

ON BEING INHUMAN

Lincoln Park Baptist Church, West Newton, Massachusetts

April 4, 1965

Scripture – Luke 10:25-37

Introduction:

The inhumanities of yesterday:

A. In the O.T. there are a couple of examples that bring to light the cruelty that men displayed in times of war.

(1) It was the custom in a Holy War to destroy everything captured – all the booty, every child, every woman, every male. When Saul spared the life of King Agag, Samuel the prophet hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord.

(2) When the king of Judah rose against the Chaldaeans, the latter captured king Zedekiah and slew his sons and put out his eyes and bound him in fetters and took him to Babylon.

B. In modern times: (1) the Inquisition; (2) the massacre of Jewish people in Germany; (3) the oppression of Negroes in the U.S.A.

Inhumanity is with us. We as Christian people must face the issue. How can we be truly human in a society where so many forces are working toward inhumanity? How can we be truly human beings?

I. How we cannot be – by not getting involved in human situations.

-- Priest and Levite passed. They refused to be involved.

-- Ex. of New York. Flight of Protestant church from cities.

II. How to be human – the example of the good Samaritan. To be human is to be a neighbor.

The Samaritan was a neighbor to his fellow Jew. In what way?

A. He came where there was need and got involved. Where is human need today? Only the layman can discern where it is.

(1) The businessman -- Maybe it is significant that the priest and Levite would not understand the situation.

(2) The man of science – Plant for East Germany.

(3) Ambassadors of good will to other nations – other people need to be appreciated for what they are – diplomats, doctors, scientists.

- B. He was moved with compassion – he did not stop to think that his fellow human being was a Jew and therefore his enemy. He did not rejoice in his misfortune. He was moved with compassion – he had to rid himself of hundreds of years of tradition.

Ex. of Herbert Hoover – his work of mercy after the first World War – feeding the enemy; feeding the Russians.

Ex. of Livingston – heart buried in Africa. Ex. of Albert Schweitzer.
“He was moved to compassion.”

- C. He took the necessary steps to remedy the situation: When he saw him, he had compassion and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, “Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.” He did what needed to be done.

The lay people of our churches have to find out where the needy person is: (1) the wounded, (2) the oppressed, (3) the lonely, (4) the unemployed, (5) the alcoholic. Then be a human being there with them. To be inhuman is sinful.

Conclusion:

The Christian church must be the community of true humanity. *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”*

Statement by Aristides on the Christians:

“The Christians know and trust God. They placate those who oppose them and make them their friends. They do good to their enemies. Their wives are absolutely pure and their daughters modest. Their men abstain from unlawful marriage and from impurity. If any of them have bondwomen or children, they persuade them to become Christians, for the love they have toward them; and when they become so, they call them without hesitation brothers. They love one another. They do not refuse to help the widows. They rescue the orphan from him who does him violence. He who has, gives ungrudgingly to him who has not. If they see a stranger, they take him to their dwellings and rejoice over him as over a real brother; for they do not call themselves brothers after the flesh, but after the spirit, and in God. If anyone among them is poor and needy, and they do not have food to spare, they fast for two or three days, that they may supply him with necessary food. ... Every morning and every hour they thank and praise God for his loving-kindness toward them. ... Because of them there flows forth all the beauty that there is in the world. But the good deeds they do, they do not proclaim in the ears of the multitude, but they take care that no one shall perceive them. Thus they labor to become righteous. Truly, this is a new people, and there is something divine in them.”