



***The Parable of the Good Samaritan
(Luke 10:25-37)***

A book on the parables of Jesus would not be complete without a chapter on the Good Samaritan. If you have gone to church for many years, you would have heard this parable preached. I hope that you will enjoy some of the fresh revelations from what I have to say in this teaching.

In Luke 10:25, it says "and behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?'"

Obviously this man was testing Jesus to see if He had the right answers.

Jesus answered by asking a question, in verses 26 to 28, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' and so he answered and said, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your

neighbor as yourself.' And He said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.'

Jesus is saying that in order for one to have eternal life one must love God with all his heart, mind and soul and love his neighbor as himself. He is saying that you need to properly fulfill the law. Yes, that is fine. The problem is that we just cannot possibly do it in the natural. We cannot love God with all our mind, heart and soul and strength and love our neighbor the way we love ourselves in our own strength without the Holy Spirit enabling us.

I think this man knew that he was falling short and he was trying to justify himself. He wanted to see if he was in right standing with God, according to this new Rabbi. So he wanted Jesus' interpretation of what it meant.

For the Jews, a "neighbor" is someone who does good things for you. In their tradition and interpretation of the Law, if someone was your enemy then you would treat him as an enemy. You know, a hit for a hit; a punch for a punch. It was commonly known as the "eye-for-an-eye law." That was the Old Testament law that they had lived under for thousands of years. So to this lawyer, his neighbor was someone who was treating him right. This he wanted Jesus to justify. So the lawyer asked, "Who is my neighbor?"

"Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked and passed by on the other side'" (vv. 29-32).

You notice in the passage that both the priest and the Levite saw the badly beaten man, looked at him and passed by on the other side of the road. In other words, they crossed over to the opposite side so that the poor man would not groan to them and thus obligate them to do something. They both saw that he was in a desperate condition but found a way to escape having to deal with the problem.

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was and when he saw him, he had compassion" (v. 33).

Notice the word compassion; compassion is an act of love: it is mercy in action. If you find compassion in your heart for someone, you find yourself compelled to help them.

"So he went to him and bandaged his wound, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day, when he departed, he took out two denarius, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him 'Take care of

him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' ” (vv. 34-35).

During that time, this money was equivalent to two days' wages, which is about two to three hundred dollars in Australia. In verse 36 Jesus asked: 'So which of these three do you think was a neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?'

The lawyer replied, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise'" (vv. 36-37).

The Jews were set apart by God: He selected them to be His chosen people. In light of this, it would have been especially hard for the lawyer, being a Jew, to admit that in this particular parable, the one to be considered a neighbor was the Samaritan. In their culture, the Jews would not mix with other people and the Samaritans in particular, were seen as the dregs of society; they would not sit down and have a meal with anyone who was not a Jew. They would not have anything to do with the Gentiles (Non-Jews), and so it was a huge step for a Jew to accept that a Gentile—a Samaritan—was his neighbor. Even if this lawyer understood what Jesus said, he would have gone away from there with no intention of applying the parable.

Now, let me make this practical. How many times have you gone down the street and seen someone lying hurt by the side of the road? How many times have you seen someone in a really bad situation? I have seen this happen twice - people helping someone into a taxi or an ambulance after having a heart attack but apart from those two instances, I have never seen anyone in a bad condition that needed to go to hospital.

So, how do we apply this parable to our own lives? How is this relevant to us today?

I believe that this parable not only talks about negative physical conditions, but emotional and mental conditions that are a tremendous burden to people. Many people have broken hearts by disappointments and tragedies in life, or may have unsolvable financial problems, or even suffer from mental health issues. Any of these scenarios can result in being homeless. People are trapped in addictions such as alcohol, drugs and habitual gambling. There are all sorts of reasons why people end up on the street. Many of these people have been abused and beaten up by life. These are just some of the people, for whom we are called to have compassion on.

In the parable of the sheep and the goats, we are exhorted to take the homeless into our home, but often people have a family to protect. Unfortunately, compassionate people, after showing love to strangers, have had their assets stolen or even worse! There are all sorts of reasons why taking in a homeless person is not practical

these days. You need to have godly discernment, to take a total stranger into the privacy of your home.

However, there is nothing stopping you from buying a homeless person a drink and a hamburger or even taking them to a restaurant once a week to have a steak dinner. There is nothing stopping you from taking him up to a clothing store and buying him clothes. If you were genuinely interested and really cared about a homeless person with whom you spent enough time, you could perhaps even find a way to get him off the streets.

If you are asking where to find injured neighbors, you can definitely consider the homeless people who exist in every town.

You may ask: "Who else, would be my neighbor?" An emotionally injured girl, who spends her time sleeping with numerous men, may be your neighbor! She may be just looking for love and acceptance in the wrong place. She needs to discover the love of Jesus. As Christians we are to love them with the right kind of love. There is a good chance she is acting that way because of low self esteem, perhaps brought about through abuse. She is a person who needs care. She desperately needs to find forgiveness, true support and understanding. How is she ever going to learn to break out from that cycle of abuse, if someone does not take her aside, help her, and show her what true love is? How would she know how a man should treat her? She could be your neighbor!

Another neighbor could be the Muslim working at your local coffee shop. Even though he might know you are a Christian, if you treat him respectfully and show him kindness, you may in time gain his interest in your beliefs. You could even lend him this book by saying "This book explains the parables of Jesus, your prophet. You can borrow it if you like. It is easy to read and I have found it very interesting." So, you can see there are many ways to help your neighbor. There are many people in desperate situations. The parable makes it quite clear that your neighbor is not necessarily someone of the same religion, color or creed, or sex. The word "neighbor" is not narrowly defined. Your neighbor is anyone in this world who is going through a hard time. We are called to love anyone and everyone. In this parable, Jesus was saying that the "Samaritan" who helped the injured man, has proved himself to be a good neighbor. To a Jewish mind this was very controversial and even threatening.

I have identified the word "compassion" as the key word in this teaching. We should flow with compassion for everyone: no matter what race, culture, or sexuality. Certain people are stigmatized more than any other group of people in our society. This is the "gay community." These people are really badly treated by the Christian

world and homosexuality is often regarded as somehow more sinful than other types of sexual sin. However, God loves the gays and many of them are in search of the truth. If given the opportunity, many would want to become Christians. In fact, in my church, we have a few gay people. We need to embrace them with the love of Jesus and pray that the Holy Spirit would draw them to Himself, so that they could come out of their present lifestyle and live guilt free. Regardless of their particular sin, God does not love them less than any of us. His heart yearns to reach out and totally heal their lives. That is what the Good Samaritan is all about. In essence, it is about removing all your prejudices against people and treating all people equally with love.

The only people Jesus openly rebuked were those who considered themselves holier or more superior to other people. He called them hypocrites and he considered the religious people in His time as the blind leading the blind.

Jesus sees our heart motive and the reasons why we do the things we do. He knows all about the hurting experiences even more than we do and He understands. Jesus Himself was a friend of the prostitutes, tax collectors and publicans. He mixed with them more than He mixed with the religious leaders. Most times, people that are caught up in sin are open and honest about their life, because they are suffering and need answers to their questions. Plus, they are hurting and their sin is often an outward manifestation of that hurt. Only people who think that they are righteous and holy and have everything together have no ears for the message of Jesus.

Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest in your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Jesus has invited everyone to come to Him, just as None of us are qualified to enter Heaven by our own goodness, but Jesus in us, makes us completely qualified they are.!