

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

Parable 15: Good Samaritan

Lk 10:25-37

I. SETTING

1. AFTER JESUS TURNED HIS FACE TOWARD JERUSALEM—**Lk 9:51**
2. IRONICALLY—AFTER SAMARITANS TURNED JESUS AWAY—**Lk 9:53**
3. THE PHRASE ‘GOOD SAMARITAN’ WAS A JEWISH OXYMORON
 - **Half-breeds**—Jews intermarried with Assyrian settlers in 8th century BC
 - **Forbidden to help** with re-building of the Temple in the 5th century BC
 - **Temple on Mt Gerizim**
 - o Dedicated to Zeus during Seleucid period—to avoid persecution
 - o Destroyed—with Shechem—by John Hyrcanus—128 BC
 - **Desecrated Temple** with scattered bones during Passover (about 9 AD)
 - **Half-shekel tax** not accepted from Samaritans—probably not allowed in Temple
 - **Samaritan women** were considered perpetually unclean
 - Jews not subject to **death penalty** for killing a Samaritan
 - Jews could **withhold wages** from a Samaritan
 - Samaritans could be **charged interest**—not considered to be Israelites

II. BIBLICAL PASSAGE—THE ENCOUNTER—LK 10:25-29

Lk 10:25-29—25 *And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”* 26 *And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?”* 27 *And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and will all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”*

28 *And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; Do this and you will live.”* 29 *But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”*

IV. EXPLANATION

1. ETERNAL LIFE QUESTION—SIMILAR TO THAT OF RICH YOUNG RULER
 - a. Found in all Synoptics—**Mt 19—Mk 10—Lk 18**
 - b. Jesus answered the question
 - Keep all the commandments
 - Give everything to the poor—then come and follow Me
2. PARALLEL TEXTS—ABOUT TWO COMMANDMENTS
 - a. Temple confrontation—in **Matthew 22** and **Mark 12**

- Jesus responds with two commandments
 - Luke omits that account—put the ‘two commandments’ here—before this parable
- b. Matthew’s account
- **Deceptive** lawyer—wanted to test Jesus
 - Like this account in Luke
- c. Mark’s account
- **Good** scribe—admired Jesus’ response to Sadducees
 - He commended Jesus for his answer
3. THE LAWYER
- a. An expert in Jewish religious law—did not think he needed instruction
- b. His intention—to expose Jesus’ inadequacy in Jewish law
- Represented religious leaders’ opposition to Jesus’ growing popularity
- c. His assumption = eternal life can be earned by what we do—by merit—works
4. JESUS’ RESPONSE
- o Put lawyer on the defense—by asking another question
5. LAWYER’S RESPONSE—THE LOVE COMMANDS
- a. Describe the heart of OT theology
1. **Dt 6:5** = love the Lord your God
 - Heart of OT faith—undivided loyalty to Yahweh
 - Shema was said 2 times daily by every Jewish male
 2. **Lev 19:18** = love your neighbor as yourself
 - Essence of Holiness Code—expressed Gods’ will for His people
 - **Not** a justification for self-love
 - **Instead:** love your neighbor as if your neighbor were yourself
- b. Same answer Jesus gave scribe in Temple—**Mt 22** and **Mk 12**
- c. Linkage of these two verses
- Not found elsewhere in rabbinic tradition
 - Possibly echoing what he had heard Jesus say!
6. JESUS’ POINT—“DO THIS!”
- o Biblical faith is not a set of ritual acts—but our relationship with God
 - o That relationship shapes our whole life—how we relate to all other people
 - o **Four simple words:** Love God, love neighbor

- o Jesus' response—"Do this"—put the lawyer on the defensive
7. LAWYER'S EVASION
- a. His question—"Who is my neighbor"—was a diversionary tactic
 - To take focus off his own inadequacy—to justify himself
 - b. His real point—where is the boundary?
 - Beyond which—I **don't have to love** a person
 - c. In Rabbinic tradition
 - **Neighbor = brother**—someone like me
 - Only **full Jews**—*certainly not* Samaritans or foreigners
 - One tradition—heretics, informers, renegades should be pushed in a ditch and not pulled out
 - Essenes said—hate all 'sons of darkness'—those not part of their group
 - d. Problem—however
 - **Lev 19:34**—extends neighborly love—even to the alien!

V. BIBLICAL PASSAGE—THE PARABLE—Lk 10:30-37

Lk 10:30-37—30 *Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' 36 *Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?"* 37 *And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."**

A. CONTEXT—NO PARALLEL PARABLE

B. PURPOSE

- UPSIDE-DOWN STORY—EXPOSES HYPOCRISY OF LEGALISM AND BIGOTRY
- GOD'S MERCY IS UNBOUNDED—NOBODY IS OUTSIDE HIS 'NEIGHBORHOOD'

C. THE PARABLE

1. ROAD TO JERICHO

- o 'Going down' = literal descent
- o Dropped 3500 feet in 20 miles
- o Barren land—hilly—with caves

- o Hiding places for bandits—even dangerous up to 20th century
 - o Road to Jericho = ‘Way of Blood’
2. THE MAN
- o Some say he was reckless—traveling alone
 - o Really? Then so were the priest, Levite and Samaritan!
3. THE PRIEST
- a. Prestigious community leader
 - Considered a ‘shepherd’ of the people
 - But with a ‘holy’ reputation of purity to protect
 - b. **24 courses** of priests—served 2 weeks during the year
 - Many stayed in Jericho—maybe half the orders
 - c. Probably returning home after serving—‘going down’
 - Anticipating celebration after special week of service
 - d. Feared contamination—and separation from family
 - Levitical laws required him to maintain purity—[Lev 21-22](#)
 - Touching dead body—made a person unclean for 7 days—[Nu 19:11](#)
 - e. He put status and ritual before mercy
4. THE LEVITE
- a. Assisted priests with offerings in worship
 - Temple guards—gatekeepers—musicians
 - b. Uncertain reason—for avoiding the man
 - Fear of robbers—was he a decoy?
 - Fear of uncleanness—or simply inconvenience?
5. THESE MEN WERE NOT BAD
- o Just very careful—and cautious
 - o And—too busy to stop
6. THE IRONY
- a. Expectation of hearers
 - Hero would be a Jewish **layperson**—probably a Pharisee
 - b. The twist
 - **Samaritan**—was **unthinkable**
 - Someone truly **despised**—**untrustworthy**
 - Like an **Arab terrorist!**
 - Like a **‘liberal’**—to a **‘fundamentalist’**

- Or a **Trump** supporter—to a Democrat—or an **Obama** fan—to a Republican!

7. SAMARITAN'S RESPONSE

- Felt 'compassion'—**v 33**
 - Word used in Gospels only of Jesus!
- He 'did' mercy—**v37**—*demonstrated* pity by his actions
 - Cared for his wounds
 - Bandaged—by tearing his own garment—having no 'first aid' kit
 - Treated—wine was antiseptic/astringent—oil sealed/protected wound
 - Gave up his own beast—and walked
 - Spent time with him—'took care' of him
 - Paid for his care—2 denarii paid for about 2 weeks
 - Incurred open-ended debt
- He showed that he **cared**—by being **careless**
 - Risked attack by robbers
 - Risked uncleanness
 - Paid for a total stranger—without any thought of repayment
 - The Danger—a Samaritan carrying a wounded Jew—in Jewish territory
 - Like an **Indian**—riding into town with scalped cowboy
 - Like a **Confederate**—riding into Union camp with Union soldier
 - Like **Marine Marcus Ware**—carrying **Iraqi** soldier
 - ☆ **26 March 2003—Nasiriyah, Iraq**
 - ☆ **1st Marine Division, 5th Regt, 3rd Battalion**
 - ☆ **Soldier had ambushed convoy—shot 3 times**

8. NOTICE JESUS' QUESTION

- o Not—who '**was**' a neighbor
- o But who '**became**'—'proved to be'—a neighbor!

9. LAWYER'S RELUCTANT ANSWER

- o Could not bring himself to say 'Samaritan'!

10. JESUS' CCOMMAND

- Must have chafed the Lawyer!
- Same command as **v28**—"Do likewise" = "Do this!"
- Meaning—related to the question about 'eternal life'
 - You **will live**—**if you obey** the two great commandments—**v28**
 - You *demonstrate* **obedience** to them—when you '**show**' **mercy**' to others—**v37**

D. OBSERVATIONS

1. SOME PEOPLE LOVE THE PRESTIGE AND POSITION OF MINISTRY
 - o But don't like to **do** ministry—because it means **serv**ing others—getting their hands dirty
2. GOD CAN USE THE MOST UNLIKELY PEOPLE IN MOST UNEXPECTED WAYS
 - o They come out of the clear blue—to do God's will and help
 - o Even people whom we dislike intensely—of whom we are suspicious
3. MY NEIGHBOR
 - o Might be—my bitterest enemy
 - o Might cost time—money—inconvenience
 - o Might be someone who cannot repay
 - o Might put me in danger
 - o Might ostracize me—from my own peers/friends
 - o Might be victim today—but a helper tomorrow
 - **Both men were neighbors**
 - Love is **reciprocal**
 - The Samaritan's actions made the wounded man a 'neighbor'
4. THE SUREST WAY TO WIN A WAR—IS TO MAKE YOUR ENEMY A FRIEND

E. MAIN POINTS

1. GOD LOVES MERCY MORE THAN SACRIFICE
 - a. The Priest and Levite were more concerned about purity laws than love
 - Legalism shatters—rather than heals
 - b. God puts people before rules
 - Jesus said to scribes and Pharisees—'your teachings are but rules taught by men'
2. LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR IS EVIDENCE OF OUR LOVE FOR GOD
 - o Lack of love for others—betrays a gap in our love for God
3. THERE ARE NO BOUNDARIES ON GOD'S MERCY
 - a. This does not mean God does not hold people accountable
 - Jesus pronounced judgment on those who rejected His message—[vv8-16](#)
 - b. This does not mean that everyone is our 'brother'
 - Our 'brother' is the fellow Christian
 - There is no universal 'brotherhood'
 - c. But there is a universal 'neighborhood'

- God created all persons in His image
 - Anyone God tells us to help—is our neighbor
4. PRIDE AND PREJUDICE CAN DESTROY MINISTRY
 - a. **Prejudice** can **blind** us—we cannot see God working through another person
 - b. **Pride** can **cripple** us—unwilling to accept that God is using someone we dislike
 - c. **Jealousy** and **bigotry** are at the root of both—pride and prejudice
 - Can we learn from someone like a Samaritan—whom we don't respect?
 - Can someone we dislike—minister to us?
 - If the wounded man could have spoken—what would he have said?
 5. THIS IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST 'BEING' A NEIGHBOR
 - a. The lawyer's question was off the mark
 - b. Jesus was concerned with more than 'being' a neighbor—but intentionality
 - He asked—who *became* a neighbor—who *proved to be* a neighbor—**v37**
 - c. Jesus' question was 'on target'
 - It's not about **me**—and who is **my** neighbor
 - But—what does **he/she** need—and how can I **help**

V. APPLICATION

1. CHRIST-FOLLOWERS DEFY WORLDLY BOUNDARIES AND CONVENTIONS
 - o They love their enemies
2. THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY OFTEN ARE UNSCHEDULED
 - o The Samaritan 'came upon him' by chance—totally unexpectedly
3. DOING 'GOOD' IS SOMETIMES BETTER THAN DOING 'RIGHT'
 - o True religion is not about ritual and ceremony—but helping others
 - o The standard of judgment is not respectability—but showing mercy
 - o Jesus *went around 'doing good'*—Peter told Cornelius—**Acts 10:38**
 - o Jesus is the epitome of doing 'good'
 - o Jesus is the model for the 'good' Samaritan
 - o Be grateful for what He has done for us
4. DON'T BE TOO PROUD TO ACCEPT HELP FROM SOMEONE YOU DON'T LIKE
 - o Be gracious—and let people help you—when you are in need
 - o Gratitude is important—not just to God—but also to people
5. LOVE IS NOT JUST SENTIMENT BUT ACTION
 - o It goes to extraordinary lengths to help the hurting

- o It risks danger
- o It sacrifices—time—money—convenience

EX:—PAUL’S NEW CAR—A BROTHER LIKE THAT—By Dan Clark

“I wish I could be a brother like that”—is one level of this well-known story
 But there is another level—Bob himself was a good neighbor—not a brother!
 He went out of his way—took his time—showed compassion—demonstrated love

- o Love demonstrates itself in sacrificial giving

Rom 5:8—But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

6. HOW THEN DO WE INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?

- a. Lawyer’s assumption was wrong—we **do not earn** eternal life
 - *Inheritance* is not based on achievement—but relationship!
- b. This parable is not about earning eternal life
 - But about *demonstrating* a relationship built on eternal life!
- c. If eternal life is achieved by doing mercy
 - Then we can earn it only by *total* sacrificial giving—to everyone
 - This is impossible! We cannot achieve that standard
 - We cannot give to *every* person who might be a ‘neighbor’
 - There are too many needs out there for us to meet!
- d. Only Christ is capable of loving infinitely
 - Only He has paid that kind of price—already!
 - Only He enables us to do it—even occasionally
- e. Two conclusions
 1. The irony—we cannot be *fully* good Samaritans on our own!
 - We need Christ in us to be like the good Samaritan
 - To meet the needs of those God calls us to minister to
 2. We are all wounded people along the road
 - We all need a Savior—Jesus—who is the Good Samaritan

VIII. INVITATION

BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN GIVEN MUCH

**Because I have been given much,
 I too must give;
 Because of thy great bounty Lord,
 Each day I live;**

I shall divide my gifts from thee
With every brother that I see
Who has the need of help from me.

Because I have been sheltered, fed
By thy good care;
I cannot see another's lack and I not share;
My glowing fire, my loaf of bread,
my roof's safe shelter overhead
That he too may be comforted.

Because I have been blessed by
thy great love dear Lord;
I'll share thy love again
According to thy word;
I shall give love to those in need,
I'll show that love by word and deed;
Thus shall my thanks be thanks in deed.