

## The Good Samaritan

### Luke 10:25-37

#### Learning Objectives

- Jesus is asking us to go out of our way to love the people in our lives even if it costs us.

**?** Do you know your neighbors? What is your relationship with them? If you don't know your neighbors, why not?

#### Luke 10:25-37 (NIV)

<sup>25</sup> On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>26</sup> "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

<sup>27</sup> He answered, "'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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

<sup>28</sup> "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

<sup>29</sup> But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Why the priest avoided helping the (potentially dead but only beaten) man:

Priests were not supposed to make themselves ceremonially unclean for anyone who dies except family (Leviticus 21:1–3). If he touched a corpse or even an item a corpse had touched, he was made unclean (Leviticus 22:4–7). If he was unclean, he couldn't eat the special priestly food or do his job serving God.

#### Strikes against the Samaritan:

The nation of Samaria started when the king of Assyria settled captured people in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites (2 Kings 17:24). They knew God's commands but did not follow them (2 Kings 17:34–41). The Jews were supposed to only go to one place of worship, the Temple in Jerusalem (Deut. 12:5–6). However, the Samaritans worshipped in Samaria. "Good Jews" shunned the Samaritans because of this.

<sup>30</sup> In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring

on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.<sup>35</sup> 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.'

<sup>36</sup> "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

<sup>37</sup> The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Why the Levite avoided helping the (potentially dead but only beaten) man: The Levites lived on the food that was made as offerings to God. The Lord was their inheritance, so they were considered especially holy and close to God. They got the firstfruit offerings, the best of everything, that was first offered to God. They could not eat that food if they were made unclean. (Deut. 19:1–5)

? What do you notice about the Samaritan's response to the man versus the priest's and the Levite's?

*Possible Answers: It says he took pity on him. He goes to the man versus avoiding him. His concern is for the beaten man, rather than for his own ritual cleanness.*

? How did the Samaritan go above and beyond for the man he was helping?

*Possible Answers: He addresses his immediate needs which were his wounds, but then he doesn't just leave him there. He takes him to an Inn and continues to care for him, make sure he will be taken care of, and pays for his care.*

? In verse 29 the expert of the law asks Jesus "And who is my neighbor?" How do you think the man thought Jesus was going to answer?

*Possible Answers: Potentially specific people, maybe his family, other experts of the law, people he is friends with, or the nation of Israel. Obviously, an answer that he felt like would make him look good.*

? In response to "And who is my neighbor?", why does Jesus answer with this parable?

*Possible Answers: To illustrate who a neighbor is - because it's very different than who this man thinks is his neighbor. Jesus realizes that the man is asking the question to justify himself. Jesus' response shows he is asking us to love everyone, even strangers, people we would not normally interact with, or even someone we might consider an enemy.*

? What does “neighbor” mean? Who are our neighbors?

*Possible Answers: Neighbor doesn’t just mean people you want to be around and helping! It is everyone God has put in our lives and the people in need in front of us.*

? At the end of the parable Jesus says, “Go and do likewise”. What is he asking us to do?

*Possible Answers: Look for the people God has placed in our life. Look for what people’s needs are and consider how you can help meet those needs. Go above and beyond to serve others, even if it is not easy.*

? The man who was beaten really has no voice or agency in this story. It is not his words or response, but his “being”, the fact that he is someone who needs help, that makes him the neighbor. We don’t know anything about him except his circumstances. Why does that matter in the context of the parable?

*Possible Answers: It doesn’t matter who the person is, what matters is that there was someone who needed help.*

? When reading the parable, it seems obvious that the priest and the Levite did not do the right thing, but they thought they were doing the right thing by avoiding the personal, social and physical consequences of helping the man. What kind of justifications do you use in your own life to avoid helping the people around you?

*Possible Answers: I don’t agree with that person. I already help people in other ways. It would put me in danger or there is risk. It doesn’t fit in my schedule.*

? In our own culture, do we avoid helping those in need who are “unclean” in our own context? What does this say about our own hearts?

*Possible Answers: Coworkers we don’t get along with, people who are different than us, people who have different opinions than us.*

## For Discussion and Accountability

? Who is a “neighbor” that you feel God leading you to help or interact with? How will you take action on that this week?

? People (like the expert of the law in this passage) often come to Jesus trying to ask clever questions to make themselves look good, but most often Jesus turns it back around on them. When you examine your own heart, is there anything you feel self-righteous about? What would Jesus’ response to that self-righteousness be? How can you respond to Jesus with an open heart and mind to hear His guiding this week?