



Date: May 31, 2020

Scripture: *Luke 10.25-37*

Introduction to Analog

Analog is designed to be a tangible way to take a deeper look into each week's Sunday morning message. *Analog* can be used by individuals, friends, couples, or small groups to further discussion and exploration of the Sunday teaching. May this tool help you to connect with God as we continue on this journey of following Jesus together.

Teaching Season

THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS: All we need is love; it's that simple. Jesus said that loving God and loving others together form the most important command, and that all of Scripture hangs on these two commands. If this is the only thing that counts, if love is the foundation of the greatest commands, then it stands to reason that we should devote our whole selves to, always seeking to understand at deeper levels what does it look like to practice love?

Overview:

The parable of the good Samaritan is one of the best known stories told by Jesus. On the surface, this parable seems to have the simple message: "help others who are in need." Although that message is a part of this parable, there are other layers of meaning and application in what Jesus said that were important back then and are important now.

Theme: What does it mean to practice love in the way of Jesus?

Opening Question: When you hear the term, "good Samaritan", what comes to mind?

Read the passage – Luke 10:25-37. Here is some context to help you dig into this parable:

- The "expert in the law" was someone who was an authority on the Torah – the Jewish scriptures – as well as other writings and teachings related to those scriptures. Today we might say this person is a "biblical scholar".
- Luke informs us that this expert in the law set out to "test" Jesus. This word does not necessarily connote bad intentions. This word can be used of someone who simply is trying to discern if what someone says is trustworthy and accurate.
- For the Jews of that day, no group of people was more despised than the Samaritans. See Luke 9:51-56 as one indication of this.

Questions for discussion:

Here are five questions for discussion or reflection. Don't feel like you have to cover them all. The Spiritual Practice for this week could be very meaningful for you or your group, so plan on 5-10 minutes for this exercise. If you are using this in a group context, read through these questions and the Spiritual Practice before your group meets to familiarize yourself with this material. You may want to send this out to the group before you meet.

1. *The expert in the law asks Jesus a couple of questions (verse 25 and verse 29). Jesus answers the first question with a question, and then answers the second question with a story. Why do you think Jesus responded this way? What was he seeking to do? (Note: this was very typical of how he would deal with questions.)*
2. *The expert in the law asked, "And who is my neighbor?" Apparently he wanted to know who qualified as his neighbor so he would know who he needed to care for and who he could ignore. Jesus tells the story, then asks a different question: "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" (verse 36). Jesus twists the question from "Who is my neighbor?" to, "How can I be a loving neighbor?" How would you explain this shift in focus? What does that mean to you to be a loving neighbor?*
3. *Comment on this statement from Dr. King, Jr. about the parable of the Good Samaritan: "I imagine that the first question the priest and Levite asked was: 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?' But by the very nature of his concern, the good Samaritan reversed the question: 'If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?'" — Martin Luther King Jr., **Strength to Love***
4. *Share your thoughts and feelings about the horrific death of George Floyd. What helpful insight or perspective might we find in Jesus' teaching?*
5. *What are one or two things you could do this week to practice love in the way of Jesus? (You may want to look at the list of racial justice resources on the DCC web site for suggestions: <https://www.denverchurch.org/racial-justice/>)*

Spiritual Practice: Breath Prayer

Materials Needed: A watch or phone to set a timer.

Preparation: Read through the following material and decide on an amount of time for the practice of breath prayer (something like 3 minutes).

In Genesis 2 we are given a beautiful picture of God creating the first human. It says that God took the dust of the ground, and like a Great Sculptor, formed a human body. However, this beautiful masterpiece was left unfinished until God leaned over and breathed into the creation's nostrils "the breath of life." Then – the Scripture tells us – this dust creation became a human being.

The breath of God marks our very humanity. Moment-by-moment we are sustained by our Creator, and yet how much time can pass without even considering this truth and the incredible nearness of God?

Breath prayer is an ancient Christian prayer practice where the practitioner aligns a short prayer to the rhythm of their breath. This short prayer is then repeated over and over. This practice invites us to slow down and pay attention to our breath, It reminds us that God is always present with us...as close as our very breath. By the way, this practice has been shown to improve personal health.*

Sample breath prayers:

IN: *God, you are love*
OUT: *may love prevail.*

IN: *Lord Jesus*
OUT: *have mercy on us.*

IN: *God, you know and love*
OUT: *search my heart.*

IN: *Lord Jesus*
OUT: *we need your healing.*

If you are using this in a group context, ask the each person to choose one of these sample prayers, or to come up with another they want. Then invite everyone to sit comfortably, close their eyes, and to simply become aware of their breath – to slow it down and notice its cadence. After a few moments, invite everyone to quietly pray their short prayer with the cadence of their breath, in and out, over and over. Take 3 minutes or so for everyone to quietly pray. Close the time by simply saying "Amen."

To learn more about Breath Prayer: <https://gravitycenter.com/practice/breath-prayer/>

*https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/what_focusing_on_the_breath_does_to_your_brain