

# The True Neighbor

# Luke 10:25-37

Video: "[The Ultimate Good Samaritan](#)" by D. A. Carson (2:07)

## Learn

1. Read Luke 10:25-37. What changed in your understanding of this parable? How were you challenged?
2. How does Christ use the context, setting, background, and culture reflected in the parable to reach within human hearts?
  - a. God was pleased through Christ to reveal Himself to the lowly and hide Himself from the 'wise and intelligent.' The lawyer is an example of the 'wise and intelligent' yet true knowledge of God in Christ is hidden from him. Ironically, by 'lawyer' it means he was an expert in the Law of Moses and one who was supposed to be trained to read, interpret, and apply God's law.
  - b. Jesus knows that no one can be saved by the law, and the lawyer wanted to hear what to do on his own, so Jesus pointed him to the law to act like a mirror and bring conviction "to the wise and understanding." But the lawyer doesn't recognize he's lost, he thinks he knows the right answers. The issue isn't 'knowing' what one must do but whether you actually 'do it.' Right answers don't mean one knows God.
3. What is the main message that Christ gives in the parable about His kingdom or aspects of it?
  - a. God's Kingdom is an "upside down" kingdom by the world's standards - we are not to isolate our love toward the neighbors that we like, but rather we love others as ourselves. We were once enemies of God, but he demonstrated love and mercy to us and likewise we do the same to others
  - b. Can't claim to love God and not love your neighbor. True religion is not just temple ritual, but showing mercy on the highways and byways. Thus it's not really a story about doing a good deed but an indictment towards the Jews who believe salvation will come by their holding to the law, but the only thing coming if you hold to the law is death.
4. How is Christ revealed in the parable of the Good Samaritan?
  - a. Jesus didn't share this parable merely to inspire kindness toward one's neighbor. Christ put the spotlight not on the neighbor, but on the one who proved to be a neighbor. Christ is revealed in ministering healing and cleansing to Israel, Christ was the embodiment par excellence of this Samaritan who did what the religious leaders failed to do.

## Practice

1. In what ways does the parable search our hearts and lives and expose what is in them, and guide us into the knowledge of Christ and his kingdom?
  - a. We can be partial, unmerciful, and consistently fail in obeying the Great Commandment.
  - b. As disciples of Christ, we are called to love our neighbors, and when we do this, our lives demonstrate the love of Christ. If we are "all talk but no walk" then people easily ignore us, and discredit our message. But when we show them love by being good neighbors, our witness aligns with the good news of Jesus that we share
2. Imagine a fellow Christian telling you about someone they can't imagine loving, serving, praying for, or loving as themselves. What are examples of people and/or reasons they would give to not demonstrate those things? Practice with each other how you would walk that person through the Gospel to reflect on what God has done for them.
  - a. People examples: The family member you avoid; The spouse who is having a difficult day; Someone who's made it impossible for you to forgive; The little ones who need so much attention;
  - b. Reasons: They're a nonbeliever; different political views; viewing someone else's sin as somehow worse than mine and not worthy of God's grace; you were hurt by someone; It will be too much of a burden to get involved
  - c. Walking through the Gospel
3. What opportunities are around you to display gospel mercy in your life where you have yet to do so?
  - a. (This is not referring to acts of kindness to strangers we may meet in public, but rather those people who we avoid trying to love)
  - b. If no one comes to mind, are you living in isolation and limiting interaction to only those you like? How would you reconcile this with carrying out the Great Commission?

Video: "[Justification: Final and Irreversible](#)" by Sinclair Ferguson (6:41) (*The lawyer in the parable was looking for a way to justify himself which reminds us that there is nothing we can do to contribute to this.*)

## Change

Some questions to ask ourselves:

- Have I come to an end of myself and see myself like the half-dead man in the parable, or do I see myself like the lawyer?
- What kind of neighbor are you? Identify the people with needs around you (not just strangers on the street), but consider others in your Small Group, at Doxa, your workplace, family, neighborhood, etc. - are you offering to stop and help, or are you making excuses and "passing them by?" What needs to change? What do you believe?

- Eternal life isn't just something that happens after death, but saving faith in God results in the love and mercy that flows to us through Christ, and that is shown to those we encounter regardless of our relationship because everyone is our neighbor
- As you reflect on what needs to change, what hope do we find as you focus on Christ?
  - Despite my inability to love God as I should, or to love my neighbor as myself, I'm reminded that I don't do these things to earn eternal life
  - God's word tells me that I wasn't just like the half-dead man in the parable, but I was completely dead spiritually unable to even cry out for help
  - "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:4-7
  - Which means that I trust in what Christ has accomplished for me, and as a person who has experienced the mercy of God, I live as a channel that the mercy of Christ flows through

#### Prayer

- Praise God for His compassion, mercy, and love for us and that Jesus is our 'ultimate Good Samaritan'
- Confess our sin in situations where we don't love God and our neighbors as we should
- Give thanks that despite our failure to obey God's Law, our salvation has been accomplished by Christ
- Ask God to help you love others that are difficult to love in a compassionate and sacrificial way