

Good Samaritan Parable

Challenge: Go and Do Likewise

Main Text: Luke 10:25-37

Notes prepared by Andy Rittenhouse

Luke 10:25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Now if there ever was an important question, there it is. And I don't want you to forget that that is the question that Jesus is being asked.

Now you must understand something at this point. When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt after 400 years of slavery, He got them all together and gave them instructions on how to live as His special people.

They were nothing more than a mob at that point with no land and no system of law to govern themselves. **THEY NEEDED CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS SO THEY COULD KNOW HOW TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH GOD AND WITH EACH OTHER (Lev 18:3-4).** So God gave them what is commonly called the **LAW** (Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy).

By the time of Jesus, the Israelites had thought about those laws for hundreds of years and had boiled down the essence of them into two simple summary ideas which stated:

(1) YOU SHALL 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 (2) YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.

LET'S CONTINUE

26 And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" 27 And he answered and said, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; [Deu 6:4-5] AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." [Lev 19:18].

28 And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; **DO THIS, AND YOU WILL LIVE.**"

29 But wishing to justify, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor

It is a fair question because many of the Jews did NOT share a common understanding of that definition. They generally did agree, however, that it applied only to Jews.

Jewish literature reveals that a common understanding was very narrow: one's neighbor was a brother or a friend. [Qumran].

This definition was obviously fairly restrictive and consequently, actually **DOABLE!**

JESUS answers his question with a story.

VERSES 30-37

30 Jesus replied and said, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went off leaving him half dead. 31 "And by chance a certain

priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 "And likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 "But a certain 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 "And 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." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

The ROAD TO JERICHO from Jerusalem is a very steep road, dropping some 3,300 feet in only 17 miles.

Moreover it has always been known for its danger to travelers as it winds through mountainous terrain making it easy for robbers to hit and run.

The first to come along is a priest (a pastor). He looked momentarily and rushed on by. Now, be careful how you judge him, because the question hangs out there, "would you have stopped?"

The second to come along the road is a pastor's helper, called a Levite. Not as high ranking as a priest, nonetheless, highly privileged in the Jewish religious system. He too passed on by.

The irony of this whole situation is that priests and Levites were the very people set up in the Jewish religious system to help people in need. The priests were public health officials and the Levites distributed alms to the poor!

Finally, along comes a Samaritan. None of the listeners expected the hero of the story to be a Samaritan.

Samaritans and Jews had been bitter enemies for over 400 years ever since the some of the Jews who returned from captivity in Babylon had married local women and compromised their racial purity.

Hurt feelings and racial pride has escalated into a ferocious hatred.

One common Jewish prayer even requested that God NOT allow Samaritans into eternal life.

Can you imagine hating someone so bad that you prayed they would not go to heaven?

If the Jew would have been more alive, he would have probably kicked his leg up at the despised Samaritan.

BUT LOOK at the Samaritan.

Verse 33 says, "He felt compassion" for him.

Next, look at what he did.

He did to the Jew exactly what he would want done to himself (AND I THINK THAT IS A KEY POINT OF COMPASSION).

He bandaged him up, put him on his donkey and took him to the inn.

He stayed the night and then PAID for up to two weeks of hotel stay. Moreover, he promised to pay more if needed (implying he had a relationship of trust with the hotel owner).

NEXT, Let's try to unpack this seemingly mild phrase "he felt compassion." You will see its importance as we examine it together.

WORD STUDY

It turns out that the Greek word found in Luke 10:33 is a sleeper. (seems innocent enough in English but is packed with meaning in the Greek).

It is used **only 12x in the New Testament and 9 of those refer to Jesus**. Some scholars have argued that compassion is really a "Jesus" word. It is HIS word because 9 of the 12 uses refer to Him. .

Let's try to understand this word by examining how the same author uses the term ELSEWHERE!

Lk 7:11-15 –

It turns out that a widow had just lost her only son. This was a real tragedy then because she was left with no provider (no husband) or comforter.

It was a terrible plight for any woman in those days. Her last bit of joy in the world was gone. She had NO ONE to care for her or bring her joy.

What did Jesus do? He was so moved with compassion that he reached out and resurrected the boy!

JESUS VIOLATED WELL ESTABLISHED RELIGIOUS LAW by touching a coffin carrying a dead body (Num 19:11,16); (although he maintained the spirit of the LAW since God desires mercy over sacrifice (Hos 6:6)].

Lk 15:20 - The father of prodigal son felt compassion when he saw his son coming a long way down the road. What did he do? He **HIKED UP HIS SKIRTS** (robe) and **RAN** to embrace him and welcome him back into the family.

Many fathers would have disowned him! Not this one.

DON'T MISS THIS POINT!

Notice that the phrase "he felt compassion" in these three instances **MEANT** that the one who felt the compassion **TOOK COSTLY ACTION!**

Notice too that the father of the prodigal and the Samaritan looked very much like Jesus when they acted on the compassion they felt!

For LUKE, the Greek phrase, "he felt compassion," was a action-oriented term.

OTHER USES IN THE GOSPELS

The other 9 uses of that same Greek word yield comparable insights:

Mt 9:36, Mk 6:34 - Jesus felt compassion when he saw the crowd like a sheep without the shepherd [SO... He healed them and taught them]

Mt 14:14, 15:32, Mk 8:2 - Jesus felt compassion when he saw the hunger of the crowd [SO... He fed them]

Mk 1:41 - Jesus felt compassion when he saw the leper [SO... He touched him and healed him]

Mt 20:34 - Jesus felt compassion for the two blind men [SO... He touched their eyes and healed them]

Mk 9:22 - The father of a demon-possessed son begged Jesus for compassion [SO... Jesus cast out the demon from the son]

Mt 18:27 - The master of a slave unable to pay a huge debt had compassion on the slave [SO... he forgave the debt.]

In most every case, the result is similar -

LOVING BUT COSTLY ACTION followed the compassion emotion.

Jesus was so moved by the leper that He touched him! *There is possibly no more provocative phrase in the NT to a Jew than Jesus touched a leper.*

NOTE - His *ministry of touch* was unheard of in that day. Lepers had to wear torn clothing, let their hair grow unkempt, cover the lower part of their faces, and cry “unclean, unclean” when in range of people. Typically they were **beggars** because had no way to support themselves. By Jesus time, it was illegal to greet a leper. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that they were treated, in effect, as dead men; dead men walking! It was thought that lepers had contracted the disease because of **some great personal sin**... Hands-on healing was unknown in the OT and rabbinical literature. [Kent Hughes, Commentary on Luke, volume 1, Crossway Books, p. 155, 167]

Some Jewish rabbi’s even threw rocks at the lepers to keep them at a distance.

And Jesus violated every cleanliness law on the books when he touched that leper.

It seems that the term “FELT COMPASSION” is ACTION-oriented term that requires a WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE brokenness, pain, suffering... and even one’s ENEMIES or societies’ OUTCASTS.

Look for yourself. In every case, positive action resulted from the emotion.

WHAT DO I CONCLUDE?

The point of all this exegetical work is just to get you to agree with me that the phrase, “he was moved with compassion,” in the Good Samaritan story (Lk 10:33) is an extremely pregnant term, packed full of meaning.

It is an action-oriented phrase: a schedule changing, priority shifting, even potentially reputation damaging - kind of phrase.

Is anybody besides me getting uncomfortable?

LET’S GET BACK TO OUR STORY (v 34-35)

See how compassion affected the SAMARITAN? He met a full variety of needs:

- friendship,
- advocacy,
- emergency medical treatment,
- transportation,
- considerable financial assistance,
- and even a follow up visit!

He risked his safety, delayed his schedule, and got dirty and bloody through personal involvement with a needy person of another race and social class.

SOMETHING ELSE HAPPENED that I think is significant.

Jesus forced the lawyer to PUT HIMSELF in the shoes of the beaten man by asking the question “who proved to be the neighbor (versus “who is my neighbor” like the lawyer asked!)?”

Obviously, FROM THE HALF-DEAD MAN’S PERSPECTIVE, the despised Samaritan was the true neighbor because he fulfilled the essence of the second half of the LAW - love your neighbor as yourself (Lev 19:18).

It is as if Jesus TOOK A MICROPHONE and handed it to the half-dead man and ALLOWED HIM to voice his opinion, and opinion that Jesus seemed to agree with. Can you see that?

In other words, by slightly changing the lawyer’s question (“who proved to be the neighbor” versus “who is my neighbor”), Jesus forced him to evaluate the story from a different vantage point... that of the half dead man.

In doing so, the half-dead man was given a voice, and a chance to tell the truth (albeit through the voice of the lawyer).

LET ME ASK YOU...

Have you EVER PLACED YOURSELF in the shoes of people in need on your street or in your school or in your office at work?

Take for example that SINGLE MOTHER that lives on your street. If Jesus handed her a microphone, who do you think she would say is the authentic Christians in her life?

Here is a intimidating question? WHO WOULD SHE CHOOSE? ...me, who rushes by to church, or the one who stops and plays with her child?

This scenario seems remarkably similar to story we are analyzing, doesn't it?

If you were a single mom, who would YOU say proved to be the neighbor?

LET'S MOVE ON TO VERSE 37

Jesus' words ring down, hauntingly, through the ages: “GO AND DO LIKEWISE” (v 37)

GO AND DO WHAT?

Go and show action-oriented compassion! like the examples we have just studied!

Remember the other uses of that Greek phrase “to be moved with compassion?”

(1) Go STOP A FUNERAL PROCESSION like Jesus did and resurrect a widow’s only son. You say, “I can’t do that”? Of course you can’t, but you can do something similar!

WHO ARE THE WIDOWS AROUND YOU who are weeping silently behind closed doors? Who are the single mom’s around you?

JESUS STEPPED INTO THE LIFE OF A HURTING LADY and changed her life. Take your family, and go do likewise.

Who are the children of the single mom's around you?

You can figuratively speaking "resurrect them from the dead". I know, I have been the recipient of that kind of love in my own life!

In one 16 square mile zone in Knoxville's inner city, there are approximately 9300 children being raised. OF those, almost 5000 are being raised by single moms.

It really IS STILL POSSIBLE to STOP THE FUNERAL procession and resurrect the widow's son!

(2) GO TOUCH A LEPER and heal him. Can't do that? Well, let me ask you... Who is it that everyone avoids at your school? Or college? Or office? Or neighborhood? Or in YOUR church body?

I BELIEVE THAT... IN AS MUCH AS YOU reach out to societies' outcasts and even your NATURAL ENEMIES, you will be obeying Jesus' command to "go and do likewise."

Who are your natural enemies? We all have them...who do you despise? (we all despise people!)

(3) GO SEE THE CROWDS who still wander around like sheep without a shepherd. Open your eyes to the lost around you as you go about your daily lives. They are still there!

The crowds still wander like sheep without a shepherd in your world today. Ask God to help you care. I often implore God to warm up my cold heart for the lost around me. I have such a cold heart so much of the time!

(4) Go RUN AFTER THE PRODIGAL like the father did. Give up your dignity. Swallow your pride... Run, run, run! Embrace the prodigal! Put a ring on his finger, a robe on his back, kill a fatted calf! Let your emotion show and CHANGE HIS OR HER LIFE!

WHO ARE THEY? I saw them when I did my research on Knoxville. I've visited the runaway shelter. I've walked the streets and seen the kids selling drugs.

I SAW THE KIDS IN MAXIMUM SECURITY detention facilities that no one cares about anymore.

Who are the prodigals in your life? What about the family members who are the black sheep? Run after them! Pray for them. Care deeply. Let them see you weep.

GO AND DO WHAT?

Go FEEL THE PAIN of suffering people with a sense of urgency and DO SOMETHING POSITIVE like Jesus did.

GO AND REALLY CARE...deeply and profoundly!

- Let compassion impact your life,
- stop you in your tracks,
- change your plans.

That is good and proper. That is what real Christians do.

Don't forget how RARE that particular Greek word is! It is only USED 12x and only TO DESCRIBE A SPECIAL KIND OF COMPASSION that originates deep within you and has tangible consequences in the lives of those being helped.

LET ME GIVE YOU SOME "WALK AWAYS". In other words, remember these four points when you walk away.

(1) WALK AWAY NUMBER ONE

Real Christians care deeply. From Jesus' command to "Go and do likewise" it is obvious that real Christians must care. We care deeply for the hurting people God puts in our path. We care and we act in costly ways on their behalf.

That care will often impact our schedules and even shift our priorities.

It may even mean we have to PUT OUR REPUTATION ON THE LINE ESPECIALLY IF WE REACH OUT AND TOUCH A MODERN DAY LEPER."

(2) WALK AWAY NUMBER TWO

Try to see the world through the eyes of a person in need!

Jesus forced the lawyer to view the story from the beaten man's perspective. From that perspective, the lawyer had to grudgingly admit that the despised Samaritan was the true follower of God.

That new perspective FORCED HIM TO SEE SOMETHING HE NEVER SAW! AND TO ADMIT SOMETHING HE NEVER WOULD HAVE ADMITTED BEFORE!

From that I CONCLUDE that Jesus would have us put ourselves in the sandals of the beaten up, half-dead people we meet along the way in life.

We are to try to see life from their perspective, and to treat them as we would want to be treated.

WHO ARE THE BEATEN UP, HALF DEAD PEOPLE on the Jericho Road in YOUR WORLD?

They are the **abused**, the **divorced**, the **lonely**, the **addicted**, the **refugees**, the **HIV patients**, the **poor**, the **orphans**, the **ones without the gospel!** ... you get the picture.

They are all over our community.

(3) WALK AWAY NUMBER THREE

Only real Christians go to heaven. What do I mean? Simply this: Jesus told the Good Samaritan story in response to the question "who is my neighbor."

But the ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION ONLY BROUGHT CLARIFICATION TO THE ORIGINAL (and more important question) ... which was: "how do I inherit eternal life."

The whole dialogue was really about how to inherit eternal life! Don't miss that.

HERE IS THE TRUTH: True faith is self-evident in the lives of believers.

It is evidenced by deep and costly concern for the well-being of other people.

In fact, ONE CANNOT LOVE GOD with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength IF HE IS NOT LOVING HIS NEIGHBOR as himself. It is impossible to have one without the other.

PAUL, in Galatians 5:14, makes a bold claim. He says “ For the whole Law is summed up in one word, in the statement, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

PAUL understood that true faith is self-evident in the costly love demonstrated in the lives of real Christians.

JESUS, in Matthew 25: 41ff, uses an unexpected criteria for **DENYING** entrance into heaven:

“Then he will say to those on His left, Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger, and you did not invite me in; naked and you did not clothe me; sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ Then they will answer, “Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison and did not take care of You? Then he will answer them, Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.”

Jesus understood that these kinds of actions would flow naturally out of hearts that had been transformed by Him.

The BEST PROOF OF HIS PRESENCE in the lives of believers would be the COSTLY LOVE FLOWING OUT OF THEM!

If there were no costly love flowing, there probably was no relationship with Him.

JAMES, in James 2:14-19, is extremely blunt:

“What good is it, my brother, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith, by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, You have faith, I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.”

JAMES UNDERSTOOD clearly that genuine faith finds expression in the costly outpouring of love on the behalf of others. If there is **NO OUTPOURING** on behalf of others, that **FAITH IS SIMPLY NOT REAL**.

FIRST CENTURY CHRISTIANS UNDERSTOOD: Did you know that the first century Christians sold themselves as slaves to reach the slaves with the gospel?

WHAT AM I SAYING?

Loving people in need is just what Christians do! It is part of our very DNA because its part of HIS!

And its not because we are such wonderful people either. Its simply **BECAUSE God lives inside us** and He has given us a new heart of mercy. People who have received **SUCH DEEP** mercy (like we have), give mercy back out.

Real Christians pour the heart wrenching, costly **COMPASSION** God has shown us (cf. Isa 53) into the lives of others (PHIL 2).

DANGER: If we routinely pass by hurting, broken lives around us, then we **MIGHT NOT EVEN BE REAL**.

ONE COMMENTATOR says it well, “Scripture’s call to love our neighbors as ourselves gives us a way of testing our relationship with God. It delivers us from an infatuation with the idea that we are lovers of God when we are not... Our relationship with fellow human beings validates or invalidates our claims to know and love God.” [Kent Hughes, LUKE, Vol. 1, p. 393]

(4) WALK AWAY NUMBER FOUR

Wise Christians run hard after God: The first part of the answer to the lawyer’s question of “how do I inherit eternal life?” was to love God with all one’s heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Now we are ALL IN PROCESS on this one. And GOD IS SO PATIENT AND GRACIOUS with each of us.

But the reality is, the ONLY THING THAT CAN SUSTAIN a life of costly outpouring on behalf of others is the giving of yourself to developing your personal walk with the One who loves you the most.

SO CHASE HARD AFTER HIM. Seek His presence. Do anything you can to develop a softness in your heart towards Him.

Only that relationship CAN PROVIDE JOY, MOTIVATION, BALANCE, AND ENDURANCE in a life given to establishing His kingdom here.

IF HE IS SUSTAINING YOU, then truly you can be a well watered garden capable of watering others (as Isaiah promises in Isaiah 58:11.)

BUT, NO DOUBT YOU WONDER:

1) **What can you do to cultivate this kind of compassion for people?** Cultivate passion for God. Learn to listen to Him. Then begin to obey Him in the small steps of obedience which force you out of your comfort zone.

- Knock on your neighbors door and introduce yourself.
- Plan a meal with the sick lady down the street who you know loves to talk and has no family.
- Love these kids like a big brother or big sister

2) **What about balance and burn out?** The key is to be Spirit led. Cultivate a listening kind of mindset.

Jesus finished all God asked Him to do on earth and still left hundreds unhealed! He cultivated a “listening ear” to the Father’s voice.

You only ultimately answer to One. Also, regarding burnout in outreach ministries, try to develop strong enough infrastructures so that your volunteers are well shepherded and protected.

3) You say, “I know many good Christians who don’t love others like you have just described. **What about them?**” I believe they are experiencing God’s grace versus God’s desire. He is a gracious God, patiently working in us His good pleasure.

4) **What if mercy isn’t my gift?** Go and do likewise is irrespective of gifting! Micah 6:8 is clear: What does the Lord require of you o man? But to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.”

5) **Where do I begin?** With prayer and honest confession before God. One church in Knoxville is appointing a “city council” of 12 people to oversee the compassion impact on their city.

Other churches are doing other things. But the key is to obey what you hear from God. Get organized and get going.