

## Transformed and Renewed Through Sacrifice and Becoming Lively Stones for Christ

May 12, 2026, Teacher: Connie Smith

*1 Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

### **A. The Good Samaritan as a Gospel Lesson, Transformed Lives Respond!** (Taken from a website) See attached document on the Good Samaritan

- What do the priest and Levite represent? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who does the beaten, naked man represent? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who does the Good Samaritan represent? \_\_\_\_\_
- When you know you are the one in the ditch, it changes our perspective toward others. It levels the playing field. Like King Benjamin said, "We are all beggars before God." When you understand Jesus carried you, you are willing to carry others. Grace paid your full cost (a debt we could not possibly pay, a life we cannot rescue ourselves, generosity and unconditional love becomes natural.
- We can see people instead of stepping over them. Offering kindness without conditions. Showing compassion without needing credit. Loving without asking if it is deserved.

### **B. Choose Me!**

- How did Jesus respond, to what seemed a reasonable request? Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.
- **The Lord was opening Martha's heart and calling to her to be near Him. I picture Him holding out His hand and bidding her to come and sit beside her sister and join them.**
- Martha's circumstances didn't change, but her perspective and perception of time and how it was being used did.
- We need to "sit at Jesus' feet and hear his words. We do that through worship, reading and studying the scriptures, praising and thanking Him, singing praises...
- Jesus whispers to us today: Choose Me beloved, Choose to see Me—to find Me—in your moments of everyday life. I will breathe new life into you and transform you into a lively stone.

### **C. Lydia-Whose Heart the Lord Opened:**

- **Acts 16:11-15** *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*
- The phrase "**whose heart the Lord opened**" refers to a divine, supernatural intervention by God to remove spiritual blindness and hardness, enabling a person to understand, accept, and respond to the gospel message. It highlights that true conversion is ultimately a work of God, rather than merely the result of persuasive human preaching.
- **Removal of Obstacles:** The "opening" implies that the heart was previously closed or "barred" by ignorance, unbelief, or spiritual indifference. The Lord removes this "veil" or "stony heart" to allow the light of the gospel to enter.

- Do I trust Him, really trust Him, with the details of my life? Am I willing to let the Lord do “surgery” on my heart? (Some of these comments taken from the internet)
- **Ladies, lets embrace the gospel like we would live it. Write down something from every class this spring and put it into practice. You are not too old or too busy or too weak to come alive in Christ, to receive His image in your countenance.**

#### D. The Mirror of God’s Word:

- **James 1:22-25** *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*
- **2 Corinthians 3:18** But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same **image** from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.
- **Colossians 3:10** And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the **image** of him that created him;
- **By doing this we recover our created identity and discover again the true selves God created us to be. We were created in His image and in His likeness. And are restored to that likeness once again.**
- **Alma 3:28** *Have ye received his image in your countenances?*
- **Alma 3:37** *I say unto you, Can you look up, having the image of God engraven upon your countenances?*
- To be alive in Christ as a lively stone we can make corrections in our character. Jesus gives us the tools to do this. The people of Ammon were so converted it says they became a righteous people.

#### E. Sacrifice and Obedience

- In looking at Christ’s example we see 2 main things: First he was filled with a love and dedication to His Father and to mankind. Second, he was obedient to all the will of His Father.
- The world sees charity as what you do. Things like acts of giving, being helpful and good. But all of these things are temporary and an outward focus.
- God sees charity as who you are becoming in Christ. This is a spiritual view, an eternal love that seeks the well-being of others without reward and motivated by grace, compassion and humility. It is rooted in the heart and spirit, not just outward actions. Seen by God, even when invisible to the world.
- **Mark 14:40** *And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless, **not my will, but thine be done.***
- **3 Nephi 12:25** *Behold I have given unto you **my** gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you, that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because **my Father sent me;***

## F. Righteous vs Unrighteous Sacrifices

- *Proverbs 21:27* *The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?*
- So, what constitutes a wicked person or wicked sacrifice? It really goes back to being obedient. A wicked person is someone who is not obedient to the commandments of God.
- Examples of a wicked sacrifice: Ananias and Sapphira; Cain and Abel
- Examples of a righteous sacrifice: *Mark 12: 49* *And Jesus called his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they who have cast into the treasury; 50* *For all the rich did cast in of their abundance; but she notwithstanding her want, did cast in all that she had; yea, even all her living. But even more than that, she gave from her heart. A heart that was open to obedience and to the love of Jesus. That's an acceptable sacrifice.*
- The woman with the alabaster box of ointment: [Luke 7:38-44](#) *And behold, a woman in the city, who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment. 38* *And stood at his feet weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment. And stood at his feet weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment...*
- [Luke 7:44](#) *And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.*
- This was an example of love in action, not just emotion. This was her sacrifice of devotion.
- Sisters, have we loved Jesus so much?

[1 John 3:2](#) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be **like him**; for we shall see **him** as he is.

[Moroni 7:53](#) Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son Jesus Christ, that ye may become the sons of God, that when he shall appear, we shall be **like him**; for we shall see **him** as he is, that we may have this hope, that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen.

## The Good Samaritan as a Gospel Lesson

### Transformed Lives Respond!

The story of the Good Samaritan is often taught as a moral lesson about kindness. Be nice. Help people. Love your neighbor. While that application is true, it is not the deepest meaning of the parable. **When Jesus tells this story through the lens of His finished work, He is revealing the gospel first, and only then showing us how transformed lives respond.**

Jesus tells this parable in response to a question. "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" The question itself reveals the mindset. *What do I do.* What action earns life eternal. **Jesus answers in a way that exposes the limits of human effort.**

A man is traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho and falls among robbers. He is stripped, beaten, and left half dead. **This is not accidental detail.**

Jerusalem represents peace and presence. Jericho represents descent (moving downward). Humanity is the man on the road. Fallen. Wounded. **Unable to save itself.**

The man is not just hurt. He is half dead. He cannot heal himself. He cannot walk himself home. **He cannot contribute to his rescue. This matters.**

A priest comes by. He sees the man and passes on the other side. Then a Levite does the same. **These represent the law, religion, and moral effort.** They can see the problem, but they cannot solve it. **The law can diagnose sin, but it cannot heal the sinner.** Rules can identify brokenness, but they cannot restore life.

**Then a Samaritan comes.**

This would have shocked Jesus' audience. Samaritans were despised. Considered unclean. Outsiders. And yet Jesus makes the Samaritan the hero. **This is intentional. Jesus is pointing to Himself.**

*The Samaritan sees the man and has compassion. Compassion moves him closer, not away. He does not ask how the man got there. He does not test his worthiness. He does not demand repentance before help. He acts.*

He binds the wounds. He pours oil and wine. He lifts the man onto his own animal. He carries him to an inn. He pays the full cost. He promises to return and cover whatever remains.

**This is the finished work of Jesus.**

*Jesus is the true Good Samaritan. He comes to us in our brokenness. He binds our wounds. The oil represents the Holy Spirit. The wine represents His blood. He carries what we could not carry. He pays a debt we could not pay. And He promises to return.*

The injured man does nothing except be rescued.

That is the gospel.

*Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace are ye saved through faith--and that not of yourselves; but it is the gift of God-- Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

**Only after revealing this does Jesus say, "Go and do likewise."** *Not to earn salvation, but because salvation has already been given, we need only to accept it. We do not become neighbors by trying harder. We become neighbors when we live by God's grace.*

**Application flows from identity.** *John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; only to them who believe on his name.*

**Because we have been loved, we love.** *1John 4:21 That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

**Because we have been rescued, we notice others.** *Matt 7:21 All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.*

**Because we have received grace, we extend grace.** *Eph 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

The Good Samaritan story teaches us that love is not about proximity or similarity. It is about compassion. Our neighbor is not just the person who looks like us, votes like us, believes like us, or lives like us. **Our neighbor is the one in front of us who needs love.**

But here is the key. We cannot live this parable by willpower. We live it by overflow. God fills us with His goodness, and we let it overflow to others.

When you know you are the one in the ditch, you stop looking down on others. When you know Jesus carried you, you are willing to carry others. **When you know grace paid your full cost, generosity and unconditional love becomes natural.**

*Our Lives have been Transformed and We Respond by Accepting His Free Gift by going into the Waters of Baptism. Our hard heart is replaced with a heart like Jesus! We now have a desire to follow his pattern of life. We are filled with JOY as we live as He taught us.*

In daily life, this looks like slowing down. Seeing people instead of stepping over them. Offering kindness without conditions. Showing compassion without needing credit. Loving without asking if it is deserved.

Not because you are trying to be a good Christian. But because your life has been changed when you accepted Jesus as your friend and Savior.

Just as the Samaritan paid the debt in full, Jesus also paid the full debt for our sins (He suffered, died on the cross and rose so we can live with Him eternally) Just as the Samaritan promised to return and cover whatever cost remained; Jesus taught Repentance, so when we sin again, we need to repent so our debt remains paid. He also promised to return. Which is something we are looking forward to!

**Our lives should be an outward expression of the Love that Jesus fills us with!**