

GOOD SAM

I missed Jean leaving for the hospital...about 5:45 a.m. She was riding with Karen to the Good Samaritan Regional Hospital in Albany. Cataract surgery scheduled for 6:30 a.m. It's 7:15 now so they are probably done. I was sorry not to be with her. In-and-out they say. Takes longer to get your teeth cleaned.

It's only been three days since I was released from Good Samaritan Hospital in Corvallis. Pneumonia. Quarantined. Only saw people with masks for four days. The hospital was full. Guess they all are. Karen took me home from there one day. I am told to expect to need at least a month to recover. I don't drive yet, so we depend on daughters Linda and Karen for medical runs. Max and Hannah have also helped. Many have much more serious problems.

I started at Good Samaritan Urgent Care but ended at the Emergency Room and Hospital on the other side of Corvallis. The trips in between are a blur. So many levels of care-givers and more specialties than I can remember. All eager to do a vital signs check about every two hours. I left an arm free and automatically opened my mouth for the thermometer. Every action was recorded on a computer at my door. They also take a lot of blood.

But I'm home, quite weak, not eating enough. Trying.

I recall some wandering thoughts...hallucinations...or just my normal foolishness. For instance, the name of this expansive collection of health care centers in this part of Oregon...*Good Samaritan Regional Health Care*. It was started by the Episcopalians. Wondered why it wasn't called "Good Episcopalian Hospital." Dumb thought. They remembered the Bible story.

Then I thought of the Samaritan connection. Why the "good?" Must have been some bad Samaritans. No time for textual research into one of the best Christian parables. I remember that it started with a lawyer asking, "Who is my neighbor?" Luke has Jesus giving a typical rabbinic response to a question...a story. I have loved hearing rabbi's come up with a story response to questions.

Remember, I'm in a hospital with IV's dripping life back into me, so I can't check the exact details. The story begins with a man left beaten and robbed alongside the road to Jericho down from Jerusalem. 3 men come by. The old three-men-come-by plot. The three could have been anyone but in this story two are respectable good guys. At least one was even a holy guy. A priest, I think. He walked by the wounded one. So did the second person. Maybe a Levite. Doesn't matter. You'll have to look it up. But he was also "good guy," respectable. Then comes this "Samaritan."

Samaritans were a shunned class of people. Wrong side of religion, maybe. I forget the details. People went a long way not to go near Samaritans. I don't remember that they were bad, just different. Marginalized. Maybe for skin color. A kind of Jim Crow mentality toward them. So, who is the one of the three who goes out of his way to help the victim? The *Samaritan*. I'm sorry that he is only given an ethnic label. Why not call him by a human name...like *Sam*?

I know of course that the story requires us to see compassion as a personal act that transcends boundaries. If a person needs care you give it. Just like "Sam" did. And when you're really sick you don't pay attention to what kind of person helps you.

A text message from Karen at the hospital says that Jean has her IV in and is due for surgery at 8:00. Should know something in a few minutes. I'll send this off when I hear she's out.

Yes, Karen's bringing her home now. Stopping for coffee on the way, so she must be OK. I'll go out to the driveway to see how many steps I can do today before they get here. Made 2400 yesterday. When you've not walked for a week that's a big deal. Yes, Jean's home, walking better than me. With an eye-patch.

Still thinking about Sam. Never did hear anything personal about the victim. I hope he was as glad as I am that there are compassionate people like *Sam* in the world. Lots of them.

Art Morgan, April 26, 2018