

Week 3: The Good Samaritan

Preview

This week we will look at one of the most familiar parables in the Bible. Familiar passages give us a great opportunity to dig a little deeper in our study. We'll look at what this text says about who Jesus is and the role sacrifice plays in responding to Him.

Text: Luke 10:25–37

²⁵ And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” ²⁷ And 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 answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”

²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, 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, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’

³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

A Good Parable

Perhaps one of the most enduring stories from the gospels is the one about the Good Samaritan. People who know little about Jesus have still likely heard of this story and the idea of "be a good neighbor" or "do unto others." It comes in response to a question about the second Greatest Commandment. Because the story is so familiar, we sometimes forget important background details, like how much Jews and Samaritans hated each other. Note how Jesus appeals to the Word of God like He did in Week 1, and emphasizes compassion as He did in Week 2.

Observe, Interpret, Apply

Observe: What do you notice in our passage?

- Key questions:
 - What two motives does Luke assign to the lawyer? (Bonus: What is ironic about these? In other words, who ultimately evaluates and justifies a man?)
 - Who actually answers the lawyer's first question?
 - For each of the three people who see the victim, what does the text say about *why* they did what they did?
 - What did the Samaritan do for the man? Make a complete list.
 - What does Jesus actually do in this passage?
 - Does Jesus answer the "who is my neighbor" question? If so, how?

Interpret: What does this passage mean?

- Key clues:
 - Jesus is the teacher, the Samaritan is the example
 - Being a neighbor is related to need, not geography
 - Compassion and mercy are key ideas

Apply: How should we respond?

- What blocks or cools your compassion for others?
 - Do you struggle with apathy? If so, is it because of busyness or something else?
 - Are you concerned about justice? For example, do you tend to think those in need are victims of their own decisions and actions? That they should be left to experience natural consequences?
- Name a time you experienced great need. Did anyone help you? Describe how that felt.
- Is there anything you can change in your life (schedule, budget, habits) that can make you more available to those in need?
- Is there anyone in your life right now who could use some mercy?
- Is showing mercy optional for a Christ follower? Explain your reasoning.

For Further Study

- Go back to last week's word study on compassion and look at the examples in the gospels. Do you see mercy anywhere in the context?

Study Tool Spotlight

Marking up your Bible (or printout) is a great way to deepen your study. It can help you see the patterns in the text more clearly and save your insights for future reference. There are a lot of different systems out there, but the best system is the one that works for you. If you study with a paper Bible, buying a set of [Micron pens](#) is a great investment. If you prefer to study digitally, you might consider the free version of the [Logos Bible app](#) for its [advanced markup tools](#).

Prayer

We live in a time where people are increasingly isolated. Cultural trends are pushing us away from one another instead of drawing us together. But people have not changed, and neither has God. As you close in prayer, ask especially that God will help you to be bold and caring about the strangers that He puts in your life. Lead with love toward people who are different from you and even toward people who stand for things that you hate.

Next Steps

Next week we will look at the passage that immediately follows this one, about Mary and Martha. This could be a good week to catch up if you are reading through all of Luke, or a good time to reflect on previous lessons. Next week's theme is listening, which emphasizes receiving what God provides. How have you been listening to God's Word the past few weeks? What can you do to listen better? What obstacles are in your way? Be prepared to discuss these things.

Leader Notes

Production Notes

Initial Observations

- Lawyer not coming for help but to test (critique) Jesus.
 - Like a sick man coming to the doctor but only to audit him.
- Jesus points to Scripture
 - Note how He did the same in week 1
- Jesus in asking the lawyer allows the lawyer to show off; completely subverts the test.
- Lawyer gets the answer right! Cites the two greatest commandments.
- Purpose shifts halfway; now no longer testing Jesus but looking to validate himself
 - Wanted to judge Jesus unworthy, then wanted to judge himself worthy
- Jesus primarily asking questions here.
- Lawyer seems unsure about whether he has obeyed the second commandment. That's potentially a big loophole!
- The story is familiar enough.
 - Roads were dangerous; realistic threat
 - Only one had compassion
 - The heart of the others is revealed by their actions
 - Why oil and wine?
 - Gave up his ride
 - Changed his schedule
 - Two denarii is two days' wages
- The main point is mercy
- Lawyer asked "who is my neighbor," but Jesus turned it around and told him to be a neighbor
 - Implied: your neighbor is anyone who needs mercy
-