



Lesson 7 October 17th, 2020

Loving Your Neighbour

Study Scripture – Luke 10:25-37

Background Scripture – Luke 10:25-37, Leviticus 19

Key Verse:

Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell into the robber's hands?

And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

Luke 10:36-37

INTRODUCTION

"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

This is a most important question. It is relevant for every professing believer. What we have to consider in relation to this question is the urgency we feel on the subject or the lack of urgency we feel.

Is there a compelling need to share the Gospel or do we feel no urgency and no compelling need? We know that people need to be saved but can we not wait for another day to make Jesus known then? Is there any emergence or crisis needed for us to show the life of Christ?

Or do we feel that it is more important to meet our needs and to respond to these needs of our own instead of to the needs of someone else even if their need is extreme?

In this very famous and well-known parable of Jesus which is called the Parable of the Good Samaritan we are really faced with two kinds of people.

One kind sees someone in extreme need but does not feel that they should take any action. It is not that they can plead ignorance or pretend that they do not see the need to look with compassion on the need before them. It is not that they might be totally devoid of compassion but this compassion is insufficient to override their fear, their perceived inadequacy, or their desire to get home quickly. Before we make a judgment in this Study maybe it will help if we would examine our level of compassion to the needs of others, our fears, our insecurities or maybe our desire to get home quickly to relax or to watch our favourite football or basketball game or soap opera.

The other kind of person understands that people are indeed needy and they care deeply with a high level of urgency about obeying the Law. In our context the extreme need is to share the Gospel and look eagerly for opportunities to make Jesus known by our actions.

It is important to realize that it is not that we or the characters in this parable are ignorant of what God wants from us. All the characters **knew the Law of God** which said they should love the Lord their God with all their heart and their neighbours as themselves. We do know the gospel of Jesus Christ and that the Lord Jesus Christ should live His life of mercy and compassion through us. So ignorance is not the matter at hand.

So as we look at this Study let us see if we recognize the needs of others, feel compassion, and have a sense of urgency to display the life of Christ, for remember we are looking at the issue of eternal life.

Now we must bear in mind that we are like the other people in the story who are faced with extreme needs and crises all the time and we like they face heart wrenching situations one after another. This might leave us tired and unwilling to help.

Or when we look at our challenges, our own pressures and demands which take our energy and our time and which are urgent and demanding our attention we console ourselves with saying that we are late, very late, for a very important date, just like the White Rabbit in the story of Alice in Wonderland.

Or sadly, we might be affected as one writer says by **“simply coldness”**. In **Matthew 24, where Jesus is talking about the times preceding his second coming-the signs of the end of the age- he says, “Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold”**. **Matthew 24:12”**.

So who among us have a sense of the needs of others?

Do we recognize that there are needs aside and apart from the physical and material needs that people have?

Do we have a sense of urgency to do something about both classes of things?

Do we feel compassion at any level?

Does the importance of eternity mean anything to us?

The purpose of Parables was to in part reveal insight into the Kingdom of God. However, their apparent dual nature and the striking way in which Jesus used them here was to cut through the veneer of peoples’ pretense and force them to confront the truth.

The truth revealed in these parables was undeniable; it would challenge one’s belief system and force you to look at things in a totally different light. It was in fact an extremely effective way of bringing the special and unique message of the Kingdom of God to men.

Jesus’ parables were filled with familiar images and symbols and anonymous yet readily identifiable characters. Everyone who listened to the parables of Jesus could relate to what He was saying; they would be forced to respond in some fashion.

Teaching in parables seems to disarm any objection before they can be raised and often leads the hearer to respond objectively and truthfully. A classic Old Testament example is Nathan’s parable told to King David about a rich man stealing and killing the poor man’s prized lamb.



Do you recall David's reaction – he responded with absolute indignation, and in condemning the rich man he actually pronounced his own sentence for his hypocrisy.

Likewise when Jesus confronts this lawyer, and should note that this person is not a lawyer in the sense that defends people in court, writes contracts or is like Perry Mason, but is rather a biblical scholar teaching the law of Moses as a career. With hearing the parable of the Good Samaritan, he actually is in a position where he can condemn himself and the entire religious establishment of which he was a part, showing the hypocrisy that is in his heart despite his knowledge of the Law of Moses, while praising a Samaritan who was hated by Jews and regarded as outcasts lower than dogs or heretics.

What a jolt that was, to come to the realization that this Samaritan actively fulfilled the righteous requirements of the Law, the Law of which you were supposedly an expert and religiously proclaimed, but really did not practice.

The Lawyer had a choice to make, he could either follow the example of David and repent, or stop his ears and close his eyes to the truth and suffer a hardening of the heart.

Because people did not want to hear the truth, parables became the hardening agent in the heart of the unbeliever. If the listeners were not seriously interested in obeying God, but preferred to follow their own interests, their hearts would automatically become hardened. The hardening increased with every subsequent refusal to accept God's invitation.

As we consider this Lesson let us think about the kind of people that we are and remember the privilege, honor and gifts that we have been given to minister to the world, to tell the truth to people that are in darkness and to bind up their hurts.

Our Lord Jesus is the Lord of the harvest and He has sent us to labour in His harvest to do the work of ministry. This work often takes long hours, is strenuous and can be dangerous.

God constantly displays His power and we must consider how amazing this is. We must take the advice Jesus gave, which is to rejoice in the relationship that we have with Jesus, that our names are recorded in Heaven, and not to glory in the display of power God shows through us. We must be thankful for these privileges Jesus has given us.

We note that the Apostles were faithful to the call of Jesus and their lifestyles as well as the fruit they produced testify they were true disciples of Jesus.

Like them, we must spend our time and energy and spiritual wisdom that we have been given focusing on our Lord and what He requires us to do.

Jesus has already defined what it is like to be His disciple. He has defined our calling, defined our goals, defined our ministry, defined our message and will eventually evaluate our ministry.



Let us approach this lesson with the proper perspective, rejoicing that our names are recorded in Heaven, that Jesus is using us to minister in His harvest and rejoicing that we are privileged to see and hear what many have never seen.

In the passage we study now, a lawyer or Jewish religious scholar, asked Jesus a most important question. One writer, in discussing the critical importance of this passage for all men, relates this question to us and very rightly states

“Luke 10:25-37 is a passage of Scripture that will either confirm that you already possess your gift of eternal life or challenge you to want to ask Jesus for the gift of eternal life.”

Let us therefore be very careful when we study this Lesson.

As with many other parables it teaches us valuable lessons. The Parable of the Sower taught us why some would enter the Kingdom, while others would not. People who were careless, who did not delight in understanding were described as being of soil made of ‘rock’.

Other people were described as soil of ‘stony ground’. These were happy to hear the Word of God, but they were shallow, floundered in their beliefs, were easily deceived and withered and died because of the lack of depth and sincerity.

Others were as the soil of ‘thorny ground’. The deceitfulness of riches, the captivating allure of the world, completely distracted them, robbed their faith and choked any godliness they might have had before.

The only people who could be considered people of God, were those described as ‘*good soil*’. They heard, believed, committed themselves to God, and were fruitful in varying degrees.

We are told who would be in the Kingdom of God. It would be those with “*good soil*”. All others were good for nothing.

Our aim is to witness to all men, praying that our scattering of the Word would come to those that are of “good soil”. We labor on, knowing that much of our effort will unfortunately not produce fruit. The parables subsequently told by Jesus then began to teach the disciples how they could discern between the ‘good soil’ and other soils and what would happen after the seed was sown. A mixed bag would appear.

We are given a tremendous amount of information about the nature of the Kingdom and what would happen as the Church expanded. If we studied these parables carefully, we would not be surprised at events that have happened and that are now happening.

Our Lesson today focuses on the kind of attitude and behavior that people who are not in the Kingdom display and it bluntly emphasizes what the people of the “*good soil*” will and must do. The people of the ‘good soil’ will behave in a certain way; so that Jesus’ words “*by their fruits you shall know them*”, will prove to be perfectly true.

Let us be warned. Those who consistently behave as the people described in the “not so good soils” will face the unpleasant judgment of Christ. Our task is to warn them, but let us not



spend all our time with them. We must go and seek for those of the “good soil”. In this lesson it is the hope for all Christians that we will come out with a better understanding about what we mean by the term “neighbour” and how can we be a good “neighbour” for God’s glory to be experienced by all.

Jesus now encounters a lawyer who did not “see” and He had to teach him and instruct him to “**Go and do**”. This man should have known the truth and lived the truth, but unfortunately he was not prepared to live the truth.

So, are we prepared to be oblivious to what is happening around us, nearsighted, unaware of the pressing needs of those around us and feeling no urgency and feeling no need or reason to get involved?

We cannot say that we do not know the law of God. We might be able to answer questions about the law accurately and be commended by Jesus for that.

But the questions that should ring in our ears are posed by one writer:

1. **What are you made for?**
2. **What does it mean to be human?**
3. **Where does life come from?**
4. **What has our creator intended for us?**
5. **Where is the place that leads away from darkness and toward the light?**
6. **Can we know anything about what is good and true and worthwhile?**

The answer is yes and it is found by looking at Scripture which says, Love God with everything that you have, and Love your neighbour as yourself.

THE TEXT

Verse 25. The incident we study occurs when the team of seventy disciples that Jesus had sent out, returned rejoicing because they had power over evil spirits and had worked miracles

Jesus, ever ready to teach, directs them to the real reason for which they should be rejoicing. The reason for rejoicing is that their names were written in Heaven.

This was relatively near the end of Jesus' earthly ministry and the Cross and the Pharisees were constantly engaging Jesus in debate to make him slip up and embarrass him before the crowd.

A lawyer – the term lawyer is an Old Testament term that was used of those who were experts in the Law of Moses and in Rabbinic law and who may have been a Scribe.

This expert of the Law stood up to test Jesus. There is some disagreement as to whether or not this was a sincere question from a sincere seeker or whether this lawyer had no real desire to know the truth and was only interested whether or not this teacher from Galilee understood the Law or would contradict the Law.



This uncertainty exists, because the idea behind the word “tested” cannot be necessarily interpreted to imply ‘mean’ or ‘evil’. We must make our assessment about the lawyer and his question or challenge by looking at the Text and Jesus’ reaction to him.

This educated scholar attempts in a sense to put Jesus to trial. He asked what he had to do to inherit eternal life. Note that this same question was asked of Jesus on several other occasions (Luke 18:18-23; Matt 19:16-22; John 3:1-15). The question was not arbitrary, for the Law of God is inseparably linked to the concept of eternal life.

One scholar points out that the word used by the lawyer “*inherit*” emphasizes that the control of an inheritance is in the hands of the giver, not the person who would receive the inheritance. So that the lawyer is really asking Jesus what he needs to do to impress God to gain the inheritance of an eternal life. We know that later the Apostle Peter told the crowd at Pentecost that they should repent and be baptized, and another Apostle told the Philippian jailer essentially the same simple thing.

It is useful to remember that in the Scriptures eternal life is really a particular quality of life that only God can give. As such, it does not necessarily refer to duration of life, or to life that begins when we die. The Scriptures point to this peculiar kind of life from God, a life which one can have now. Jesus and the Apostles stress this present aspect of eternal life, reminding us that when we accept Jesus we have passed from death into life.

Given the teachings of Jesus and the teachings in Jewish law and tradition, the lawyer would certainly be asking Jesus what he would have to do to enter into the Kingdom of Messiah.

Remember the Old Testament Scriptures had clearly stated what one had to “do” in order to live. When the lawyer asked Jesus this question, he seemed to have wanted Jesus to tell him the essence of the system that he taught, so that it could be properly contrasted with the essence of the teachings of Judaism.

Verse 26. This teacher of the Law might have been seeking to establish himself as a more learned teacher than Jesus; but Jesus maintained his position of authority, turning the tables on him. Jesus asked the lawyer, “*what is written in the law, and how do you interpret it?*”

Jesus often asked questions to force people to confront the truth. This method of teaching was designed to shake up people’s way of thinking and make them more open to correct their misconceptions. Jesus used parables such as the one we are about to examine to force people to confront the truth, but those who purposely close their eyes to the truth would sink deeper into darkness.

This man read the Law every day and probably had it in the phylacteries, which hung from his clothes. Here Jesus was prepared to listen to the opinion of the lawyer.



Let us remember that Jesus did not always condemn as incorrect the teaching of the Pharisees and scribes. In Matthew 23 He told the people to listen to what they taught, but He warned the people not to do as they did, for they said things but did not do them.

Jesus was about to show him that he knew the truth and that he should properly interpret it, believe it and follow. Such is the case with many of us today; instead of turning from our ungodly ways we simply seek to justify our actions rather than follow the word of God.

Verse 27. The Lawyer answered Jesus by putting together two Old Testament Texts, namely Deuteronomy 6: 5 and Leviticus 19: 18. Note that this answer was identical to the answer that Jesus gave when He was asked a similar question. (See Mark 12: 29-33.)

The two Commandments emphasize that eternal life is given by God. When people have a special relationship of love with the only true and living God, they are empowered by God's Spirit to love their neighbours as themselves. When we love our neighbor as ourselves, it means that in the same way we take care of ourselves and are concerned about our own interests, we should take care and have concern for the interests of others.

The lawyer's answer was absolutely correct. The answer was very simple and correct. Keep the Law of God. He knew the essence of the Law. The Law called for love of God alone. All else flowed from that. That fundamental requirement of God has never changed. That is why we insist that if you love God you will keep His Commandments, not try to change them to suit yourself, your convenience, your traditions, culture, nationalistic feelings or anything else. Of course we know that keeping the law comes from the enablement and possession of the Holy Spirit not from human ability.

Abraham knew this, and trusted this loving God, who was willing to enter into a covenant relationship with him. The Jews understood this.

Verse 28. Jesus applauds his answer, *'you are absolutely correct'*. However, Jesus now challenges the lawyer; it is one thing to be able to recite answers verbatim, but a totally new dimension is entered when one truly applies these principles to their life. We are told: **"For the bare reading of it was not sufficient; though these men placed great confidence in reading this passage, or in reciting their phylacteries, of which this was a part, morning and night. Our Lord intimates by this, that, according to the tenor of the law, eternal life was not to be had without a complete and perfect performance of the duties of love to God, and to the neighbour, contained in these words;"**

Eternal life is not to be had without doing what God commands. Anyone who fulfills the great Law of love is born again. Those who are not born again cannot do the things of God and cannot please God.

It is all interrelated. When we repent and live, it is the same as saying that we believe and live and that we obey and live and love and live.



One cannot exist without the other. We cannot love God if we do not believe in Him and if we do not repent. We cannot love God and be continually disobedient to Him. Just remember the fate of those seeds that fell on the wayside, on stony ground, and among thorns.

If a person is not saved by *grace* and lives according to the Commandments of God, they are not saved. There must be faith and there must be works too.

Note however that it is not simply a matter of “doing” something that alone will lead us to eternal life. One must never feel that one’s works is responsible for the granting of eternal life.

Eternal life is given to those who are of the “good soil”, who hear, repent, believe, obey, and love. All exist together.

“Do this and you will live...” Life is promised to those who keep the Law. (Lev 18:5; Ez. 20:11) It is impossible for a sinner to keep the law perfectly, thus the demands of the Law are designed to force us to seek divine mercy (Gal 3:10-13, 22-25). This man should have responded with the confession of his own guilt, rather than seek to justify himself.

Verse 29. The lawyer now measures himself against what the Commandments required. He felt that he loved God with all his heart, all his soul, all his strength, and all his mind. There was no doubt about that. He had assumed that he had fulfilled the first commandment.

He seemed to have made three mistakes. First, he had not quite considered the meaning of the first Commandment and the kind of relationship that God required of His people, which impacted every single command to love with the entire heart, soul, strength and mind. Second, he did not seem to recognize that the First Commandment can never be kept if one did not recognize the inextricable connection it had with the Second. A person can never keep the First without keeping the Second, or vice versa.

Then of course his third mistake was to too narrowly define the word neighbor.

We are told that the man was now seeking to justify himself, to present a high view of who he was, to show that he was in fact a skilled interpreter of the Law and was not just a simple student facing this popular Rabbi.

The pride and self-righteous element in the character of this man is now exposed, for while seeking to justify himself he asks this very important and deep question; *Who is my neighbor?*

This question had been addressed by many Jewish scholars over the years and many answers had been given. It was in fact a very important question. The prevailing opinion among scribes and Pharisees was that only the righteous were their neighbors; citing Psalms 139:21-22: *“Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.”*



They attempted to justify their dislike and sometimes hatred of people and held firmly to the opinion that people such as tax collectors, prostitutes, Gentiles and especially Samaritans, were to be hated and could not possibly be one's neighbor.

“Jesus wished to lead him to a proper view of his own sinfulness, and his real departure from the law. The man was desirous of showing that he had kept the law; or perhaps he was desirous of justifying himself for asking the question; of showing that it could not be so easily settled; that a mere reference to the “words” of the law did not determine it. It was still a question what was meant by “neighbor.” The Pharisees held that the “Jews” only were to be regarded as such, and that the obligation did not extend at all to the Gentiles. The lawyer was probably ready to affirm that he had discharged faithfully his duty to his countrymen, and had thus kept the law, and could justify himself. Every sinner is desirous of “justifying himself.” He seeks to do it by his own works. For this purpose he perverts the meaning of the law, destroys its spirituality, and brings “down” the law to “his” standard, rather than attempt to frame his life by “its” requirements.”

The lawyer knew that Leviticus 19: 18 had specified that the people should love their neighbor as themselves. But he had forgotten that Deuteronomy 1:16; 10:18, Leviticus 19:34; 24:22; Numbers 15:15-16 and other Texts had stated emphatically that there was not one Law for Israelites and one Law for Gentiles. The Law itself had been quite broad in defining who one's neighbour was.

But he, like others, had first redefined the word ‘neighbour’ to mean Israelites only, or blood relatives with the same religion as they had; simply because the Law had imposed special obligations on Israelites to care for each other in particular ways. The Jews had made the clear biblical differences between Jew and Gentile so great, that they had in fact voided many of the Scriptures. They went further and certainly did not love even many among their own people. Some of the Jewish sects even separated themselves, living in isolation and regarded people who did not belong to their group as *sons of darkness*.

One scholar tells us about the well-known writings of a Jewish scholar named Ben Sirach who was highly regarded and who lived about 180 B.C. He said:

“Give to a devout man, do not give to the help of a sinner. Do good to a humble man, give nothing to a godless one. Refuse him bread, no not give him any, it might make him stronger than you are; then you would be repaid evil twice over for all the good you have done him. For the Most High himself detests sinners, and will repay the wicked with vengeance. Give to the good man, and do not go to the help of the sinner” (Sirach 12:3-7)

Note that it is always dangerous to stretch Scripture, put it out of context and read into its contradictory things.

It seems pretty clear that the lawyer was trying to quiet his own heart and conscience and to do that, to justify himself, he had to put Jesus on the spot.

Let us not feel so great about what we do, for we are often guilty of the same kind of sin.



Verse 30. Jesus now had to get the truth across to this man with a legal way of thinking. He responds with a parable. It was in fact an expression of tenderness on Jesus' part to seek to gently lead the lawyer to his own conclusion - he made the lawyer his own judge in the case, and constrained him to admit what at first he would probably have denied.

He compelled him to face up to the basis for any kind of hatred. Jesus wanted him to acknowledge that a Samaritan - of a race most hated of all people by the Jews - had shown the kindness of a neighbor, while a "priest" and a "Levite" had denied it "to their own countrymen." He showed love, while those who thought they were better than others and had the right to determine who should be hated were way off base.

Jesus tells him of a certain man, who was obviously a Jew, that was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. This route was a rocky winding decent of 3300 feet over a distance of approximately seventeen miles and was notorious for bandits and robbers. The road went through an area which was hilly and full of valleys and caves, a perfect location for bandits.

This man surprisingly was traveling alone despite the dangers and not surprisingly was attacked, badly beaten, stripped naked and left for dead. The other travelers in the drama were clearly stated to be Jewish, that is, the Priest and the Levite. The hero of the story however was a Samaritan.

Verse 31. Jericho was the second city in Judah and was the dwelling place of thousands of priests, and this road would therefore have been traveled frequently by them. It is assumed that this priest was returning from Temple duty in Jerusalem, but evidently he had not learned that God "*would have mercy and not sacrifice...*".

Jesus exposes the blatant hypocrisy of this priest and his disregard for the Law; he was a member of the Jewish elite class, a religious professional, a holy man, who knew Deuteronomy 6, and that the Law commanded mercy and help to a neighbor (see Exodus 23:4-5 and Deuteronomy 22:1-4).

Yet as by chance he happened to see this critically injured Jewish man lying in the road, there was nothing that stopped him from helping him, but chose not to get involved, not checking if the man was dead or alive, or even asking if he needed help, instead crossed the road and passed him on the other side. This was ugly behavior, and was in no way in keeping with the Law.

Verse 32. Likewise a Levite who would also have been involved in Temple work, assisting the priests and of whom one expected to show mercy because of his office. He in fact acted worse in that he actually took the time to look at the man, saw the extent of his injuries, yet without



showing an ounce of compassion and not affected by any feelings of pity at the sight of the man, at least not enough to help. His only reaction was to look and pass by on the other side.

According to the law, one would not even treat an animal like this, even if it belonged to your enemy. *“If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.”*
(Ex 23:4-5)

We know that there are many excuses that they could have thought of, such as, the road is too dangerous to stop and help, the man might be a decoy for an ambush. I don't know first aid, it's a hopeless case, the job is too big for one person, I can pray for him, I can't get myself all bloody, and so on. Men can get very creative with the excuses and the excuses are all reasonable.

We can be sure that the listeners thought that Jesus was going to say that an ordinary Jewish man came to help the dying man and that this would show up the deficiencies in the religious leaders. Help from an average man would show this educated, intellectual scholar, who a good neighbor really well was. He would see that the average poor Jew behaved and loved better than the elite.

Verse 33. But Jesus shocked them all. He said that sometime after the two religious leaders had passed, a Samaritan also happened to be traveling the same route. The Samaritans, were a race which began when the Assyrians invaded Israel in 721 B.C., took away many of the people into exile and replaced them with pagan outsiders, who then promptly intermarried with the remaining Jewish community. The children of these unions were of mixed blood, following a mixed religious system of Judaism and paganism. When the Babylonian captives returned to rebuild the temple, Ezra refused their help and the temple in Jerusalem catered only to Jews of pure blood who worshipped God in an undefiled way.

The Samaritans set up their own temple on Mount Gerizim. They accepted only the five books of Moses, rejecting all others in the Jewish Scriptures and the hatred and rivalry between the two races continued until the day of Jesus and even till today. But note that this Samaritan also knew the Law of Moses. Sometimes we think that the nonbelievers don't know anything about Scripture but be warned they often do and know what God expects from us.

Samaritans were hated by Jews; they were considered worse than tax collectors and Gentiles. They were treated like trash and Jews would have nothing to do with them. They were labeled heretics and said to be possessed by the devil (Jn 8:48).

The fact that this Samaritan was traveling this road, his life was probably in greater danger; yet seeing this wounded man, he had compassion and despite the risk to his own life, he demonstrated the essence of the law in showing mercy and kindness.



Regardless of the prevailing social expectations and appalling stigmatization of a Samaritan, it would be his example that Jesus would have us follow.

There really is no excuse not to do what is right and most definitely those things that God requires of us.

Verse 34-35. The Samaritan 'knew' the instructions in Deuteronomy 6. He did not pass by on the other side of the road, as did the priest and the Levite. Instead he delayed his own journey, did not let the danger from robbers hinder him from helping. Using his own first aid kit - the oil and wine that would act as an antiseptic and sooth the wounds; he took care of the man, put the man on his animal and took him to a place where he could rest and recover.

This Samaritan actually did all that was in his power to help this poor man; he even spent two days wages on him and committed himself to pay any additional expenses for the man's care.

One can imagine the response of the Jewish lawyer. The two Jews that were in the most prominent religious jobs in the Land, had deliberately ignored the needs of a half dead, helpless, badly wounded Jewish victim. In total disobedience to the Law, they chose to ignore the man.

By the current thinking, the priests and the Levite were neighbours to the helpless Jewish man who had been mugged. But they did not act as neighbours at all.

The hated, despised, vilified, ceremonially unclean, social outcast, outside of the Covenant Samaritan, had proved to be the opposite of the Priest and Levite and by implication, the lawyer. He acted as if the man was his neighbor, loving him, as one writer says:

“With a sacrificial love; he didn't wait to be asked, for to see the need right in front of him was enough to compel him to action. He also gave freely of both his time and his resources.”

Note the impact this would have on the seventy disciples just returning. Jesus had sent them out and they had spent their time and resources helping those in need. This was love and this was ministry. Anything else is not acceptable to God. This is the lifestyle of those that will have eternal life.

Let us summarize then the costly and tangible ways this Samaritan showed mercy and love.

1. He saw the bleeding man lying at the roadside, and he did nothing to prevent what was happening to his heart. No excuses.
2. He felt compassion, and his heart of love knitted with the man lying on the road.
3. He took his life in his hands, disregarding the possibility that the robbers might be still in the area, and he approached the man. Then he saw that the badly wounded man was one of his hated, sworn enemies, but he still continued his approach, not turning away.
4. He bandaged up the man's wounds, putting oil to soothe the wounds and ease the pain, and putting wine which included alcohol, as an antiseptic.



5. Then he walked, putting the man on his own animal, and went to seek a place of refuge.
6. He altered his own plans and journey, and took the man to an inn. He delayed his business, inconveniencing himself.
7. He took personal care of the man and stayed the night to nurse him.
8. He took two days wages out of his pocket and gave the innkeeper the money to look after the man for the next two weeks or so to make sure the man was going to live.
9. He made plans to return to make sure everything was okay.

Clearly this Samaritan had learned from Deuteronomy 6 what God wanted of him and had placed his faith in Jehovah, and had been given His indwelling power to show that kind of mercy.

Let us note what God requires of us. This is the narrow way. We come to it by the call of God, and we are kept in it by the power of God. By our fruits we are known.

Verse 36. So once again Jesus answers the lawyer's question with a question, "*which one of these was neighbor to him that fell among thieves?*"

Verse 37. Again, the lawyer was forced to answer the question and in so doing condemned his associates and commended someone of a hated and despised race. The lawyer, apparently with great reluctance, conceded that the Samaritan was the good neighbor. But note that he could not bring himself to say that the Samaritan was the one who showed mercy, that he had a personal relationship with God and that he was able to reach out to his enemy.

The lawyer could not escape the implications of his answer. He knew he could no longer justify himself. He knew he did not have the kind of love that the Samaritan had, that his love did not go beyond his narrow definition of neighbour. He was spiritually bankrupt. He simply did not love God, and so he could not "love" his neighbour.

He was told to go and do likewise. He should help everyone and he should not look down on the poorer, unfortunate people of Israel, as was the custom for people in his class. He should not behave as if he was superior to his own people, the publicans and sinners. He should associate with them and help to improve their lot in life. He should even love the Samaritan. He should be like Jesus, who had come to seek and to save those of his people who were lost.

It is clear that the Law of Moses had told this man, and all the other members of the elite, what they should have been doing. They however were unwilling to keep the Law, just as they were unwilling to follow Jesus. According to Abraham, they would not hear Moses and prophets and neither would they hear Jesus.



CONCLUSION

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN DRIVES HOME SEVERAL IMPORTANT TRUTHS.

First, this world would be a much nicer place if every professed Christian would see the need and act to meet it, not making excuses.

Eternal life is not really given because of some great religious activity. It comes when one is in relationship with God and His Son Jesus and this loving relationship involves God filling us with Himself, enabling us to love Him fully and then to love our neighbors as ourselves.

So we should not be fooled into thinking that any amount of religious activity or knowledge will earn us eternal life – *you must be born again*. Salvation is the sovereign work of God.

We see that God requires us, those who are good soil, to exercise mercy and compassion, genuine concern for all men; for their physical needs as well as their spiritual needs. Our goal as Christians is to succor eternal life for all, meaning now and into eternity with God.

We must never let the pretentiousness of self-righteousness cause us to despise or ill-treat others who are different from us whether it be race, nationality, appearance, sex or in any other way.

Our life is to display the matchless love of God. Jesus came down from Heaven to save essentially worthless men. Jesus showed His great love and mercy. He even showed concern for the wicked. He even washed the feet of Judas at the Last Supper, knowing that Judas would soon betray Him.

People of God must behave in the right and correct way, always obedient to the Words of Scripture. We cannot define our behavior in any other way but the way laid down in the revelation of God.

Those who belong to Christ must “do” as God commanded. May we learn to be obedient to God, and show the character of God in our life! If there is any problem at all, call on the Lord for help, and allow His eternal love, mercy and life to flow from us to the people that are in need. He will always give us the gifts and strength necessary to do His work.

The famous Spurgeon stated:

“Let it never be forgotten that what the Law demands of us the gospel really produces in us.”

So now come to the crux of the matter. You make the decision as to who the right person is in this story. And in doing so understand in this conclusion that you have to go and do the same thing.



To put one of the despised people in your community or nation as the Star of the story is a shocking thing. These are people who don't belong, who are not at your level and who you would think do not act in ways and believe in ways that please God.

Do you think that the hero is the wrong person? Do you have the compassion that the “wrong people” have? Are the homeless people and the addicts who help one another showing more compassion than you are showing?

One writer points out that the Samaritan was in Jewish territory and it is most likely that he knew that he would be hated by the injured man if that injured man were awake. It is sad but some people hate others and won't accept help from them even if they are suffering or dying. They just do not want to accept any help or advice from supposedly “inferior people”.

It is very easy to think that you will come to accept that you cannot do it, you cannot love in ways that are beyond your abilities. You look at this story which shows that the Samaritan is the Golden Boy while others are not so great and when you look at your heart or prejudice and feelings of exclusion you still are down on those that you don't want to do anything with.

So what about courage! Are you failing here? Do you find courage difficult or distasteful? It will help you to face up to the reality of your heart for then you can go to Jesus and let Him work on you as you cry out for help.

But better yet look at the story and put yourself in the place of the wounded man on the side of the road. He really is **YOU**. From the earliest days of Christianity people have said that this is really a story of failed people, wounded people, broken, hurting, unbelieving people who need a Saviour and who need someone to stop for them.

If this is the case, put yourself in the place of the man who has been wounded. You are a traveler who is alone. You have been stripped naked. You are in pain, near-death and nobody would draw near to help you.

Nobody understands your physical pain, your emotional pain and the fact that you have been abandoned by every one of those who should really love you. So you are a person living in what one scholar called “relentless depression”.

Remember that Jesus was an outcast, rejected and it cost Him His life even though He did everything possible to care for people who were hurting.

So don't deny you saw him, the wounded outcast. You saw him but did you feel compassion? Do you believe that Jesus saw him and saw you and that it mattered to Him what you did? Or did you feel ONLY judgment, rejection and certainly not compassion?

Did you ministered to the wounds and stop the bleeding and loss of life of the people around you? What about the ointment? Do you put ointment on those around you, and helped them,



and talked to them and held and embraced them and placed them on your animal that would take them to safety just as Jesus took your wounded soul up and took you to a place of safety?

Do you love the way that Jesus loved? Remember that Jesus has commanded you to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength. Is that all gone? Or is there something left so that you can respond to the call of the Spirit of God who calls you to love before it is too late?

Try to love just a little bit. The more you do the small acts of love the more you will become stronger, increasing in strength even though you do not feel or recognize what is happening. So love that neighbour, the neighbour as defined by Jesus.

We hope and are confident that your response will be true to the Love required of you.

