



Wednesday Prayer

5th Sunday after Pentecost – Who is my neighbor?

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” 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 given the right answer; do this, and you will live.” But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”
Luke 10:25-29

In this Gospel lesson, Jesus goes on to share the story of the good Samaritan, a story most of us know very well from early Sunday School lessons. I wonder how we relate to this story, this lesson from Jesus, in today’s broken and divided world. As the world breaks out of the isolation of these past couple years, we’re seeing an alarming and deeply troubling increase in mental health issues amongst young people, creating an even greater vulnerability in their potential to be exploited. What if we treated every young person we encounter the way the Samaritan treated the wounded traveler? Our “wounded” youth may be acting out or retreating in – both circumstances when they most likely need us most – and often when adults may “pass by on the other side” to avoid the pain and mess of helping those most in need.

Further, what if we truly treated all our neighbors as we wish to be treated? I think about the lesson we’d be sending young people about how to treat one another in this world, rather than some of the lessons they’re seeing play out in how adults are treating one another when there are disputes. I was at my parents 100-year-old farm this week and came across a newspaper article my Grandmom Irene had written back in 1954. She writes,



“Are we willing to accept the truth that because we are all human, each of us often wounds his fellow man? Are we prone to desire to retaliate when we are hurt in spite of the fact that the Great Book says, ‘Retaliation is mine saith the Lord’? Let us try to realize that the pain, the disillusionment and the gross injustice has already been inflicted. We have suffered it. Why attempt to keep it alive? Let it heal.”

God of healing, help us to take on the role of neighbor to all, especially supporting the young people in our communities needing to see our love and care. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.