



## Going Deeper - Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

Luke 10:25-37 06/21/2020

### Reimagine: Love your Neighbor as yourself

Whew! Jesus is scandalous! The nature and significance behind the story of the Good Samaritan is radical. Take time to read Luke 10:25-37 and let's take a look at the story and dig deep into what this must have meant at the time, looking at the first character.

**The "Expert in the Law":** This man was a scholar, an expert in the Torah. He was presumably familiar with every nook and cranny of the commandments (and the loopholes that the religious leaders had exploited). He, like many "questioners" in the Gospels, was looking prove Christ wrong. The story opens up with this Expert in the Law asking what it takes to obtain eternal life, displaying he knows the greatest commandment from the Shema (Deuteronomy 6; Leviticus 19:18). And, we can see he wanted to "justify himself" asking Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answers the Expert in the Law with another question, not letting him off the hook. You see, Jesus doesn't care to simply answer our questions; he cares too much about our hearts being in alignment with His and for our motivations to be exposed for true repentance to occur. His questions are an invitation to come to an understanding of his nature. He wants us to be learners and listeners. Just because we might have the right answer/actions doesn't mean we have the right motive or intention. (1 Samuel 16:7)

When Jesus answers the Expert in the Law, he tells the parable of the Good Samaritan. Let's look at these characters:

**The victim:** We know nothing about this man other than he was going from Jerusalem to Jericho. This man could have been a Jew, a Gentile, a Samaritan, we don't know, and I believe this is intentional. As the one character who *doesn't* have a group identity, he is first, foremost, and crucially this: in need of help, this is the part that matters about him.

**The Priest:** A religious leader. If anyone should be close to God, surely it would be him, right? He spends his life ministering in the temple; he should choose what is right, right?

**The Levite:** Levites were of a particular tribe; they were given religious, social, and political responsibilities. Some Levites were priests too, but many more were involved in the running of society. Surely, he would have chosen love.

**The Samaritan:** To "true" Jews (such as this expert in the Law) Samaritans were heretics, race traitors, promiscuous, untouchable, and outside the bounds of acceptable behavior.

The Priest and the Levite see the victim and move to the opposite side of the road, avoiding the major inconvenience of ritual impurity. The Samaritan on the other hand **felt compassion, went over to him**, soothed his wounds with **valuable resources** of olive oil and wine, placed him on his donkey which (forcing the Samaritan to walk), takes the victim to a hotel, and cares for him through the night. Then, the Samaritan pays the charges and commits to future costs. And note, unlike the priest and Levite, the Samaritan is on a trip, he has places to be. Wow! THIS WAS INCONVENIENT for the Samaritan to say the least! (2 Samuel 24:24)

Jesus is making a point: loving your neighbor as yourself means going beyond the limits of basic human decency to actually take moral responsibility for the wellbeing of those who hurt and are in need of help. The "who" doesn't really matter, it is about OUR behavior toward others. Are WE acting like good neighbors or not? Are we treating people, regardless of who they are, in a way that fulfills the mandate to "love your neighbor as yourself"? Jesus doesn't care about your theology, or if you're in the "in crowd", he cares about your radical love for God and others.

#### So, Consider:

1. Who is hurting around me and what am I doing to be neighborly towards them?
2. REALLY consider this and do some soul searching: When I make actionable steps to love others, do I have strings attached or do I love without expecting return?
3. Bill mentioned in his sermon about guilt being a terrible motivator, are you motivated by guilt or by a heart that desires to see God's kingdom come with compassion in action?

#### Take Action:

We are in the midst of significant unrest as a country and in solidarity throughout the world whether it be due to COVID or standing as anti-racist in the midst of generational racism. There are countless opportunities of extravagant love needed in the world. Ask how is God calling you to be a neighbor to those who are hurting, vulnerable, and silenced... and do it.

*On earth as it is in heaven, Julie Briley*