

The Good Samaritan

Family Service

Introduction

The Good Samaritan Again?

- A. I wanted to welcome into our service, in particular, this morning the Elementary Class (grades 1st thru 5th). We are happy to have you with us.
- B. Now before I read our text and pray, I should say a word as to why we are in the text we're in. For those of you who have been with us through the last weeks/years, you may have noticed we've suddenly here this morning gone backwards in our trek through Luke's gospel.
 - 1. Why are we looking at the parable of the Good Samaritan again back in [Luke 10](#)? I thought we were now moving into [Luke 16](#)?
- C. We most certainly are! But, for this Family Service, I pledged to follow along with our Mercy Hill Kids curriculum. The Preschool and Elementary Classes both use the Gospel Project curriculum and they are synced up together. This means that they both are looking at the same story with the same main points and things, just catered to their particular capacities.
 - 1. So right now, back in the Preschool Class, they are looking at the Good Samaritan.
- D. When approaching this Sunday, I was faced with a choice.
 - 1. I could either do something entirely different with the Elementary kids in here and they would just miss the lesson on this parable and carry on next week with the same stuff as the Preschool Class.
 - 2. Or, even though I preached on this parable a while back now, I could revisit it here this morning and, in so doing, keep your kids on track and maybe even emphasize a few critical ways we hope parents are utilizing the curriculum and things together as a family.
 - a. Obviously, I chose the latter of the two.

Partnering with Parents

- A. So let me quickly say a few things here to parents before we begin.
- B. The mission of Mercy Hill Kids is to partner with parents to reach and raise the next generation for Christ. We don't see ourselves as the chief evangelists or disciple-makers in your kids' lives. According to God's word, you are! And we exist to partner with you and help you in that.
- C. And this mission really influenced our choice of curriculum. I don't know if you know this, but every week we send your kids home with things that are designed to be taken up by you and used as tools

to engage them further. And because our Preschool and Elementary Classes are going through the same text and basic points, you can have one family discussion with your kids around the table regardless of age range and things.

1. Now, just so you're aware, the resources I'm referring to here are the Big Picture Card and the Activity Page. These are not just trading cards, and they're not just throwaway doodle pages. They have notes on them for you. There are discussion questions, ideas for family application, etc.
 - a. The hope is that you will take these up and use them. Take one night around the table and go deeper with your kids on this.

D. We do a few other things to try to help you with this.

1. In the Mercy Hill Newsletter we tell you what text we'll be teaching your kids and link you to a training video where one of the Gospel Project staff members actually explains the text to you and helps you see what it's all about.
 2. Then after every Sunday Service we send parents a follow-up email discussing what we covered with your kids that past Sunday and there you'll find links to video tutorials showing you how you might use the Big Picture and Activity Pages with your kids at home during the week.
- E. My challenge for you parents this week is actually read this, look at this, try this. And come back next week and let us know how it went—what questions you have, challenges you faced, encouragements God gave, etc.
- F. Please, I'm taking this much time in our service to discuss these things with you because we believe that these kids are our first mission field. God is calling, God is sending you. We want to help you along in that.
1. Mercy Hill Kids exists to partner with parents to reach and raise the next generation for Christ!

The Text

²⁵ And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" ²⁷ And he answered, "You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you

spend, I will repay you when I come back.’³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?”³⁷ He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.” (Luke 10:25–37)

Preparing for the Parable (vv. 25-28)

- A. Let me try to set up our time together this morning with a quick consideration of vv. 25-28. This is really that which provides background and context for the parable that’s coming later down in v. 30.
- B. The first thing we must be clear on is meant by a “lawyer” here. “And behold, a lawyer stood up . . .” (v. 25).
 - 1. A “lawyer” in this context is a man who is well versed in the law of the Moses, the Torah in particular, which is composed of the first five books of the Bible—Genesis thru Deuteronomy.
 - a. In other words, here is a guy who knows his Bible. Here’s what in Jesus’ day the Jews would’ve considered a good and honorable and important man. If any were seen as righteous before God, surely this man would be among the number.
- C. The initial question this lawyer asks is, at least on the surface of it, well and good: “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (v. 25). It is a question we all would do well to ask. Indeed, it is a question put in various forms all over the Scriptures:
 - 1. It is in a similar vein that the Philippian jailer cries out in Acts 16:30: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”
 - 2. Or when John the Baptist speaks of the coming Messiah and the day of wrath that is coming for those who refuse to repent and receive him, the crowds cry out: “What then shall we do?” (Luke 3:10).
 - 3. Or after the Spirit had fallen and Peter opened his mouth to proclaim the good news of Jesus, the crowds were cut to the heart and asked: “Brothers, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).
 - a. It really is a most important question. “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (v. 25). It presupposes the fall of man out of favor with God. And recognizes something of the desperate need we have to get back.
- D. I wonder if you have ever asked it? How do I get right with God? How do I get out of this realm of death and back into the realm of life with Him?
 - 1. Kids, I know that when you are young such questions feel irrelevant. Your life is just beginning. What do you mean inherit eternal life? I already have all the life I need!
 - a. But the grim reality is, no matter how much we should like to shelter you from this fact, this world has the curse of death hanging over it as a result of your sin just as much as mine.

- i. And so you too must reckon with this question: “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”—not just fleeting, momentary, earthly life . . . but life eternal. Life with God forevermore.
- E. Now, having said that, what we see here is that, even if you have asked this right question, it is possible to ask it in the wrong way.
 - 1. Certainly this man is Exhibit A of such a thing. For, while on the surface, the question appears honest enough, Luke gives us a little detail there in [v. 25](#) as to his motive, and it really unmasks him straightaway: “[And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test . . .](#)”
 - a. That is why he stands up. That is why he asks what he does. It is not a posture of humility and discipleship and learning, it is one of superiority. “I’m a lawyer for goodness sake. Let me see if this Jesus of Nazareth really measures up or if He’s a quack after all.”
- F. Jesus, of course, will have nothing of it. He quickly turns the test back on His proctor with a question of his own: “[What is written in the Law? How do you read it?](#)” ([v. 26](#)). It’s a subtle way of saying: “Get back in your place.”
- G. Well, this man here, to his credit responds rightly, though we will come to see he has a very distorted understanding of it all.
 - 1. What must you do to inherit eternal life? “[You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself](#)” ([v. 27](#)). To which Jesus responds: “[You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live](#)” ([v. 28](#)).
- H. Now, with this in the background, let’s move into [vv. 29ff.](#) and this parable of the Good Samaritan. Let me provide you with a brief outline for the rest of our time together. We shall look at: (1) Wrong Questions ([v. 29](#)); (2) Right Answers ([vv. 30-37](#)); and (3) Gospel Clues (throughout).

(1) Wrong Questions (v. 29)

And Who Is My Neighbor?

- A. The question this lawyer asks in [v. 25](#) is the right question asked with wrong motivation. But here in [v. 29](#) the question he asks is just simply wrong outright by all accounts. It’s the wrong question asked with wrong motivation: “[But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’](#)”
- B. The wrong motivation shows up there first: “[desiring to justify himself . . .](#)” What does this mean?
 - 1. Kids, if you’ve ever gotten in trouble and you’ve responded to your parents with something like—“I may have done this, but my brother did that. I may have messed up here, but I did something good earlier today”—then you know something of what it’s like to seek to justify yourself.

- a. It's a refusal to say: "I'm not all right. I'm not so good. I've done wrong. I need help. I need forgiveness." It's amazing how long it takes us to get to the point of saying: "I'm sorry." We often kick and fight and resist the notion.
 - i. And that is precisely what this man is doing here.
- C. And the way he is seeking to justify himself, to get out of admitting he's not living out what Jesus is calling him to here, is to try to get Jesus to define the terms: "If it is required of me that I love my neighbor as myself if I should hope to inherit eternal life, well then, who exactly is my neighbor?"
 - 1. You sense the falseness in this from the beginning, don't you? It's as if he's starting to feel something of the comprehensiveness and the weight of this call and he's trying desperately to wiggle free from it. He's trying to whittle it down into something manageable, something he feels like he's already doing.
 - a. The clear implication behind his question here is: "Okay, okay, I have to love my neighbor, but surely I don't have to love all people! Just tell me who these 'neighbors' of mine are and I guess I'll love them well enough."
- D. Kids, it's something like when your parents tell you not to "hit" your sibling, and then later when you get in trouble for pushing them, you say: "But I didn't hit them. You said not to hit them. You didn't say I couldn't push them, or trip them, or stick my tongue out at them. I didn't hit them. Isn't that good enough?!"
 - 1. Well, you know very well this isn't good enough. You know this isn't what your parents meant. They meant: Love your sibling, do good to your sibling, be kind from the heart to your sibling. But instead you defined the terms and reduced it to something small and manageable, something you could "obey" while truly disobeying in your heart.
- E. And that is precisely what is going on here. Adults play this game too. "God says love my neighbor, well, technically speaking, who is my neighbor?"
 - 1. If this is where you're at, you've missed it! You've gotten lost in the letter of the law and missed its spirit. This love is not meant for a select few who live next door to you. It's meant for all. It's meant to be the driving force of your life and move you towards all manner of people!
 - a. As Paul would say of his own mission and reason for being: "[T]he love of Christ controls [constrains; compels] us" (2 Cor 5:14). It's why we do what we do, say what we say, go where we go. Love!

(2) Right Answers (vv. 30-37)

Priests, Levites, and Samaritans

- A. So, when this lawyer, trying to justify himself, asks Jesus this wrong question in the wrong way, Jesus responds by telling him a story. And, in so doing, He's trying to lead him to the right way of thinking about all of this.
 - 1. Let's read through the parable Jesus tells bit by bit here and make sure we get the story straight and see just what Jesus is after.
- B. Look again at v. 30: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead." So the man is obviously in a desperate place.
- C. Jesus continues: "³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side."
 - 1. Stop. Priests and Levites are those men of Israel, Jews, who were set apart and called by God to serve Him in His temple there in Jerusalem. And, whether these men are here traveling toward the temple for duty or traveling back home from the temple after serving there, the outrage of this whole scene is the same.
 - a. Surely, we are right to think that a man who has given his life to serve God in the temple would be most ready and willing to serve a wounded traveler on the roadside. And yet both the Priest and the Levite "pass . . . by on the other side" (vv. 31b, 32b).
 - i. No doubt they justified themselves in their own mind. Perhaps they convinced themselves that it was more important for them to get home to their families or to the temple for their duties. Perhaps they were concerned for the ceremonial uncleanness they could incur if this man were in fact dead (cf. Lev 21). Whatever the case, they left this poor man there to die.
- D. But the story is not done: "³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'
- E. There are two things we need to notice here.
 - 1. The first is that this Samaritan would be despised by Jews and by the lawyer that Jesus was telling this parable to. They were tainted ethnically in that they were Jews who had intermarried with Gentiles. So they were a sort of half-breed, sell-out. And they were also tainted religiously. They had their own version of the Bible, and their own temple where they would worship.

- a. Kids, back when I was in elementary school, on the playground and things, we talked about something called “cooties”. It was a big deal. As far as the boys were concerned, all the girls had cooties. If they even touched you, you would fall ill with their disease. You had to stay away. They’re gross. And as far as the girls were concerned, it was not they but the boys who were contaminated. Yuck.
 - i. The long and short of it then, to the Jews, this Samaritan has cooties. He’s gross. He’s contaminated. And yet . . . Jesus here is saying he’s the one, not the Jews, who’s doing the right thing.
2. And that is the second thing we must notice. This man loves his neighbor well. “[W]hen he saw him, he had compassion.” (v. 33). And that compassion moved him, not away from this poor man, but towards him. His love compelled him.
 - a. He put his plans on hold.
 - b. He got low and bound up and washed this man’s wounds.
 - c. He set him on his own animal. “I’ll walk, you ride.”
 - d. He led him to an inn where the man could rest and revive.
 - e. He “took care of him” (v. 34).
 - f. He opened up his wallet.
 - g. He promised to come back and settle any accounts. This was not a momentary act of compassion. He was committed to this man’s recovery.
 - h. And he did all of this for a man who commentators agree was most certainly a Jew—a man who, were he in good health, would’ve considered him an enemy.
 - i. He was an elementary school boy doing it for an elementary school girl. Or an elementary school girl doing it for an elementary school boy. “You hate my guts and yet hear I am to help you.” He was a good neighbor.

Reframing the Question

- A. And this is where Jesus is going to go next. Jesus comes out of this parable with a question for the Lawyer (and for us): “Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” (v. 36).
 1. Now, did you catch what Jesus did there? Just like with this Lawyer’s first question back up in v. 25, he takes it and kind of throws it back at him. Only in this second instance, if you noticed, he reframed the question entirely. He put a different spin on it.
 - a. The question at first was: “[W]ho is my neighbor?” As in: “Jesus, define for me that little group I am supposed to love as myself, and I’ll do it so I can be justified.”
 - b. But here, at the end, the question Jesus is trying to get Him to ask is not: “Who is my neighbor?”, but “Am I a neighbor?” He flips it on him.
- B. Do you see the difference here? The former asks: “How much do I have to do?” The latter asks: “How much can I do?” The former is focused on doing what’s required and no more. The latter is excited to go above and beyond!

1. If you are asking the first question, you're already off the track. You're still trying to justify yourself. You're trying to make the call of God manageable so you can feel justified and righteous even while your heart is all wrong and pursuing all manner of sin.
2. But if you're asking the second question, it means the grace of God is starting to take hold. You know you've already been justified freely in Christ, loved in Christ, and that love is starting to break out of your life towards others!

(3) Gospel Pictures

Jesus Is the Samaritan

- A. And I suppose this is where we'll draw things to a close. You see, what this parable is for us at the end of the day is actually a profound picture of the gospel. It portrays to us something of the good news of Jesus and what He's done for us in His life, death, and resurrection.
- B. I think as we read this parable, one of the errors we can make is we think that we ought to come out straightaway and be like the Samaritan. That's certainly what Jesus seems to be saying: *"You go, and do likewise"* (v. 37).
 1. Those of us who know our Bibles, know there is more to all of this than that. Yes, we must go and do likewise if we are to inherit eternal life. But no we cannot do such things in and of ourselves, by our own power and will. And history, both biblical and secular, has borne this out over and over again.
 - a. We see the need to get there, but the step is not one to one. There is something that must happen in between.
- C. What the Scriptures make plain is that if we are to learn to love others in this way, we must first come and let Jesus love us in this way. John puts it most succinctly in **1 John 4:19**: *"We love because he first loved us."* God's love for us enables our love for others.
- D. What this means is that the Samaritan here, before he is a picture of what we are to be, is actually first a picture of what Jesus already is for us!
 1. You see ours is not first to see ourselves there with the Samaritan but rather to see ourselves there with the man on the ground, the man in the dirt, the man in desperate need of God's mercy and compassion and love.

Amplified in Every Way

- A. What we have in this parable, before anything else, then, is a picture of the gospel. And the astounding thing is that, while the parable itself is beautiful picture of God's love for us in Jesus, the reality that comes to us in the gospel is incomparably greater.
 1. Every little detail we pick up here in the parable is amplified as we connect the dots forward to the gospel of Jesus.

B. Consider this with me:

1. In the parable, this man was a helpless victim of robbers. But you and I are not merely victims—we are willing rebels against God.
2. In the parable, this man is said to be “half dead” (v. 30). But in [Eph 2:1](#), Paul tells us that spiritually we are not half dead but fully “dead in . . . [our] trespasses and sins.”
3. In the parable, we’re told that the Samaritan man was simply journeying from one location to the next. But in the gospel, we are told that Jesus journeyed from heaven to earth—that He left the glory that He had with His Father before the world ever was to come in love for a people who had rejected Him and would reject Him yet again and again.
4. In the parable, we’re told that the Samaritan bound up this man’s wounds. But in the gospel, we learn that Jesus doesn’t just bind up our wounds, He bears them.
5. In the parable, this Samaritan pours out oil and wine to refresh him. But in the gospel, Jesus pours out His blood. We don’t need to try to justify ourselves like this lawyer any longer. For as Paul tells us in [Rom 5:9](#): “we have now been justified by his blood . . .”
6. In the parable, the Samaritan puts the wounded man on his animal’s back. But in the gospel, Jesus carries us on His own.
7. In the parable, the Samaritan leads the wounded man to an inn. But in the gospel, we learn that Jesus is taking us to His Father’s house! “In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?” ([John 14:2](#)).
8. In the parable, the Samaritan pays for the man’s needs with two denarii (or two day’s wages). But in the gospel, Jesus pays for our needs with His own life.
9. In the parable, the Samaritan commits to return for the man and to settle any accounts with the innkeeper. But in the gospel, Jesus commits to return for us not to merely settle our accounts but to freely give us our share of His inheritance in glory.

C. Jesus is Himself the essence of this neighbor love called for in this parable. He takes it all to its most ultimate and sublime expression.

1. And if we would own up to our place with that man in the dirt and open ourselves up to the love of God for us in Christ, we would find ourselves able to go out and do likewise more and more!