

My Brother's Keeper – Inner Responsibility

Luke 10:30-37 (Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan)

Introduction

1. Our modern technological society and its people run more by the clock than at any time in history. In the towering growth of our business and industries there is much praise for the responsible person – the person who can keep pace, achieve, make things work.
2. But with the advancement outwardly there are noticeable problems, areas that have fallen victim to a world wrapped up in speed and efficiency.
3. One key victim has been a definite loss of internal, or inner, responsibility from person to person, the sense of responsibility that comes from the heart of one to the heart and needs of another, a responsibility that transcends wage considerations, working hours, or position.

The Parable

(First, briefly go over the story point by point.)

- A man traveling from one city to another falls among robbers, and is severely beaten and left at the roadside.
- Shortly after, a priest passes by, but walks around the man and continues on his way.
- Shortly after the priest, a Levite passing by also walks around the man and continues on his way.
- Finally, a Samaritan man passes by, stops, and has compassion on the poor man, binds his wounds, and takes him to a local inn for care.

What is Jesus saying in this story? There is more than meets the eye here.

1. First, it is important to note that Jesus uses the example of the Samaritan for a good reason. The Samaritan people were a people of mixed blood from northern Israel. They were a people whom the Judean people tended to look down upon as not being of pure lineage. The Samaritan people were victims of prejudice in their day.

2. Here we have two men in religious service who walk right by this poor victim of robbers. Why? Could it be that they had important schedules to keep, religious duties that made it “impossible” to help this man? (Jesus asks here: What was their religious duty in this situation? Indeed, what is the heart of religion?)
3. Along comes the Samaritan: “...and when he saw him he had compassion.” Here, very simply, is the heart of religion: heartfelt, inner responsibility. (Note that the Samaritan also takes the man to the local inn, and even leaves money for him before departing. His kindness is not token kindness, but a genuine and sincere action.)
4. In his parable Jesus showed his audience that day, so many centuries ago, two important things:
 - a) That a truly religious heart (the heart of inner responsibility) is much more important than religious position or office.
 - b) That true religious practice is not a matter of blood lineage. Human worth comes not from the blood line but, again, from the heart of selflessness.

The Parent’s Heart

Before we consider where we stand today as those who have taken on the life of Christian responsibility, let us look at another example of internal responsibility – that which comes from the heart. It is the common and magnificent example of a mother, a parent.

- 1) From the moment of her baby’s birth (an immense and painful job in itself) a mother is literally the slave of her child (at least for several years).
- 2) Babies don’t offer a salary to mothers. They have no concern for her health. They demand her services at any hour. And the word “thanks” is not part of their early vocabulary.
- 3) After a nine month gestation period, where the unborn fetus has feasted and gained life directly from its mother’s own elements, the newly born child now demands milk of the mother, to the point of sucking her breasts out of shape.
- 4) Surely, if the mother were only looking for wages, of thanks, she would walk out the door mad within the first week of the baby’s life!

But here again we see, perhaps most clearly of all, the heart of inner responsibility:

- The parent serves her child because she loves it, even at the moment of birth she has already invested so much of herself. Her greatest reward as a parent will be to see the child's growth and development and happiness.
- HERE IN THE LIFE OF THE GREAT PARENT, WE SEE THA THE ROOT OF RESPONSIBILITY IS THE HEART OF SELFLESS LOVE.

There is a clear relationship, here, between the true parent's heart and the heart of true religious practice.

Conclusion

Our service to God, our Father, is at once the service to His children, humanity. In that way we represent our Heavenly Parent. We are called upon to take a nurturing, or parental, role (not in a patronizing or insincere way, but from the heart) following the path of Christ.

God gave birth to humanity after a long gestation period, and has had to suffer watching his children (like the man battered by thieves) in pain after the fall.

Can we, knowing of the incomparable investment of our Heavenly Father in each life around us, ever be so shallow as to think in terms of who I like and who I don't like, or who loves me and who doesn't? (Thank God that Jesus didn't think that way.)

IT IS FROM THE HEART OF LOVING RESPONSIBILITY TO God, THE PARENT, AND TO HIS SONS AND DAUGHTERS, THAT WE FIND THE ONLY TRUE RELIGION. If we would live that true religion, then, like the great parent, we will be asked to invest everything (often without thanks). This refers to our individual lives as Christians as well as the level of collective action (social action, etc.).

Our reward and glory will be in seeing the growth of that person, that kingdom we have helped to nurture (a reward only understood by those who have truly given from the heart). Learn the lesson of the Samaritan.