those who open up, they take place and when they take place, a new world is created. St. Paul, when they took place in the heart of that Jew, St. Paul a pharisee, a trained pharisee who was

all out to murder christians because to him they were heretic, and in order to keep religion pure, ~~he~~ he had to kill in the name of Jehovah. How can you more, be more blind? Yet when he met that shining reality of eternal love which embraced him enemy as he was, which liberated him; which is what I call divine retaliation, so the God retaliated to Paul in liberating him and he ~~set~~ ^{so} set this man free, that when you read his letter, he was always stretching out for word to express what took place, the unspeakable riches of Christ. He said, kept saying, when a new, when a person is caught up in the atmosphere of that love that person can never be the same, he becomes a new creature entirely. This is really looking for right words isn't it to express the unspeakable miracle, so you see love God, love neighbor is not as simple as it sounds. It is at the bottom of everything that can restore humanity as God meant it to be. That is why Jesus came. And when he came, he came in that love, a demonstration in concrete human terms of that love and what it costs. ^{Love} We have been speaking about God and become alive. And that was the challenge shared on Sunday, you can never respond to the love of God and remain static, or immobile, or paralyzed or unfeeling or insensitive. As soon as the miracle of that love by the Holy Spirit takes place in the hearts all become alive. The entire person, the movement, the feelings, the reactions the responses, the vibrations, everywhere, yes indeed where that love of Christ is, there is abundant living, and abundant living. Second night means abundant movement. Love God and move. You can't remain where you were, as soon as you become alive, immediately you begin to move in the direction of that love. That is what we shared last night. Tonight we are moving on a little bit. Love neighbor and become is what I want to share with you. Love neighbor and become. Now I want to read a story which the Lord Jesus used and I take it from the very passage from which the theme comes, when the lawyer, a trained Jew, in the ~~Old~~ ^{OT} Testament scriptures came to Jesus and asked a question. A

Paul / divine retaliation

very, very critical question, although he asked (as a test,) as a test to the Lord Jesus. You know there are many times when people ask questions like that meaning they are testing your knowledge when actually they are confessing their need. And this is what this lawyer comes with, he ^{camouflage} comflages his need with a question, ^{which} it sounded as if it was testing the theological knowledge of Jesus Christ, can you imagine that. And he says to him, "Master, what must I do in order to receive eternal life?" And that is where it all begins, love God with all that you are then love your neighbor as yourself and then the lawyer said. "I understand, that is the most central commandment God ever gave to human beings," and the Lord Jesus Christ said, "You go and act likewise, and you will live." Very simple but very profound, and so the lawyer here it says in Luke ^{chap} 10: this very trained man wanting to escape from being put in a tight corner where the response must come, and the confession must come, and we human beings know how to evade. Sometimes in sophisticated training you become as slippery as a fish. And it takes such a problem to the Holy Spirit to catch you, because wherever he touches we have a theological reason to explain, or a doctrinal stand point or a traditional background, or a cultural difference, you name them, they are all there. And so the lawyer says to him, when the Lord Jesus said, alright you go and do that and live. (And then ~~then~~ the lawyer left, Part one) love your God, with all that makes you, and in loving him, you commit the whole and person that you are, /you become alive. Love your neighbor as you love yourself. (And he left part a) and he asked, and who is my neighbor? And being a jew, if you may allow me to paraphrase a bit, it is as if he is saying, Lord Jesus, tell me exactly who the neighbor is, just in case I love the wrong one. Because, you see, I mean being a Jew meant not everybody, was expected to be a neighbor. According to the teaching only the one who was within the agreement of the chosen people of God, was considered a neighbor. (Not the gentile, outside the pail, certainly Lord Jesus, you can't expect

The Rich
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(me to love those people who are outside the pail. You know the gentiles, the Greeks, the non-jews, the non-covenant people, Lord Jesus, tell me exactly who the neighbor is, as I may, that I may love the right one,) and the Lord Jesus looked at him and said, in his wonderful divine simplicity, and he said, let me tell you a -story, and he took a very realistic life story, as it were, because that is how he ^{used} is to communicate. A man was on a journey from Jerusalem going to Jerico, very simple. The road from Jerusalem to Jerico is ~~lonely~~ road. And this man on his journey fell into the wrong hands, ~~he~~ fell into hands which only considered him as one, as a chance for exploitation, a lonely person, to take advantage of. So they took advantage of him, they stripped him naked, they ~~beat~~ him up they wounded him they left him utterly helpless, and half dead. And as he was lying there in utter helplessness, scripture says, and as it happened, a priest was going down that road. You would have said, "My! what an opportunity! A priest, happened to be going that road, it couldn't have been better time." A helpless person lying half dead on the road, inviting help, neighborly hands, loving concern. A priest comes that way, absolutely, absolute opportune, opportunity, a timely opportunity for a religious person to practice faith, you can't beat that one. You know God knows how to time Listen what happens, these incidents. Right there, and so what happened?/ the story goes on and he says, as he came down that road, but when when he saw the man, not and when he saw the man, but, contrary to expectation, scripture has a way of putting words, the Holy Spirit, not and when he saw the man, but when he saw the man) which means the man was absolutely out of his schedule, or ← schedule (The the,) this man was not in the program, ~~he~~ was out many other things were lined up for this religious person. But when he saw the man, he did see him and he walked on by, on the other side, as ~~nothing~~ existed, as if nothing happened, a religious priest, In the same way a levite also one who gives sacrifices in the temple also came along. You know this man

The Good Samaritan

really had a tremendous opportunity, two religious people, ^{special} ~~powerful~~ ones. And a levite came by the same way, came along. He went over and he looked at the man. A levite did a little bit more, than the priest, he went over and looked at the man. And then he walked on by on the other side. There are two religious people, who missed a tremendous opportunity of becoming. And Jesus said, the man lying on the road, looking utterly helpless, beaten up wounded, stripped naked. He was the divine opportunity, to discover a neighbor and become. And two religious people came and walked on the other side, and the man remained utterly alone, suffering alone, in lonely pain, in lonely shame and nakedness, in lonely helplessness, as if the world had no other people, it was a lonely world, for him, the priest was absolutely irrelevant, wasn't he, he might never have existed as a priest. There are many people in your valley to whom the church is utterly irrelevant, it is as if, it never existed, they are still utterly alone. Absolute suffering alone in pain, alone when you feel utterly helpless, alone when you feel utterly wounded; no neighbor to touch your wounds, what kind of faith is that. I want you to see the two religious ^{people} walking on the other side. Who is more helpless than the two religious people? I don't believe that the man who is lying there is as helpless as those two, they demonstrate a faith which is utterly paralyzed, they are missing a tremendous opportunity, they never knew. As they walked on the other side, they remained untouched unfeeling, insensitive, unbecoming. They simply missed to discover the neighbor and become. And there are many of us christians in the church, don't we? Even in the congregations, you pass by on the other side. The fellow who is lying on the road, is not your concern, he is just a case, ~~he is just a case~~, these character who are beaten up on the road of life, just one of the many thousands of cases, no discovery no fight, may be the priest and the Levite needed to cry like Bartimaeus, "Lord, that I may recover my sight." For you will never know the neighbor until the spirit of God, the spirit of love

Discover your neighbor

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opens those eyes, then the world changes for the Lord said, "But a Samaritan," another But. One who is not supposed to be the neighbor of this man who must have been a Jew. A Samaritan and a Jew were completely poles apart. And but says the Lord, "But/Samaritan," listen how it is put, was travelling that way, came upon the man, and when he saw him, his heart was filled with pity. Oh his heart went out, in compassion." I want you to see the different seeing. You, in order to find who is the neighbour, you need new spiritual optics. The priest saw and passed by. The Levite came and looked and passed by. The seeing had no effect whatsoever on the life of the priest or the levite. They remained, intact. A christianity which leaves you intact; which never shakes your complacency; which doesn't invade your security, is lacking something. We need special spiritual eyes of love, because love has special optics. A Samaritan came, A wanderer, a traveller, a stranger, and he saw the man. And what happened. He simply had no way to escape. The seeing crossed into him and affected him. He could not be the same. The Samaritan, sorry, the man lying in helplessness and wounds was no longer alone. Listen to the words. His heart, or the heart of the Samaritan went over. So you see, the man is no longer suffering alone, another one has joined him. It is now suffering shared. They are no longer the wounds of loneliness, they are the wounds of two people. It is no longer a helplessness of one human being, it is now shared by another one, you see, love neighbor and become. The Samaritan has become. The priest has lost the chance, the priest has, the levite has, the Samaritan has gained a becoming. And what happened he moved over to the man. And listen what happened, compassion does not stop there. It was not standing and sort of expressing sentimental pity. This was concrete love of the neighbor and this man is now becoming for we read here in scripture, and he poured oil into the wounds. He had some oil. It was his own oil, and now he has shared. It was oil for one, now it is

need
spiritual
optics

oil for two. And he had some wine and he poured into gap, into the gaping dry, painful wounds, thus assuaging the pain. Wine for one has now become wine for two. And we don't read that he was a medical doctor, but he bandaged the gaping wounds, where did he get the bandage. He must have torn his outer garment, in order to cover those gaping wounds of another human being. The garment is shared by the two. Do we know how to cover? Do we cover the wounds or do we strip them naked? (Now let me just be a little bit closer, what is it that I am talking about? Do you know that in a valley like this, characters are murdered, wrongs are over played and over gossiped, and there is no covering,) there is a stripping naked ← in of one another even/the church, oh tongues move so quickly, eyes look through characters, and what remains, lonely human beings, suffering alone life has become a lonely forest, with strange experiences, what a misery. Don't ^{you} see what the Lord is saying. Love neighbor and then become. The Samaritan is not alone, nor is the sufferer. The possessions are no longer possessed by a lonely man. They are shared. And in this movement of God, the Samaritan is now, stooping low, and touching this man who was suffering alone. And in discovering this sufferer, the Samaritan is becoming more human (more lively, more alert, more of a human being.) Life is tremendous now, it is not like a miserable life, of a lonely religious person walking along the road, it is now an exciting experience. And the man not only shares what he had, he bows down, he lifts the man. Do you say he was heavy, love does not know that kind of heaviness, Jesus. not a burden (stories told of a man, a brother who was carrying his young brother in the snow, met another gentleman, and the gentleman said, hey, you are carrying a rather heavy burden. And the brother said, "Dare not call my brother a burden, I am not carrying a burden, I am carrying my brother." He can't be a burden, that is what the Samaritan now is about to do,) he lifts the man and he puts him on his own, animal, the animal is shared. →

The Samaritan walks, the man who was suffering ~~is~~ is on the animal, **Life** has now become double, do you know that? That is what a neighbor means, says Jesus Christ. And He turns round and he says to the lawyer, "Who of those three people is the neighbor, and of course naturally, he said the one who had the concern for him, said the lawyer. He understood but what I am getting at, do you see that the Lord Jesus is actually telling about himself. You never catch the vision of a neighbor until you see the greatest neighbor of all, Jesus Christ, the very son of God, ^{of} the eternal Father, the purest, decided to cross over, to cross over, if there is anyone who should have walked by on the other side, it was a pure God. And yet he never did, he kept crossing over to us, until he was born in Bethlehem, as one ~~over~~ ^{of us}, until he grew in Judea as one with us, until he died on calvary ~~was~~ as one for us. Completely joining not ~~only~~ a neighbor but a closer one, a one closer than a brother, and in seeing him christianity then produces men and women who love the neighbor, and become followers of Jesus, and become men whose image has been restored by the Holy Spirit. So don't miss the blessing of becoming, (don't you think you are going to enjoy your church, get your big bibles, and be wonderful evangelicals and sing lovely songs, and let the world go by, impossible. That sort of christianity does not exist in the New Testament, it is a strange creation of our own.) The New Testament christianity is alive, when ~~men~~ ^{we} see him who died on the cross of calvary who rose again from the dead with fresh wounds of suffering in his hands, then they see humanity, ~~then~~ ^{conclude} they see neighbors who were lonely and they cross over, **Compassion**, like like a dynamic power, moves you on and life can no longer be alone. ~~And~~ neighbors are no longer ~~lonely~~ and enemies are turned into friends. **Can** you see this Samaritan going into the Inn to pay the price, **Some** of you would say, he sacrificed, you don't read it here. **If** you read it carefully you don't sense that Jesus is saying that the Samaritan sacrificed, not at all. When you read St. Luke you have the feeling, he is enjoying it.)