

# Parable of the Good Samaritan

## Luke 10:25-37

### 1. Jesus' Use of parables

- A total of 39 parables are recorded in **Matthew** (20), **Mark** (9), **Luke** (27)
- Jesus used parables to make a point
- Jesus often answers a question with a question
- The parable of the "Good Samaritan" is only recorded in Luke
- What is a parable?
  - Common form of teaching in Judaism
  - A parable can be considered a long analogy, a form of a story
  - Sometimes Jesus used analogies, **Matt. 5:13-16**, "You are the salt of the earth; ... . You are the light of the world. ... . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."
  - Salt is a preservative and a flavor enhancer
  - A light is lit to be seen
  - **1 Pet. 2:12**, "having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation."
- Why parables
  - **Matt. 13:10-17**, Jesus explains the purpose of parables to the disciples
  - **Matt. 13:10** – The disciples asked Jesus "Why do You speak to them in parables?"
  - **Matt. 13:11** – Jesus answer is profound "He answered and said to them, 'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.'"
  - Truth made known to the disciples
  - Truth obscured from unbelievers – an act of judgment & an act of mercy
  - **Matt. 13:3-9**, the parable of the sower given
  - **Matt. 13:18-23**, the parable of the sower explained

### 2. Background (v. 25-29) – "Who is My Neighbor?"

- **Luke 10:25**, A lawyer asks Jesus a question "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
- **Luke 10:26**, Jesus answers his question with a question "What is written in the law?"
- **Luke 10:27**, the lawyer knew the law and answered with "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."
- **Deut. 6:5**, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."

- **Lev. 19:18**, "... but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord."
- **Luke 10:28**, Jesus told the lawyer (who was skilled in the Mosaic law) that he had answered correctly
  - "Do this and you will live"
  - We are held responsible for what we know
  - We are not condemned for what we do not understand
  - We are condemned for what we do understand, and do not do
  - Jesus does not say that we can get to heaven by being perfect
  - Doing good does not get us to heaven
  - Jesus is holding up a mirror so the man can see his sin
  - We need to understand the need for a Savior before we can be saved
- Jesus Himself summarized the law when asked by a Pharisee lawyer:
  - **Matt. 22:36**, "Teacher, which is the great commandment of the law?"
  - **Matt. 22:37-40**, "Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." [See also **Mark 12:28-34**]
  - The Pharisees knew the ten commandments and the summary
- Rich young ruler asked the same question:
  - **Mark 10:17-22**, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"
  - **Matt. 19:16-22**, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"
  - **Luke 18:18-23**, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
  - Ruler went away sorrowful because he was asked to sell all his possessions, take up the cross and follow Him
- **Luke 10:29**, the lawyer asked a second question "And who is my neighbor?"
  - The lawyer was comfortable with loving God
  - The lawyer was NOT comfortable with his past actions in loving his neighbor
  - The lawyer has an attitude of self-righteousness
  - The lawyer tried to justify himself by seeking a narrow definition of "neighbor"
  - The purpose of this parable is to answer a question and deal with an attitude
  - Jesus answered the lawyer with this parable to illustrate who our neighbor is
  - How would you answer the question "Who is my neighbor?"
  - We will come back to this question after looking at the parable of the Good Samaritan
  - The parable illustrates three different attitudes to the use of what we have
    - What we have can be any or all of 1) treasures, 2) talents, 3) time
  - The purpose of the parable is two-fold:

- To illustrate who is our neighbor
- To deal with an attitude of self-righteousness
- Samaritans were despised and hated by the Jews
- The parable that Jesus tells would seem impossible to the Jews
- The Jewish social structure started with the priest in the center and the Gentiles on the outside in this order:
  - Priest
  - Levite
  - Ordinary Jew
  - Tax collectors, outcasts, sinners
  - Samaritans
  - Gentiles
- Even in the synagogue, the priest read first, then the Levite, then the regular Jew
- The lawyer's question becomes – how far out in the circle do I have to go?
  - i.e. who is my neighbor? Who do I have to love?
- Parables are representative of real life – no specific names are used, e.g. certain man
- The key players – robbers, victim, priest, Levite, Samaritan, innkeeper
- We see three different attitudes in the key players in the parable

### 3. The Robbers (v. 30) – “What is Yours is Mine”

- The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is treacherous
- The hill from Jerusalem drops about 3300 feet in 17 miles (~ 25 Km)
- A steep hill with many places for robbers to hide
- The road is known as “the way of blood”
- The story is very believable for Jesus' listeners
- The victim is very likely a Jewish person
- He is robbed, wounded, and left for dead
- He needs help
- The robbers take what is not rightfully theirs
- They break two of the ten commandments:
  - **Ex. 20:15**, “You shall not steal.”
  - **Ex. 20:17**, “You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.”
- The robbers have the attitude that “might makes right”, e.g.
  - Bank robbery, car jacking
  - What is yours is mine if I can take it from you
  - Brutality is a characteristic of the wicked, as shown in **2 Tim. 3:2-3**, “For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, ... , brutal, despisers of good, traitors, ... .”
  - The wicked are violent, **Prov. 4:14-17**, “Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it;

turn away from it and pass on. ... For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.”

- Violence becomes part of their nature
- Money is more important than his fellow man
- Riches can be a snare – **1 Tim. 6:6-10**, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into [this] world, [and] [it is] certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and [into] many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, ... .”
- Physical riches cannot save, but many put their own well-being first – **Luke 12:16-21**, “Then He spoke a parable to them, saying ‘The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentiful. ... So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.’”
- The robbers take what “is yours” and make it “mine”
  - i.e. Their attitude is “What’s Yours is Mine”

#### 4. The Priest/Levite (v. 31-32) – “What is Mine is Mine”

- The Jewish culture – treated anyone who touched a dead man as unclean
- The priest and the Levite could have used this as an excuse – this would have kept them from serving God in the temple
- But the priest and the Levite were going home from worship in Jerusalem – they had already accomplished their worship duties
- To the scribes and Pharisees one’s neighbors were the righteous ones only
- The wicked (includes sinners, tax collectors), Gentiles and especially Samaritans were to be hated because they were enemies of God
- The self-righteous would use **Ps. 139: 21-22** to justify their attitude, “Do I not hate them, O Lord, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.”
- We are to hate the sin, but love the sinner
- Godly hatred is marked by a broken-hearted grieving over the condition of the sinner
- **Luke 6:27-36**, “But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. ... Therefore be merciful just as your Father is merciful.”
- **Matt. 5:44-48**, “You have heard that it is said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”
- They were lovers of themselves
- They were too busy in their own duties to get involved
- They weren’t responsible for the man’s unfortunate circumstances

- They felt no obligation or responsibility for the man's welfare
- They neglected an opportunity to do good:
  - Not doing the good you know about is a sin. – **James 4:17**, Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.
  - How can you have faith without doing good? – **James 2:13-16**, “ ... What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? ... Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”
  - If you ignore the needy, how can God's love be in you? – **1 John 3:16-18**, “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”
  - Do good to all men as the opportunity arises – **Gal. 6:10**, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”
- Their attitude showed their hypocrisy – they had just been to worship God (i.e. love God), but they did not help the wounded man (love neighbor)
  - Refusal to help one's neighbor casts doubt on one's love for God
  - The priest and Levite knew the law
  - They were caught up in dead religion
  - They “go to church” but it does not affect the way they live
- The priest and the Levite were religious leaders
- They were responsible for the spiritual leadership of the nation of Israel
- The priest and Levite represent the Religious
- They had elevated hostility to the wicked to the status of a virtue
- They made the statement that “I'm keeping what I have for myself”
  - i.e. What's Mine is Mine
  - They had the attitude of every man for himself, a common attitude of the religious
  - They were lovers of themselves – **2 Tim. 3:2**, “For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.”

## 5. Good Samaritan (v. 33-35) – “What is Mine is Yours”

- The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is treacherous
- The Samaritan was risking his own life just to travel this road, not just because of the thieves, but also because of the hostility of other travelers
- The Samaritans were an inferior mixed race in the Jewish mind
- The Samaritan showed compassion
  - He did not pass by on the other side
  - He moved to the injured traveler
  - We must move to a person to show love, and to build a relationship
  - It was not convenient for him
  - The injured traveler would probably not have done the same for him

- Perhaps we need to move toward someone, rather than wait for him to move to us
- Sometimes we fail to move toward someone because of fear of rejection
- The Samaritan provided care
  - He stopped and took care of the traveler's wounds
  - He put the injured traveler on his own donkey and walked himself
  - He took him to an inn
  - He took time to help
  - Sometimes it is easier for us to make a donation for a worthy cause, rather than take the time to get involved
  - We are too busy doing our own thing
  - Taking time shows that we care and love others
- The Samaritan paid the cost
  - He gave money to take care of him
  - He did not put a limit on how much he would spend to see that the wounded man was taken care of
  - He was willing to sacrifice and be vulnerable, even in enemy territory
  - Are we willing to do that?
- The Samaritan's actions were a true demonstration of love
- He had no prior relationship with the wounded victim
- He would not gain anything by helping the victim
- He would lose time and money
- There was no assurance that the victim would help the Samaritan if the shoe was on the other foot
- Do to others what you would have done to you – **Matt. 7:12**, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."
- The Samaritan represents the Righteous
- He did not wait for someone else to help
- He did not check out the character of the man to see if he was deserving of help
- We are commanded to help even our worst enemy – **Rom 12:20-21**, "Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Quoted from **Prov. 25:21-22**, "If your enemy is hungry, ... and the Lord will reward you."

## 6. Our Response (v. 36-37) – "Go and Do Likewise"

- Israel failed to keep the law, especially the part to love their neighbor
- The lawyer answered Jesus question with "He who showed mercy on him"
  - He did not refer to him as the "Samaritan"
- The lawyer asked Jesus – who and how much do I have to love?
- How we love people shows our relationship with God
- Love does not ask – how far should I go? How much should I give?
- Love asks – what can I do?

- Love is a 100% commitment in marriage, not 50/50
- The points of this parable
  - Even our enemies are our neighbors
  - Ethnic and social standing are no guarantee of right standing before God
  - The Samaritan's actions are an example of what it means to love
- The attitudes displayed in this parable
  - Robbers – what's yours is mine and I'm going to take it
  - Priest/Levite – what's mine is mine and I'm going to keep it
  - Good Samaritan – what's mine is yours and I'm going to share it
- Lessons learned from this parable
  - Mere "membership" or "rituals" in the church do not satisfy the commands to love God and love our neighbor
  - When we love our neighbor, we show that we love God
  - Biblical love goes beyond the boundaries of geography, race, religion, socio-economic status and even convenience – we must love all men equally and well
  - My neighbor is anyone with a legitimate need for which God has given me the resources to meet that need – treasure, time or talent
  - Love means moving towards others, even when not convenient
- Practical implications of this parable
  - Should we help everyone that comes across our path?
  - Who is our neighbor?
  - How do we discern whether and how to help our "neighbor"?
- Go and Do Likewise
  - Look for opportunities
  - Do it in love
  - Do we only do good to those who are nice to us? – **Luke 6:32-36**, "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even the sinners love those who love them. ... Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful."
  - Have mercy on the poor – **Prov. 14:21**, "He who despises his neighbor sins; but he who has mercy on the poor, happy is he."
  - You have been shown, what will you do with this lesson? – **Micah 6:8**, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"
  - To whom much has been given, from him much can be given!
  - God bless you as you minister to your neighbor