

FIRST (SCOTS) SERMONS

“THE ROAD OF OPPORTUNITY”

Scripture Lesson: Luke 10: 25-37

*This sermon was preached by Hunter Dawson on Sunday, February 8, 2026
at First (Scots) Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina.*

Luke 10: 25-37

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

25 An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” 27 He answered, “You shall 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.” 28 And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

29 But wanting to vindicate himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 30 Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and took off, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while traveling came upon him, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, treating them with oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him, and when I come back I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ 36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” 37 He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

The Road of Opportunity

Leader: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Good morning. My name is Hunter Dawson, and I’m a senior at Porter-Gaud School. If you know me, then you know soccer is one of my biggest passions, and almost every afternoon of my life is dominated by practices, film sessions, or workouts. As you might guess, a lot of my interests outside of the sport itself are related to it, including one of my all-time favorite TV shows, *Ted Lasso*.

One of the episodes centers on the players banding together against injustice, in which Ted says, “Doing the right thing is never the wrong thing.” When I was writing this sermon, this episode, and particularly this quote, came to mind. In Luke 10:25–37, Jesus tells the Parable of the Good Samaritan. In this story, a man is left beaten and robbed on the side of the road to Jericho. As he lay there, battered and bruised, a priest and a Levite passed by, going to great lengths to avoid him, even moving to the other side of the road. However, a Samaritan also came down the road and stopped upon seeing the victim. He bandaged his wounds, brought him to an inn using his own donkey, and paid for his room.

Now, I suspect everyone is familiar with this parable. It's such a familiar story, isn't it? We all know it so well. Whether you have acted it out in youth groups or been taught lessons about it in service, the story is widely renowned as one of the core teachings of Jesus, with a simple meaning: that we should love our neighbor, no matter who that is. We should care for all people, even those who are different from us, and even those we don't like, without expecting anything in return.

And of course, that is true, and that is one meaning of this story. We should love our neighbors no matter what. However, I would like to highlight another aspect of this story, and that is the opportunity that the Samaritan took to help the man on the side of the road.

For starters, the Samaritan must have been absolutely astonished to see this man, broken and tattered on the side of the road. We all certainly would be. However, instead of passing him by like the priest and the Levite, the good man saw an opportunity—an opportunity to help his neighbor.

Now, this certainly was not easy for the Samaritan, who was assuredly a busy man, nor was it expected. He was confronted with a completely unanticipated situation. The Samaritan wasn't looking for someone to help that day; he was simply minding his own business on the road to Jericho. However, when faced with the situation, he took the opportunity to help the man. Instead of taking the easy road of ignoring the man like the priest and Levite did, the Samaritan found it within his heart to take the road of opportunity and help him.

This is what Jesus asks us to do. He teaches us that we should be like the Samaritan and help those in unexpected situations, rather than turn a blind eye. When the situation arises, we should avoid the road of smooth sailing and instead take the road of opportunity.

This seems counterintuitive. We often spend time in church or in personal reflection praying for a smooth journey—one with no interruptions or delays. We ask that there be no traffic on the way home, or that a big project for work or school goes smoothly, everything according to plan. I think we should reconsider this notion.

What if we prayed that, instead of our journey being on a smooth path, we also ask for the wisdom to recognize a road of opportunity? The easy road is just that—easy. It is more predictable, more reliable, and certainly causes much less stress and involves less personal risk. On the other hand, the road of opportunity is much less traveled. It can cause distractions, unwanted interruptions, and involve us in problems that may not necessarily affect us.

The act of bandaging the man, taking him to an inn, and paying for his room certainly took the Good Samaritan's entire day and cost him time and money he could have spent otherwise. However, it is the opportunity itself that Jesus teaches us to take. We must seize the opportunity to help our neighbors, even when it's inconvenient to do so, so that we may love our neighbors and truly epitomize the Good Samaritan.

Take the opportunity to help someone in need. Take the chance to be kind and compassionate to someone. Be a good neighbor. As Christians, we seek to follow in Jesus' footsteps to live a meaningful life. In doing so, we must take the more difficult path and follow the road where opportunities to help others lie.

We must embody the Good Samaritan's actions on the road to Jericho and find ways to take hold of the opportunities presented to us—to help others and truly be a good neighbor. At the end of the parable, Jesus tells us, "Go and do likewise." I implore that everyone go and do likewise. Take the road of opportunity, because doing the right thing will never be the wrong thing.