

Luke 10:25-37

NIV Harmony 139; Compassionate 135-38

Introduction

1. Have you ever been a Good Samaritan? Have you ever been helped by a Good Samaritan?
 - a. During the flooding in WV back in 2016, Deborah and her friends were blessed by a Good Samaritan.
 - b. They were traveling home in a torrential rain and had a flat tire. They were stuck.
 - c. A young man stopped to check on them to see if they needed help.
 - d. He went home, returned with a floor jack, changed the tire, and saw them safely on their way.
2. In this passage, Jesus answered a “test” (Gk., *ekpeirazon*) question from “an expert in the law.” (25)
3. The expert asked Jesus, “Teacher,...what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (25)
4. Charles Erdman notes this expert, “...evidently thought that Jesus would prescribe some new rites or ceremonies or would in some way disparage the Law” (Charles Erdman, *Gospel of Luke*, 110).
5. Hear Jesus’ reply: **Read Luke 10:25-37.**

A. What the Law Says (25-28)

1. Warren Wiersbe notes, “It was expected that rabbis would discuss theological matters in public, and the question this scribe (lawyer) asked was one that was often debated by the Jews. It was a good question asked with a bad motive, because the lawyer hoped to trap our Lord. However, Jesus trapped the lawyer” (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Compassionate*, 135).
2. As Jesus often did, he turned the expert’s question into a question back to him: “‘What is written in the Law?’...‘How do you read it?’” (26)
3. Of course, the expert in the law, perhaps a Pharisee or scribe, knew the right answer and gave it.
4. In his answer, the expert quoted two Old Testament scriptures.
 - a. “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’;....” (Deut 6:5)
 - b. “‘...and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Lev 19:18)
5. This is the same summary of the Law that Jesus Himself gave when asked later by another expert in the law to give the greatest commandment (cf., Mt 22:37-40).

B. A Second Question and Parabolic Answer (29-35)

1. The Second Question (29)
 - a. The expert would not be deterred. He wanted “to justify himself” (Gk., *dikaiousai eauton*), and so asked a second question still trying to trick Jesus into an answer that he and his compatriots could use against Him.
 - b. Erdman states, “The reply of Jesus not only defeated the lawyer; it smote his conscience. He realized that he himself had never fulfilled the requirement of the Law he knew so well. He therefore attempted to justify himself by limiting the sphere to which the law of love applies” (Erdman, 110).
 - c. He asked, “And who is my neighbor (Gk., *plesion*)?”
 - d. Wiersbe states, “The scribe gave the right answer, but he would not apply it personally to himself and admit his own lack of love for both God and his neighbor. So, instead of *being justified* by throwing himself on the mercy of God (Lk 18:9-14), he tried *to justify himself* and wriggle out of his predicament. He used the old debating tactic: ‘Define your terms! What do you mean by ‘neighbor’? Who is my neighbor?’” (Wiersbe, 135-36).
2. Jesus answered by telling The Parable of the Good Samaritan. (30-35)
 - a. **An unknown man** (30a)
 - 1) “A man (Gk., *Anthropos* – generic term for a male) went down from Jerusalem to Jericho” (30a)
 - 2) This man is the first of a cast of four main characters in the parable.
 - 3) We are not told the nationality of the man, but the assumption would have been that he was a Jew.
 - 4) The way down was steep with an altitude drop from Jerusalem to Jericho of about 3,000 feet in just 17 miles.
 - 5) The road had many twists and turns winding through a barren wilderness inhabited mostly by wild animals and robbers.

b. Several robbers. (Gk., *lestais*)

- 1) The robbers attacked the man, “stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away leaving him half dead.” (30b)
- 2) They took everything that he had and to add insult to injury beat him within an inch of his life.
- 3) Jesus now turned the story toward three other men who encountered the half-dead man.

c. A priest (Gk., *iereus*) (31)

- 1) This man was a Jewish priest who most likely was coming down the way after serving in the temple.
- 2) The priest “passed on the other side” (Gk., *antiparelthen*).

d. A Levite (Gk., *Leuites*) (32)

- 1) This man, a Jew from the tribe of Levi, also “passed on the other side.”
- 2) Wiersbe concludes about these first two who passed by, “Most of us can think up excuses for the priest and Levite as they ignored the victim. (Maybe we have used them ourselves!) The priest had been serving God at the temple all week and was anxious to get home. Perhaps the bandits were lurking in the vicinity and using the victim as ‘bait.’ Why take a chance? Anyway, it was not his fault that the man was attacked. The road was busy, so somebody else was bound to come along and help the man. The priest left it to the Levite, and then the Levite did what the priest did nothing! Such is the power of the bad example of a religious man” (Wiersbe, 136-37).

e. A Samaritan (33-35)

- 1) Here, Jesus introduced the central character of this parable, a Samaritan.
- 2) We have already encountered the utter disdain and hatred between Jews and Samaritans in our previous studies.
- 3) Wiersbe notes, “By using a Samaritan as the hero, Jesus disarmed the Jews, for the Jews and Samaritans were enemies (John 4:9; 8:48). It was not a Jew helping a Samaritan but a Samaritan helping a Jew *who had been ignored by his fellow Jews!* The Samaritan loved those who hated him, risked his own life, spent his own money (two days’ wages for a laborer), and was never publicly rewarded or honored as far as we know” (Wiersbe, 137).
- 4) The assumption of Jesus’ hearers may have been that this Samaritan would also pass by on the other side perhaps even with a bit of joy in his heart at the misfortune of this Jew. However, Jesus said his reaction was different in three ways.
 - a) **Pity:** “...he took pity (Gk., *esplagchnisthe*) on him.” (33) – This is the same word that we have often seen used as Jesus took pity on those who were ill or hungry (cf., Lk 7:13 *et al*).
 - b) **Immediate Action:** “He went to him and bandaged his wound, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.” (34)
 - 1) His pity was not just a feeling. It led him to take action.
 - 2) He gave the man immediate first aid using his own resources. Oil and wine have medicinal value for healing and cleansing.
 - 3) He took the man to an inn and continued to nurse him there.
 - 4) Wiersbe notes, “There was no logical reason why he should rearrange his plans and spend his money just to help an ‘enemy’ in need, but mercy does not need reasons” (Wiersbe, 137).
 - c) **Long-term Action:** “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.” (35)
 - 1) The two denarii would have been the equivalent of several days’ wages.
 - 2) The Samaritan apparently was known to the innkeeper who considered him trustworthy. Perhaps he travelled this way often and stayed at the inn?
 - 3) After insuring the continuing care of this man, he continued his journey.

C. A Final Reflective Question from Jesus, the Answer, and a Command (36-37)

1. Jesus asked the expert in the law, “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” (36)
 - a. Jesus drove home His point by asking the expert this direct question.
 - b. Jesus moved from teaching to application. We must do the same when we study scripture.
2. The expert correctly answered, “The one who had mercy (Gk., *eleos*) on him.” (37a)
 - a. The expert wisely gave the correct answer. He couldn’t bring himself to say Samaritan. So, he referred to him only as “the one who had mercy on him.”
 - b. It was not the answer that he wanted to give but had to give unless he wanted to look like a fool.
 - c. But did he really understand the implication of his answer?
 - d. Wiersbe states, “The lawyer wanted to discuss ‘neighbor’ in a general way, but Jesus forced him to consider a specific man in need. How easy it is for us to talk about abstract ideals and fail to help solve concrete problems. We can discuss things like ‘poverty’ and ‘job opportunities’ and yet never personally help feed a hungry family or help somebody find a job” (Wiersbe, 137).
3. Jesus then commanded the expert, and all His hearers, “Go and do likewise.” (37b)
 - a. Jesus drove home the application of His story by giving this direct command.
 - b. Wiersbe notes, “...the lawyer wanted to make the issue somewhat complex and philosophical, but Jesus made it simple and practical. He move it from *duty* to *love* from *debating* to *doing*. To be sure, our Lord was not condemning discussions or debates; he was only warning us not to use these things as excuses for doing nothing” (Wiersbe, 137-38).
 - c. Robert Stein states, “Jesus indicated that one should worry less about who a neighbor is than about being a good neighbor.” (Robert Stein, *Luke* in NAC, 318).
 - d. It was an interesting story, but so what?
 - e. We must listen to the words of Jesus not just for entertainment or for knowledge. Ultimately, we must act on what we have heard.
4. Wiersbe concludes, “We may read this passage and think only of ‘the high cost of caring,’ but it is far more costly not to care. The priest and the Levite lost far more by their neglect than the Samaritan did by his concern. They lost the opportunity to become better men and good stewards of what God had given them. They could have been a good influence in a bad world, but they chose to be a bad influence. *The Samaritan’s one deed of mercy has inspired sacrificial ministry all over the world.* Never say that such ministry is wasted! God sees to it that no act of loving service in Christ’s name is ever lost. It all depends on your outlook. To the thieves, this traveling Jew was a victim to exploit, so they attacked him. To the priest and Levite, he was a nuisance to avoid, so they ignored him. But to the Samaritan, he was a neighbor to love and help, so he took care of him. What Jesus said to the lawyer, He says to us: ‘Go and keep on doing it likewise’ (literal translation)” (Wiersbe, 138).

D. Reflections

1. Are you, like the expert, trying to justify yourself and your actions or are you relying on Jesus for the justification of your sins and imperfections?
2. Does your pity for the misfortune for others remain as simply a feeling or does it result in action?
3. Do you just meet immediate needs or do you follow-up to ensure the person you helped is doing better?
4. To whom can you be a Good Samaritan today, tomorrow? Be on the lookout for opportunities that the Lord places before you each day.
5. Don’t just study God’s word for knowledge. Study it so that you will be prepared to do the good works for which you were created in Christ Jesus (cf., Eph 2:10).
6. G Campbell Morgan concludes, “The difference between Law and Grace is this. The Law says, Do this, and live. Grace says, Live and do this. The new life is not intended to set us free from the moral requirement of law. It is to enable us to obey it” (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 140).
7. Jesus says to you and me concerning the Samaritan, “Go and do likewise.”