

**THE GOOD SAMARITAN :
THE GREAT COMMANDMENT FOR LOVE : Lc 10,25-42**

Context : The tenth chapter relates the mission of the twelve. For what reason should the apostles rejoice ? The miracles ? No, but the revelation that God makes of himself : he shows himself as a Father to the little and the humble. The knowledge of God as Father is the ultimate fruit of this love of God and the neighbour which is built day after day.

This is what is shown in this episode :

- The starting point is a question : What should we do to have eternal life ? (v. 25-28).
- The summary of the Law clearly replies : 1) Love God. 2) Love your neighbour (it is found in Mc 12,28-32). Luc adds a question that is specifically his : who is my neighbour ?
- The Parable of the good Samaritan (v. 29-37) explains what should be understood by « love of the neighbour ».
- The story of the two sisters (v.38-42), that follows, shows the way to follow for the realisation of the commandment for the Love of God.

The question : Lc 10,25-28

V.25 « There was a lawyer who, to disconcert him (Jesus), ...what must I do to inherit eternal life ? »

It concerns a legist (a wise man or erudite) who wishes to put Jesus' knowledge of the Law to the test. He puts the question on the way to take to obtain life with (or from) God.

V.26 « He (Jesus) ... What do you read there ? »

Jesus replies by a counter-question = in Jewish language, read the scriptures is to interpret them.

V.27 « You must love the Lord your God...and your neighbour as yourself ».

The legist recites the precept that all devout Jews recite twice daily in the «shema Israel» prayer that requires a total attachment to the sole God (Dt 6,4). He adds the precept concerning the love of the neighbour (Lv 19,18).

V.28 « ... do this » ...

This reading of the Scriptures rejoins exactly the teachings of Jesus ; he has placed the love of enemies in the centre of the Christian vocation (cf 6,27). He invites « to do » to inherit the initial life of plenitude.

V. 29 « ... who is my neighbour ? »...

Counter-attack by a further question.

The Parable of the good Samaritan : Lc 10,29-37

-brigand, innkeeper, priest, Levite, Samaritan : Lc 10,29-37

In the scene, the persons are defined by their social or religious rôle.
- The Samaritan is considered as a heretic by the Levite for he does not acknowledge the written Law and refuses the spoken Law.

V.30 « ...leaving him half dead ... »

- He has no social standing (we do not know if he is a Jew or not).
- The temple employees see the injured man, but they respect the interdict not to defile themselves with a corpse. To apply the Law they dissociate the love of God with the love of the neighbour.

V.31 « ... a priest...saw...a Levite ...saw »

-The Samaritan sees and feels a visceral compassion (we find the same attitude of Jesus on seeing the widow of Nain (7,13).

V.34 « He went up and bandaged his wounds...lifted him onto his own mount »

-The Samaritan straight away takes care of the wounded man (with 6 verbs).

V.35 « ... to the innkeeper. Look after him... »

- He gives money to the innkeeper in order that he takes care of this unknown man for him. He plans to come back to settle any extra expenditure but does not say that he will make any enquiries about the wounded man.

V.36 « Which of these three...proved himself a neighbour... ? »
V.37 « ...do the same... »

Martha & Mary: Lc 10,38-42

V.39 « ...Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet and listened to him speaking. »

V.40 « ...Martha who was distracted... »

V.39-40 Lord (twice)

V.41 « ...you worry and fret... only one (thing) is needed... »

Jesus turns the tables. The lawyer put himself into the centre of the question : he saw the others gravitating around himself. The neighbour is the one who manifests mercy and not the one who benefits from it. Jesus invites the lawyer to invent similar practices himself.

We now come to the theme of the love of God.
Mary is presented as the perfect disciple : sitting at the Master's feet so as not to lose a word of his teaching.

Martha acts in her woman's rôle : the perfect hostess.

Lord (twice) : introduction to the first christian community (see note).

Jesus reproaches Martha for :

1 – her anxiety which goes against the spiritual state of mind of the believer (Lc 12,25-26).

2 – To make the service of the table the priority. For this he justifies Mary.

To be a disciple of the lord is to choose the only necessary thing : Love the Lord above all

Conclusion : If the lawyer practices the Law he announces, he will find himself in the position of the tiny ones and will see the active presence of God. This episode teaches us that we must give to others and at the same time receive from the Lord.

* To understand the text :

The Jewish tradition says : *That your house be a house of meeting for the wise, hold tightly to the dust of their feet and drink their words with thirst.* Strange thing that here it is applied to a woman ! (It was forbidden to teach the Law to a girl : it was considered as incitement to vice !)

Jesus encourages this woman to follow his teachings.

Martha acts as the perfect hostess (role of the woman disciple Lc 8,2)

She believes that the Master cannot but agree with her way of thinking.

* **Title of Lord** : title that the christian community gives to the Resuscitated Jesus. There were questions about the service of the Word and the service of the tables (Ac 6,2-4). A hierarchy must be established between the two.

* **The Samaritans** : The Samaritans had a specific pentateuque which offers somewhere around six thousand Differences to the hebrew massoretic text, of which one thousand six hundred rejoin the LXX. The hebrew of the samaritan pentateuque is not written with the 'classic' square writing but with characters of a 'paleo-hebrew' type. The origine of the Samaritans is a source of controversy, they are descendants of colonies of strangers settled after 722 bc by the Assyrians. It is this origin that the juifs, at the time that interests us, take into account and by Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples. There was, therefore, a consensus about the origin of the Samaritans. The Samaritans did not recognise the Temple of Jerusalem, but the Temple of Mount Garizim. The Samaritans get their name from the town of Samaria, capital of the North of Israel. But according to the Samaritans themselves, their name come from the hebrew verb « to keep, to conserve », in the sense of «guardian of the Law ». The Samaritans survive after 70 ad, and in the modern Israel state they are around 600 perpetuating the Samaritan traditions.

* **The priests and the lawyers** : The cultural and liturgical jewish functions were assumed by the priests who were chosen amongst the descendants of the family of Aaron. They were assisted in their work by the descendans of Lewi (the Lawyers). A whole sacerdotal class gravitating around the sanctuary of Jerusalem.
