

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

TEXT: Luke 10: 25-37.

Grace, peace, and mercy, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Today we once again, look at the parable of the Good Samaritan. So, in this day and age, can we do what the bible says about helping out our fellow man or woman, in their time of dire need, regardless of the cost that comes may our way, by way of death or injury.

How do we do it with a clear heart and a clear conscience? We don't really want to put our family's lives in jeopardy if we can avoid it, especially if you are the bread-winner and everyone relies on you to keep the household going. And then, what will happen if the unthinkable does occur, that you are maimed or killed in your attempt to help someone being handed a terrible beating.

Let's play with this a bit, what about if you help someone in need, just to get recognition of what a great, brave person you are? Some people become Good Samaritans just for this very reason, if it will boost their profile in the community, they will go out there and do it.

I wan to go off on a bit of a tangent now about showcasing a good profile but doing something underhanded at the same time.

I would like to bring to your attention to this little pearler of a quote, by, Sir Walter Scott, (15 August 1771 – 21 September 1832) who was a prolific Scottish historical novelist and poet, popular throughout Europe during his time. *'What a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive.'* This, I take, is as good a modern day proverb to allude to, in any given situation that you may find yourself personally in; especially if the situation is toxic.

For example; you may be watching the golf, and a commentator may make some chatter whilst the spotlight is upon Tiger Woods and his fall from grace in the eyes of the public, which has happened during the past year or so. In particular all the girlfriends and lovers he got himself tangled up with, and the public got wind of this dark side of his life for the first time. And it came out into the open. His life is an open book isn't it?

As we are well aware, Tiger is a fabulously wealthy man, a professional, has/had a beautiful wife and a family: and he seemingly threw it all away, for what...? Whatever reason or cause he had, it wasn't worth it! And the only reason he showed remorse was because he got caught and found out at the same time.

But food for thought, who knows what sort of good, honest, high profile leaders or role models are doing in their private lives? Do we need to know who said what? From, Andrew Johns to Mel Gibson, even if they said what they did in jest or out of anger? Many people are now keeping tabs on our new Prime Minister Julia Gillard and what she is saying or promising, then they'll make their mind up at the ballot box come Election day.

In the past week, who could not forget the tears of remorse flowing from Lindsay Lohan's face, when she knew she was in deep trouble? The judge sentenced her to ninety days in prison [which was shortened somewhat]. To Lindsay, doing time for her will be days of sheer hell. This is her hell on earth, which we all hope she'll learn from. No tweeting [which is rumoured to be constant], computer, cell phone, drinking, freedom, travel, nightclubs, etc. Lindsay thought that she could ignore the warnings and pleas to rehabilitate herself to attend classes while on probation [nine times], but now she has to suffer the consequence.

Moral to the story, 'do the crime; do the time' [drink driving].

Isn't it true, that if you put yourself in the public limelight, then you are putting your head on the public chopping block? Whether we like it or not, because we publicly profess to be Christian, by publicly gathering together like this, people out there believe that they have the

God-given right to comment about us, me and you, especially if you are doing something that is contrary to their beliefs of how a Christian's action should be conducted. The most common comment is: 'Oh what a hypocrite'.

This and similar comments surprises me, because they come from people who don't regularly attend church [and if they do, they should think again – never, ever point the finger or judge others], yet they themselves have these high morals and standards they don't even practice themselves!

When you look at it though, I guess that if you had a bit of money to throw around [as in Tiger Woods case], then you'll easily find a few people out there who are willing to turn a few tricks because of the need for easy cash.

Anyway, super duper sports star or not, Tiger Woods; Lindsay Lohan feel hurt, pain and rejection just like the rest of us! Like the Bible says, when it rains, it rains on all of us. The rain doesn't magically keep the rich and famous or those living a privileged life dry, while the rest of us mere human beings get thoroughly soaking wet. No one escapes what God sends down upon all of us at the same time.

One day, we're all going to come face to face with God, whether we like it or not! But as Christians, this is the day we've been waiting for, so it will be a good day for us when that day does eventuate.

Speaking of proverbs, maxims or adages, there is one that says, "if you play with fire, you'll get burnt!" And that is the threat that is out there for all of us, each and every waking moment of our lives. Temptation looms large for all of us. The Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour, constantly.

The consequence for deliberately deceiving is that when you get caught – then there are penalties and debts that need to be paid in consequence. For every cause there is an effect. The lesson for all of us is to make sure that we count the cost of our actions, if we plan to play up. Remember, you're going to get caught one day. Then the penalty is death in all its form: i.e. which could be the end of a marriage, relationships, trust, etc, etc. once the innocence is gone, the bare reality is ugly.

Then again, do you have to do something untoward or out of character; to feel the sting of death? This is the other thing I wanted to say: can you feel bad, bothered and unworthy for doing the right thing?

Recently, I had my stepson staying with me [even though I've been divorced for just about ten years – he still calls me dad when he needs

things], he needed to get away from the environment he was in because his de-facto wife wants to call it a day after thirteen years or so of being together.

He was hurt about it and I agreed he could come and stay with me, and see if we could work through a few issues to help him cope during this terrible time. That was the intention, but nothing of a sort happened like that. Can you identify with that, you set a plan, and it goes askew, completely opposite to what you intended.

He wallowed in his self pity, drank heavily, and I found myself after a while, unintentionally supplying his poison, until I quickly woke up to myself, that he needed to face facts and get himself home, get out of my sight, start talking to his de-facto and face the reality about what they will do with the children and their future.

To my detriment; my sympathy was used against me to feed his weakness, and I told him so. I was acting against all I knew that was honest, right and good. After a good talking to, in the sober light of day [no more false courage], after a few arrangements, I got him to go home and deal with all the issues at hand. But I felt bad that I got sucked into his self pity instead of doing what was good for him, right from the onset of him coming to stay for awhile.

Today, our gospel lesson is about Parable of the Good Samaritan and the difference he made in a person's life. This parable came about because an expert in the law wanted to test Jesus out and justify himself in that what he was doing was the right thing after all. Fair comment isn't it, don't we all at some time or another, seek another person's approval, that what we do is right, right?

But what I do struggle with is the fact that people need to justify themselves, especially if they err. They should know better, but would rather play the victim instead of owning up to doing wrong. I can't remember if Tiger Woods justified himself or not? Lindsay Lohan tried but the judge was made of much sterner stuff, and Lindsay paid the penalty.

What about this parable? What is your reaction to the Priest and the Levite, passing the injured man on the other side of the road and not carrying out their priestly duties? Shock, horror, or hey, give 'em a break?

In the modern day world we live in, have you, or could you, play the role of the Good Samaritan, given the dangers that lurk out there. We've seen it on the news bulletins of he many now dead heroes who stood up for the rights of others. Live and let live, is a good sensible motto to live by if death can be avoided, for once our lives are gone, it's gone for good, there's no coming back.

So just to conclude, if the occasion arises that you are to display yourself as a Good Samaritan, may you exercise extreme caution as you boldly intervene to save someone's life. Also pray that God and his angels watch over you, should the unexpected happen so that the next vision you have is of heaven in all its glory and majesty.

And finally when occurrences occur that make you feel as though you are contrary to whom you truly are, or if you are caught out with the wrong crowd, remember this, God knows who you truly are and where your heart is at! And if you are having a bad day trying to do all the good you can, God is with you. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.