THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

25 Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus.[a] “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” 27 He answered, “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 your neighbor as yourself.” 28 And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.” 29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 30 Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ 36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” 37 He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Key Verse


Key Concept

An expert on the law asks Jesus how to inherit a good or eternal life. Jesus responds, “What is written in the law? Love your neighbor as yourself.” Who is my neighbor?
Gathering Prayer

God of creation, who loves us deeply and cares for all,
be with us in this study. Open our hearts, minds and eyes that we may hear from you regarding love and care for others. Amen.

Devotional Reflection

Scripture: The religious authority in this scripture has asked Jesus how to have a good life. Jesus’ response is to ask him what he already knows of what is written in the law. “To love your neighbor as yourself and to love the Lord your God with all your mind, soul and heart.” The question is then asked, “Who is my neighbor?” For Jesus, therein lies the parable.

Observation: As Jesus begins to tell the parable, we quickly learn that our neighbor can be someone who has been violated or needs a helping hand by someone who does not judge or discriminate. The Good Samaritan in this story simply didn’t find a neighbor, friend or family member to help - he found someone he didn’t even know personally. The Good Samaritan gave of himself, his money and his time, and then he promised to repay the innkeeper if any other costs came up.

Application: As we think about the Samaritan in our present society, who might he be?

Perhaps a stranger becoming entangled in immigration laws and policies to help someone that is about to be displaced from their family. Or someone who has taken on the task of helping a family find their daughter who has been forced into human trafficking. Or might the Samaritan be one who is helping a community of color have access to fresh food sources where there are food deserts in their community? As we encounter the marginalized we begin to see faces and lives different from our own, hopefully, we begin to make friends. As we open our hearts and pocketbooks for the disenfranchised do you think they begin to see Jesus on earth?

Prayer

“Lord, open our eyes and hearts to those you deeply care for. Help us to truly practice what we preach: “to be the hands of Jesus in the world.” Amen.
Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Jesus used the “dreaded Samaritan, who was disparaged in Jewish society” in this parable?

2. How might laws in our society negatively impact those in need?

3. Do you see people of color, the disabled or marginalized as potential friends? Why or why not?

4. The Samaritan went out of his way to ensure the stranger was in a good position to get back on his feet; have you considered how your own efforts might impact someone in need?

5. What stops us from being friendly towards strangers or those in need?

Sending Forth

God of love, wisdom, power and might,
Guide us, we pray:
as we encounter the stranger,
as we encounter those considered lesser than.
Help us to represent you as we assist with a helping hand.
In your name we pray,
Amen.

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