

# The Parable of the Good Samaritan

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered, "'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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Luke 10:25-37

## Context

- The path from Jerusalem to Jericho is a steep, rocky decline that was notoriously dangerous and full of thieves
- If a priest touched a dead body, he was ceremonially unclean for 7 days and not allowed in the temple (Numbers 19:11). The priest walking by the half-dead man may have steered clean of him to avoid losing his turn of duty. He chose ceremony over charity.
- Samaritans were hated by the Jews. Calling someone a "Samaritan" would be an insult and possibly an accusation (see Jesus being accused of being a Samaritan in John 8:48)

- The priest and Levite may have felt sympathy for the man but the Samaritan is praised for his practical help.

## Large Group Outline

- The simple point of the parable is that we should love others with the love of Jesus
- The lawyer came looking to justify himself
  - Would be like a professor giving you an impossible problem. You can't possibly solve it but it humbles you to ask for help and learn from the professor
  - In the same way, loving like Jesus is impossible but shows our need for God and draws us to Him
- There are two false ways that we seek to justify ourselves (both are selfish in motivation and full of hypocrisy)
  - **Social Moralist** - Unlimited concern for social justice but not concerned about personal holiness for self or others.
  - **Religious Moralist** - Unlimited concern about personal holiness for self and others, but very unconcerned about social justice
- The Good Samaritan is not a moralist trying to please God but a person humbled by God's grace who loves others as an overflow of what he's experienced. In so doing he fulfills all the commandments and stamps out social injustice. In Jesus, we don't see a lopsided focus of love without truth or truth without love, but both in perfect balance. Unless we are crushed and convicted by the magnitude of the love God requires then we will never be humbled enough to receive the love that God has to offer. Only when we receive it will we be able to love like the Good Samaritan.

## Potential Questions

- What concerns might have kept the priest and Levite from attending to the man?
- What motivated the Samaritan to take care of the man?
- How do you think the original audience would have reacted to this parable?
- Who would be a "Samaritan" in our culture?
- Who is our neighbor? How should we love them?