

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN"

For individual study or group discussion

Best known for his pivotal role in the Protestant Reformation, theologian and reformer Martin Luther was also known for his biting sarcasm. (So much so, you can find an auto-loaded compendium of his criticisms on a website called the *Lutheran Insulter*.) His evocative speech was compiled by his students into a collection of his sayings called *Table Talk*. Many of these informal speeches were made around the dinner table at his home, and during one question and answer session Luther responded to what he thought was a silly question raised by one of the students: "When one asked, where God was before heaven was created? St Augustine answered, 'He was in himself.' When another asked me the same question, I said, 'He was building hell for such idle, presumptuous, fluttering and inquisitive spirits as you.'"¹

Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, we find the crowds peppering him with questions. Some of the questions were astute (Luke 11:1), others foolish (Luke 9:46; 54). Most were raised to entrap him, as we see in today's passage. Luke 10:25-37 records an interaction with a lawyer who was putting Jesus to the test. The question he asked is *the question that preoccupies the religious*: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (v. 25).

- Read Luke 11:46. What was a common characteristic of lawyers during Jesus' day? How does this description relate to the parable Jesus told of *The Good Samaritan*?
- How did the phrasing of this question by the lawyer reveal his heart (v. 25)? Read Galatians 3:10. Why is it impossible for us to earn our salvation?

Jesus does not answer the lawyer's question, but replies with a question of his own. The early Greek philosopher and teacher, Socrates, used similar techniques with his students. Known as the "Socratic Method," a teacher utilizes questions as a technique to promote thoughtful dialogue with students, enabling them to examine their thinking and encourage ownership of their conclusions. With his questions, Jesus was always adept at getting to the heart of the matter. But as was the case for the lawyer, *the answer that should convict, actually emboldens the religious*. He pressed Jesus by further querying, "And who is my neighbor?" (vv. 26-29).

- How did Jesus respond to the lawyer's answer (v. 28)? Why was it correct (cf. Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18)?
- Desiring to justify himself, the lawyer continues to question Jesus (v. 29). It seems he was hoping for an answer from Jesus allowing him to check a box, demonstrating he was worthy of eternal life by his own efforts. Read Luke 16:15; 18:9-14 and Romans 3:20. What does God have to say about those who justify themselves?

Instead of directly answering the question, Jesus responds to the lawyer with *The Parable of the Good Samaritan*. Through the story, Jesus implies that the lawyer has asked the wrong question. Rather than asking "Who is my neighbor?" the question he needed to ask was "How can I be a good neighbor?" Christ's parable is a *story that reveals the condition of the religious and the heart of Jesus* (vv. 30-37).

- The story unfolds the truth of the Gospel for us—that we are each the badly beaten man left for dead along the Jericho Road. Read Romans 6. Why is it crucial that we see ourselves as dead to sin and Jesus as our Good Samaritan?
- What did the Samaritan do for the man (v. 34)? What motivated him (v. 33)? Read Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 8:2; and Luke 7:13. How did Jesus react to those who were in need?
- How does Christ's redemptive love for us reflect the love of the Samaritan in the story? (See Romans 5:6-8.)
- Concerning how we are to treat our enemies, Luke 6:31 states: "And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them." How did the Samaritan express this love by his actions? Think of people to whom you can show the love of God this week. Pray that your heart will reflect the heart of Jesus.

DATE: October 2, 2022

SPEAKER: Brian/Wil

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 10:25-37

Family Dinner Table

In his book, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, American novelist and poet Wendell Berry challenges the modern church to compare notes with the teachings of Christ. Given the modern church's tendency to conflate Christianity with nationalism, *The Parable of the Good Samaritan* asks Christians to take a closer look at the question, "Who is my neighbor?" Berry claims, "Christ told us...when he answered the question, 'Who is my neighbor?' In the tenth chapter of Luke, he tells the story of a Samaritan who cared for a Jew who had been badly wounded by thieves. As we know from the preceding chapter, in which the disciples suggest in effect the firebombing of a Samaritan village, the Samaritans and the Jews were enemies. To modernize the story, then, and so to understand Christ's answer, we may substitute any other pair of enemies: fundamentalist Christian and fundamentalist Muslim, Palestinian and Israeli, captor and prisoner. The answer: Your neighbor is any sufferer who needs your help."²

- Given our current cultural context, what pair of enemies could you add to Wendell Berry's list?
- Read Proverbs 11:25; 14:21; 14:31; 19:17; Psalm 41:1-2; and Luke 6:32-36. As followers of Christ, what effect will loving others have on us?
- Read John 13:34-35. In light of what we studied in Deuteronomy 4:6-8, what effect will loving others have on them?

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Chattanooga Evangelism
Fellowship, supported partner
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PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Ruth and Keith Powlison, supported
missionary partners

¹ Luther, Martin. *Table Talk, Number LXVII*. Retrieved September 27, 2022, from <https://cat.xula.edu/tpi/works/tabletalk/>

² Berry, Wendell. *Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Christ's Teachings about Love, Compassion, & Forgiveness*. 2005. Shoemaker Hoard. 7