Our reading from Ezekiel speaks of the need for repentance and makes it clear that there are a lot bad people who better mend their ways. The reading from Romans describes the obligation of Christians to love. The lesson prompts us that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Finally, our Gospel lesson reminds us that Love requires us to address the inevitable conflicts that will arise among us. Jesus tells us in so many words that unaddressed conflicts can render a community unable to function as God hopes.

At times we can get the impression from lessons like these that most of the world is more or less out for themselves and that people care little about the plight of others. No doubt many of us have become cynical about life and conclude how the world has become so self-serving.

But I am going to resist in believing that is true. Luther did say we are both "*Saint*" and "*Sinner*" and we have the potential to do both good and evil. However, God made us in his image and breathed into us goodness!

Therefore, if we pay attention there are people all around us that are basically concerned about others, even if they don’t always know how to express it. That is perhaps why Methodist pastor Steve Goodier loves to tell this story.

*"A trucker relates that he was traveling through rural North Carolina on I-95 when a brown sedan merged onto the highway. It weaved back and forth between lanes, causing the driver of the truck to shift into a lower gear. At first he thought the driver was drunk, but when he came closer, the trucker saw an old man shaking uncontrollably behind the wheel. He noticed a Citizen’s Band aerial whipping to and fro as the car jerked between lanes, so he called on the radio: ‘You in the brown Chevy, if you can hear me, pull over. Pull off the road!’ ”*

*Amazingly, he did! The trucker pulled up behind the car and climbed from his cab. The elderly man staggered from his auto and fell into the trucker’s arms. He poured out a story of months of fear and pain that accompanied the illness of his only daughter.*

*Now he was returning from the hospital where it was decided that she would cease any further treatment. In the hospital he remained “strong” and stoic for his daughter, but out on the road he fell apart.*

*The two men talked for the good part of an hour. The father eventually decided to share his pain with his daughter and said he felt good enough to drive home. The men embraced and the trucker followed him for 50 miles. As they drove along, the two talked together on the radio.*

*The older man finally acknowledged that his exit was ahead and thanked his new friend again for the help. The trucker asked if he could make it home all right and, suddenly, a third voice broke in on the conversation: ‘ Breaker 19, don’t worry, good buddy. Go your way. I’ll see him home!’*

*Glancing in his mirror, he saw a livestock truck move into the exit lane behind the brown sedan."*

I think there are people all around us that are good and want to be helpful and kind. They are God-sent individuals who will advocate for the ill, the poor, the lonely or the displaced; they are people who will gladly give that caring touch, a needed warm embrace or a patient and listening ear.

Look around. You are sure to see one. Oh, and when you get a chance look in the mirror. You might spot one there, too. Amen.