

"The following story is told about a famous rabbi who lived around the time of Jesus. A Gentile challenged the rabbi that if he could recite the entire Torah or "Law" while standing on one foot, the Gentile would convert to Judaism. The rabbi stood on one foot and said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your strength; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. That is the whole law. The rest is commentary.' The rabbi then put his foot down, and his challenger was converted." pp.156-7 (Luke, Sharon Ringe) This is the preface to today's text known to us as "The Good Samaritan". I've preached on this text before, and so I wanted a way to make this familiar story say something new or say something in a different and helpful way. So today, I want to briefly review some important points of the story and then give an example of you as a church being neighborly in the year following Katrina. This was before I came to be your pastor.

The lawyer in our text was engaged in a question and answer session with Jesus that was typical of his day, but he has a hidden agenda of testing Jesus. His hidden agenda soon becomes irrelevant because Jesus is so astute in his response. Instead of answering the question "*Who* is my neighbor?", i.e. "how few people must I be nice to", Jesus makes it a question of "whom am I to love as I love myself." (Ringe, p.157)

I want to simply remind us that the legalistic laws of purity prohibited the fine clergy of Jesus' day (the priest and Levite) to get near death or blood or else they couldn't perform their temple duties. They couldn't be seen near the traveller. And so the random act of kindness is left to a Samaritan, the foreigner scorned by the Pharisees. This theme of neighborliness is one which we are going to work with our children on today at their special event. And I want to continue this theme next week with some followup from our children and about what they have learned so that as a community we are talking about some of the same things.

Now I'd like to share with you a DVD which we were given at the General Synod of the UCC. It's called "Hope Shall Bloom." It tells how the church responded to Katrina, and this church raised over \$1500 for hurricane relief, so I thought you'd like to see how your money was spent. Let's watch this and then I'll conclude.

(Show "Hope Shall Bloom") *see ucc.org website*

Today we've seen neighborliness in the face of too much water. Next week we will see neighborliness in the face of too little water. This week may we ponder "*Who* is our neighbor?" or "*Whom* am I to love as I love myself?"