



March 9, 2025 – Jericho Road

There is a well-known parable. Most people have strong opinions on this story. It paints the church leaders in a poor light. It praises the response of the Good Samaritan. Why did the first two people walk past? Why did the Samaritan stop and help? The truth is that the answer to both questions is the same: It was a dangerous road. There were curves and hills, trees, scrubs, and places to hide. It was a dangerous road. The first two likely thought “What will happen to me if I stop?” The Samaritan likely thought, “What will happen to him if I don’t stop?” These are two responses to the same problem. It was dangerous.

At the time of writing this sermon, a dangerous road just got more dangerous. There is a bill waiting for the Governor’s signature that takes away the rights of our siblings in Christ who are transgender or gender non-binary. The path that is often dangerous and scary on its own is now home to legalized discrimination. If that is not enough, the efforts of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are now being halted, and in some areas of business, no longer allowed. The already dangerous path just got more dangerous.

These are just a couple of examples of the harm being done right now. The news is filled with examples of rights and inclusions being taken away, along with stories of Good Samaritans standing up in support of those who have been wronged. The Scriptures are quite clear on these issues. The love of God is for ALL people. Period. And, when one part of the body hurts, the whole-body hurts. We are ALL hurt when parts of the Body of Christ are targeted and harmed.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke on the Good Samaritan text shortly before he was killed. Publicly, he praised the work of the Good Samaritan, who was willing to put his own life at risk out of fear for what might happen to the person in need if he did nothing. Standing in support of those in need is important work. And that work should be praised, and others compelled into that same work.

However, privately, he admitted to friends that he did not want to be a Good Samaritan. His desire was to build a better Jericho Road. The main problem is that the road was dangerous. There were too many places for people to hide and attack. The goal was to build a better road, one with lots of lighting and nowhere to hide. A road that was so full of traffic that all were seen and safe.

We have a Jericho Road right here in Iowa. Instead of becoming a safer place to travel, there are more places to hide than before. Instead of better lighting, the light bulbs have been removed. The fear of what will happen is real. There are many who are deeply impacted by these decisions. Those changing the laws would have you believe it is a select few who will be harmed. It is not. These decisions directly impact family members or friends, people in your workplace or schools, neighbors. The road has gotten more dangerous.

We are called to respond. We can look at the contemporary Jericho Road and say “What will happen to me if I try to help? Or, we can say, “What will happen to others if I do not help?” Jesus made it clear. The first step is to do what we can to help those in need. We are called to create safe space for healing. We are called to stand in solidarity.

Much like MLK said, we are called to build a better road. That means advocacy. That means reaching out to the offices of those in power. This work is not easy. There will be bumps along the way. We will make mistakes. May we never lose sight of Christ, and our calling to follow. May we do what we can to support those in need and to build a better and safer future for all people. Amen.

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