

The Good Samaritan isn't just a parable, it's a way of life, Pope says



Pope Francis greets pilgrims during his jubilee general audience March 12, 2016. Credit: Alexey Gotovski/CNA.

by [Elise Harris](#)

Vatican City, Jul 10, 2016 / 05:56 am ().- On Sunday Pope Francis said the parable of the Good Samaritan isn't just a nice passage to reflect on, but signifies a concrete choice we make in deciding how to live and treat those around us.

“The Good Samaritan indicates a lifestyle, the center of which is not ourselves, but others, with their difficulties, who we meet on our path and who challenge us,” the Pope said July 10.

It's us who choose this lifestyle or choose to reject it, he said, explaining that the attitude of the Good Samaritan tests our faith, since faith without works “is dead.”

“Let us ask ourselves: is our faith fertile? Does it produce good works? Or is it rather sterile, and so more dead than alive? Do I make neighbors, or do I just pass by?” Francis asked, adding that these questions would be good to ask ourselves often, since in the end “we will be judged on the works of mercy.”

The Lord, he said, will remind us of the situations in which we saw him in those around us and either helped, or did nothing.

“Do you remember that time on the street of Jerusalem and Jericho? That man who was half dead was me. Do you remember? That hungry child was me. Do you remember? That migrant who many times they wanted to throw out was me.”

“Those grandparents, abandoned in the nursing home, was me. That sick person in the hospital, who no one visited, was me,” the Pope said, explaining that these are the questions we will be asked.”

It is through good works, done with love and joy toward our neighbor, which makes our faith sprout and bear fruit, Francis observed.

He spoke to pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square who braved the Roman heat to participate in his Sunday Angelus address, focusing his entire speech on the parable of the Good Samaritan.

In his address, Pope Francis noted how Jesus used the parable to dialogue with the doctors of the law on the twofold commandment of loving God with one’s entire heart and loving one’s neighbor as oneself.

When Jesus’ disciples ask him “who is my neighbor?” it’s the same question we must each ask ourselves today, he said.

Turning to the parable itself, the Pope noted how out of the three men who pass the dying man on the road, the first two, who did nothing, were a priest and a Levite. It was the third man, an inhabitant of Samaria “despised by the Jews because they didn’t observe the true religion,” who stopped.

“It was precisely he, when he sees the poor unfortunate man, who had compassion,” Francis said, noting how the Samaritan went above and beyond just rescuing the man, but cared for him and paid for all the expenses involved in curing him.

At this point Jesus asks the doctors of the law which of the three men was a neighbor to the one beaten and left for dead, to which they all naturally respond was “the one who had compassion on him,” the Pope observed.

By doing this, Jesus “completely overturned the initial perspective of the doctors of the law,” which is frequently our own perspective as well, he said.

Francis cautioned that we mustn’t “catalogue others to decide who is my neighbor and who isn’t,” explaining that being a neighbor entails adopting the same attitude as the Samaritan toward the people we meet who need help, “even if they are a stranger or even hostile.”

The Pope then pointed to how Jesus tells his disciples to “go, and also you do the same.” Jesus, he said, repeats the same commandment to each one of us: “go and to the same, be a neighbor to the brother and sister you see in difficulty,” whether they are a stranger, a migrant, elderly or sick.

He closed his address by praying that Mary would help us to walk along the path of the Good Samaritan, which is the path “of generous love toward others.”

“May she help us to live the principal commandment that Christ left us. This is the road to enter into eternal life.”