

Today, two stories making two points – both based on the Gospel reading – and both just happen to be -
-dog stories. . . So I guess we can say
St. Jude/St. George is going to the dogs today. . .

Story number one. A woman recounted an interesting occurrence: “There was a terrible racket outside, and when I went to the window I saw a large dog standing just outside the fence, and my dog was angrily barking at it. Have you ever noticed that the dog inside always barks angrily at the dog outside, but the dog outside usually does not bark at all? Well, that’s the way it works with dogs, I reckon.”

She continued, “I recognized the dog outside as belonging to a neighbor, and I knew the dog should not be running loose. So I opened the gate and let it into the yard with my dog.

The barking stopped. A bit of sniffing took place while the two dogs checked each other out – and then they both proceeded to ignore each other. But that’s the way it is with dogs!”

The woman continued reflectively, “It occurred to me that this is the way it is with church members also. The ones outside never bark, but the ones inside often bark angrily at those not on the inside with them.

However, once they come inside, and after we make sure of them, we proceed to completely ignore them unless they happened to be in our social crowd.”

She thought, “It would sure be nice if we changed the rules of Christianity and stopped acting like dogs!

Wouldn’t it be better if we would extend our hands and be friendly to those outside our group?

Wouldn’t it be so much better if we did not ignore one another, except for an occasional sniff and handshake at church on the holidays?

Just how many broken hearts might be mended, how many tears dried if we cared enough to notice and to share a bit of genuine love.

There has been much written of pets being brought into rest homes to cheer up those who are lonely. It is too bad that a puppy with a wagging tail can bring more comfort and acceptance than we do. But, after all, that’s the way it is with dogs. . .”

--End of Story--

How many times have we been like the Samaritans in the Gospel – who miss the opportunity to host the Son of God – all because we don’t like where someone has come from -- or where they are going – or because they are somehow different than we are?

Who do we include – and who do we exclude? Who do we pay attention to – and who do we ignore?

Perhaps we can all improve our efforts of hospitality--- especially when we are in this holy place. . .

Story and point number two.

Have you ever heard about the man who was bitten by a dog? When he learned the dog had rabies, he immediately began to make a list.

The doctor told him there was not need to make a will, for it wasn’t like the old days -- rabies could now be cured.

“Oh I’m not making a will,” the man replied. “I’m making a list----- of all the people I want to bite!”

Can’t we all make a list like that? We’ve already learned, haven’t we – that friends aren’t always friendly. And that neighbors aren’t always neighborly. And some workers never work, and some bosses are always bossy. . .

We’ve already learned, haven’t we – that a promise made is not always a promise kept? And a friendly, ‘call me if you need something’ – really means – ‘don’t bother asking. . .’

We’ve already learned, haven’t we – that we have a tendency to want to fight back. . . To keep lists of who is naughty and who is nice – and to snarl our lips and growl at people we don’t like. . .

Even the disciples James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume the inhospitable Samaritans.

But isn't it interesting – the only ones Jesus rebukes in the Gospel are not the Samaritans for their inhospitality --- but the disciples – James and John -- for their anger and their desire for retribution??

I think there is a lesson there for us – perhaps it's one of those crosses we are to take up daily in order to follow after Jesus. . . in fact, ---- I think God wants our hostility list --- and He wants us to leave that list --
- at the cross: and only then, to come and follow after him.