

20260125 The Parable of the Good Samaritan – Duane

Luke 10:25–37

Today, the parable of the Good Samaritan has lost much of its original shock value. After centuries of positive biblical interpretation, we automatically view Samaritans as heroes. In Jesus' time, however, to a Jewish scribe, a Samaritan was the ultimate outsider—a despised traitor and “bad guy.”

The **Samaritans** were not considered pure Israelites/Jews, as intermarried with foreign settlers. From the perspective of later Jews, the Samaritans were viewed as ethnically mixed or impure due to this intermarriage. Furthermore, their worship blended devotion to the God of Israel (Yahweh) with certain pagan elements

The hero of this story is precisely the person no one expected to exemplify love.

Many focus on Jesus' question, “**Who is my neighbour?**”—a valid question He Himself asked. Yet the deeper challenge is not “**Who qualifies as my neighbour?**” but “**Am I being a loving neighbour?**” When we encounter someone in need—hungry, poorly clothed, hurting, or desperate—what is our instinctive response? Are we like the priest and Levite, who passed by, or like the Samaritan, who went out of his way to help at great personal cost in time, effort, and money?

Doing the right thing often carries a cost. The Samaritan didn't debate or calculate risks; his response was immediate and instinctive. He acted without hesitation. How can we cultivate that same automatic compassion? The answer lies in two key truths: **first, a heart transformed by God's true love; second, the fruit that naturally flows from such a heart.**

1. A Heart Impacted by True Love

Scripture teaches that the heart determines our actions: “**As water reflects the face, so a man's heart reveals the man**” (Proverbs 27:19). Our lifestyle exposes what truly fills our hearts. This is why Jesus emphasized the heart throughout His teaching. In this parable, the

priest and Levite reveal hearts hardened by self-preservation, while the Samaritan displays a heart of genuine love—one that mirrors our heavenly Father’s.

What fills our hearts will overflow into our lives. That’s why we must continually allow God’s love to touch and saturate us. Love is the most compelling force: **“God so loved the world…”** and the Samaritan so loved the wounded man.

Ezekiel says: **“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh”** (Ezekiel 36:26). We receive this heart of flesh by letting God’s love reshape us from within.

David understood this longing. He prayed, **“Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my mind and my heart”** (Psalm 26:2), and **“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me”** (Psalm 51:10). He yearned to feel what God feels and love as God loves. May the same be true for us.

There is a vast difference between merely knowing about God’s love and experiencing a true revelation of it. If we asked the lawyer in this passage, **“Do you love God?”** he would likely have answered yes. Yet his actions betrayed a lack of deep revelation.

The lawyer approached Jesus with a focused question: **“Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”** He assumed it was something to earn, but Jesus redirected him to the Law: **“What is written? How do you read it?”** The lawyer answered correctly, quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18: love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love your neighbour as yourself. This is the **“law of love.” Righteousness isn’t earned through actions alone; it flows from a heart that loves God fully.**

At that point, the lawyer could have stopped. Instead, he asked, **“Who is my neighbour?”**—revealing his true motive. He wanted to justify himself, to limit who deserved his love and mercy. He sought to pick and choose. We do the same when we excuse inaction: **“I was in a hurry,” “I didn’t know what to do,” or “They’re not from our group/nation.”**

Our relationship with God is a heavenly romance, a love story. If it isn’t rooted in love, it rests on the wrong foundation. God’s love compelled Him to send Jesus; our love for Him must

drive everything we do. Otherwise, we fall into a works-based mindset. When Jesus said, **“Do this and you will live,” He wasn’t endorsing works-righteousness. He was pointing to the life-giving power of a relationship with God—His love touching us brings life to us and through us to others.**

We were created to be loved by God and to love Him in return. To love others well, we must first love the right Person. Too many search for love in the wrong places—unhealthy relationships, substances, possessions—only to find fleeting satisfaction that ultimately brings death. God offers abundant, meaningful life to every person, beginning with loving Him with all our heart, mind, and strength.

I believe God desires to transform nations, covering the earth with His glory as waters cover the sea—through people saved, set free, and set on fire for Him. It starts with the lawyer’s question and Jesus’ answer: love God fully.

When God’s love captures our hearts, we truly live—and we bring life to those around us.

2. The Fruit of Such a Heart

The New Testament repeatedly links our love for God with our love for others:

- **“Love your neighbour as yourself”** (Matthew 19:19).
- **“Love one another as I have loved you... By this all will know that you are My disciples”** (John 13:34–35).
- **“The whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’”** (Galatians 5:14).

Jesus turned the lawyer’s question around: it’s not primarily **“Who is my neighbour?”** but **“What kind of neighbour am I?”** Am I neighbourly to the lovable and the unlovable? To the hungry, thirsty, or hurting—regardless of background?

In this story, a man lies beaten and dying on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. A priest passes by—surely help has arrived. Yet he crosses to the other side. A Levite does the same. Both religious men fail to show mercy; they fail to be neighbours.

Then comes a Samaritan. The lawyer listening would have expected nothing good from this “half-breed.” But Jesus subverts expectations: the despised outsider becomes the model of neighbourly love. Jesus details the Samaritan’s six compassionate actions—he approached, bound wounds, poured oil, set the man on his animal, took him to an inn, cared for him, and paid for his stay.

Jesus asks, **“Which of these three was a neighbour to the man?”** The lawyer, unable to say “the Samaritan,” replies, “The one who showed mercy.” Jesus concludes, “Go and do likewise.”

To love God is to show mercy to those in need. Authentic life flows from loving God and loving others. The lawyer preferred abstract discussion; Jesus made it concrete and personal. It’s easy to debate poverty or hunger in theory while ignoring the hungry family or hurting person right in front of us.

Jesus shifted the focus from duty to love, from debate to action. Caring has a cost, but failing to care costs far more. The priest and Levite lost the chance to steward God’s gifts, to reflect His love, and to influence the world for good. The Samaritan’s single act of mercy has inspired sacrificial service worldwide for centuries.

Let’s allow God’s love melt our hearts today. Let it move us to demonstrate that love to our neighbours—near and far, lovely and unlovely. May we be a generation transformed by love, transforming others through it, and making a lasting difference in our world.