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Luke 9 – 12

“Lessons from a Good Samaritan”

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There’s a law in our country called “*The Good Samaritan Law*,” which protects people from being civilly liable when they provide emergency care to someone in need. It’s hard to imagine that there’s a need for a law to specifically protect those who are trying to give potentially life-saving aid to someone in trouble, but the fact is, it is necessary in our ever-increasingly litigious society.¹ There is also another law, by the same name, that has a vastly different meaning. This law is on the books in eight states,² requires a person to give aid to a stranger in need. It’s commonly known as “Good Samaritan: Duty to Rescue.” These laws are so-named because they’ve been adapted from the parable³ Jesus taught in **Luke 10**.

First, we need to get the background for the events of **Luke 10** by looking at the previous chapter, where we read that Jesus and his disciples were making their way from Galilee through Samaria to Jerusalem. In **Luke 10:25**, an “*expert in the law*”⁴ asks Jesus a question: “[W]hat must I do to inherit eternal life?” On the surface, this question seems to have the ring of sincerity, however, it’s actually a question asked with wrong motives, because **Luke 9:25a**, tells us that he did this “*to test Jesus*.” He didn’t really want to know the answer as much as he wanted to play a little game of “Stump Jesus.” As often is the case, Jesus answers a question with a question. Jesus’ response was, “You’re an expert in the law, *how do you read it?*” Being well acquainted with the Law, he quoted **Deuteronomy 6:5** and **Leviticus 19:18**: “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind*’ and, *Love your neighbor as yourself.*” So, why do all of Prophets and the Law hang on these two commandments? Because, if you really love God, you won’t sin against him; and if you really love your neighbor, you won’t sin against them.

¹ To learn more about a prominent case going forward in California, please use this link: http://www.foxnews.com/video-search/m/21714759/good_law_gone_bad.htm

² The eight states are Florida, Massachusetts, Ohio, Rhode Island, Minnesota, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

³ A parable is usually a short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/parable>. The Greek word is *paraballo* (para – beside, near / ballo – to throw), which could be described as a story thrown alongside a spiritual truth to illustrate that truth.

⁴ This man was not an expert in Roman law. He was probably a scribe who had a certain amount of expertise in the Mosaic Law.

Jesus told the man, “*You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.*” He, however, wasn’t satisfied with the reply because the Bible tells us that “*he wanted to justify himself,*” so he asks, “*Who is my neighbor?*” Unfortunately, he didn’t ask the right question, which should have been, “How can I do this, since I’m not able?”

This parable goes far beyond the idea that we need to be good people and help others in need. The focus of our study today is to see that Jesus is using this parable to teach us about defining love, eliminating prejudice and demonstrating mercy.

Defining Love

1. Jesus said in **John 13:34**, “*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*”
 - a. The only way this is possible is through a relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. This was a new command, because up until this time, the highest form of love was self-love.
3. The request to define who his neighbors were highlights the problem of prejudice in this man’s heart.
4. **Romans 13:8–10** says, “*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*”

Eliminating Prejudice

5. Jesus’ parable tells the story of a man who was on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, a road that descends approximately 3,000+ feet over a 17-mile distance.
 - a. In **Psalms 23:4**, the reference to the “*valley of the shadow death*” refers to this route.
6. This man, probably understood as being a Jew, is beaten, robbed and left for dead.
7. A priest comes upon this tragic scene and chooses to pass by on the other side of the road, only to be followed by a Levite who makes the same disturbing choice; both refusing to help a fellow Jew.
8. In a startling development to Jesus’ hearers, especially considering the deep-seated animosity between Samaritans and Jews, a “half-breed” Samaritan⁵ enters the story; a man, who shockingly, did the right thing!

⁵ The Jews considered Samaritans half-breeds because they were descended from the intermarriage between Jews and Assyrians, who took charge of Israel in 723BC. Samaria was in what we know today as The West Bank. The Samaritans were very much a closed society of approximately 1 million people in Jesus day, numbering only about 600 today. With regard to their religious

a. Jesus' own disciples dealt with prejudice. ([Luke 9:51–56](#))

9. [1 John 4:19–21](#) provides a Biblical perspective of the kind of Christ-like love we need to demonstrate.

Demonstrating Mercy

10. Jesus asks the tough question in [Luke 10:36](#): *“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”*

11. This man couldn't even bring himself to use the word Samaritan, he just referred to the *“one who had mercy.”*

12. Jesus simply told the man to *“[g]o and do likewise.”*

13. [Luke 6:23–36](#) says, *“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Luke 10:25–37](#) to provide an overview of today's study.
3. Briefly review and discuss the California case by using the link to the Fox News video archive to gain an understanding of the details.
4. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences with prejudice, in all its various forms (age, race, class, education, social position, employment, etc.).
5. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences with racism.
 - a. Be careful to point out that it's not only a white/black thing, but also can be Catholic/Protestant (Ireland), men/women, etc.
 - b. Read and discuss [Luke 9:51–56](#).

practices, they believed the first five books of the Old Testament, and they worshiped at Shechem on Mt. Gerzim, unlike “real” Jews who worshipped in Jerusalem.

- c. We may be witnesses to a greater healing of the long-term effects of racial prejudice in the United States, now that President Obama is in office and, hopefully, the Church will lead the way!
 - i. Be careful with this point, because the possibility exists that some may want to veer off course and turn the conversation into a political discussion.

- 6. The real question we need to ask ourselves is, “How do I live this way?”
 - a. Read **Romans 13:8–10** and **Luke 6:23–36**.
 - b. Spend time talking about ways in which Christians can live their lives so they will:
 - i. Define Christ-like love.
 - ii. Eliminate prejudice.
 - iii. Demonstrate mercy.

- 7. Read and discuss **John 13:34**. (This Scripture is the foundation for our Cornerstone Chapel Outreach Ministry.)
 - a. What does it look like when you love like the Lord loves?
 - b. What’s included in loving others?
 - i. Do you think sharing the Gospel with the unsaved is a part of loving others?
 - ii. What about meeting physical and temporal needs?

- 8. Close your time by allowing everyone in your group to: allow the Lord to search their heart to see if there is any prejudice/racism that needs to be dealt with (select someone to read this Scripture) reflect on **1 John 4:19–21**; see that they are to go beyond the concept of being a good person who does nice things for others, but to understand that the Lord is calling them to a different level of relationship with him that will change the way they love others (select someone to read this Scripture) reflect on **John 13:34**; ask the Lord to help them be agents of mercy and grace to people who are lost and hurting.