

PM Luke 10:25-37

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Preacher: Rev Thomson McKenzie

[0 : 00] taken from Luke, Luke chapter 10, reading from verses 25 to 37. Luke chapter 10, verses 25 to 37.

So here Jesus has sent out his disciples, and the 72 of them have returned. He's been teaching them, and he's speaking with them, when he's approached by a young lawyer.

Well actually we don't know he's a young lawyer, that's me at my age that's putting that word in there. But he's approached by a lawyer. So here we are, chapter 10, verse 25.

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said to him, What is written in the law?

How do you read it? And he answered, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your strength, with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.

[1 : 20] And he said to him, You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live. But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

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.

Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. 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. 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.

[2 : 41] Which of these three do you think proved by neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers? He said, The one who showed him mercy.

And Jesus said to him, You go and do likewise. Thanks be to God for the reading of his holy word, and to his glory be the praise and honour forever.

Amen. Let's briefly bow our heads in prayer. Father, as we come to study your word, may the words of my mouth, and the thoughts of our hearts and minds, be acceptable in your sights.

These things we ask through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our Redeemer. Amen. This evening, I'm going to look at the passage, Luke 10, 25 to 37.

Probably much better known to us all, is the parable of the Good Samaritan. Tonight, I'm going to give it a slightly different title. The parable of the five questions.

[3 : 49] It's probably one of the best known parables that Jesus tells. It's so well known, knowing that the term has passed into our language as an acronym for an act of goodwill, or a caring and kind gesture.

It's so well known, that, we'll actually begin, a wee bit tonight, about looking at what the parable is not. Because, it's so well known that, things have started to grow up around the parable, about what its meaning actually is.

And, these are erroneous. Then, we'll take a quick look, at the five questions that I've mentioned.

And how Jesus uses, those five questions, to get the point of his teaching across.

And the meaning, for each of us. For you, and for me. Too often, the actions of the Good Samaritan, are seen as the route to salvation.

Do good. Lead a good life. Be kind. And when it's your turn to cross the Rainbow Bridge, everything will be taken care of.

[5 : 01] You'll go straight to heaven. And life will be happy forevermore. That, that, is a wrong interpretation, of this passage.

This passage is not saying, that we do good works, and by those good works, we have salvation. Often, there's meanings read into it, that distort, Jesus' teachings.

Sometimes, it's suggested, that the Samaritan, is Jesus himself. And yes, we can see, some similarities. He cares, for the injured, for the weak, and for the needy.

And the Samaritan, does the same. He cares, for the injured, the weak, and the abandoned. We can see, the idea, that, we, are, the, person, who, has fallen, amongst the robbers.

We're the one, who's in need of aid, and in need of rescue. But again, that, is a misinterpretation, of this parable. Rather, this parable, is about, the appropriate behaviour, of believers.

[6 : 16] And also, a message, for those, who haven't yet, committed themselves, to Christ. It starts, with, the young lawyer, interrupting, Jesus, as he speaks, with his, disciples.

They've just, returned, from the mission, that he'd sent them on, to go, and preach, that the gospel, or the kingdom of God, was at hand. They've come back, they're meeting with Jesus, and then, the young lawyer, appears.

And he asks, the first, of the questions. Quite simple, question. What shall I do, to earn, an eternal life? So here, we see, the, the, the lawyer, quoting from, Deuteronomy 6, chapter 5, sorry, chapter 6, verse 5.

The, the, the, the, the, the, the, sorry, getting ahead of myself. So, here we have, Jesus, sorry, here, we have, the lawyer, asking Jesus, about what must he do, to, inherit eternal life.

He's, asking, Jesus, and in the process, he's trying to, trip Jesus up. He's trying to, find out, what Jesus really believes, and is there a chance, of actually, trapping him, as a false teacher.

[7 : 46] But Jesus is aware, of the intentions, of the young lawyer. And he turns around about, and asks, two questions in return. First question, in verse 26 is, what is written in the law, and how do you read it?

Really, quite a simple, question. First one, what is written in the law? What does the, the law say? The second one, is much more important.

How, do you read it? Rather, so you know what the law says, but how do you interpret it yourself? The lawyer, knows this stuff, and he replies, in verse 27, 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 neighbour, as yourself.

So, first of all, he quotes from, the Old Testament, from Deuteronomy 6, 5, in the sense of, you are to love your God, with all your being, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.

And then he also, refers, to Leviticus 19, to love his neighbour, as himself. Jesus says, that's correct, but, it's not sufficient, just to know it.

[9 : 16] As I've touched on in the past, he has to also, experience it for himself, and live, the knowledge, which he has. He's got to put his knowledge, into practice.

So Jesus says, correct, now go, and do, as you've said. Do this, and you will live, Jesus says. But a lawyer, is sharp.

He sees, Jesus challenging him, to live up, to his answer. And the problem, is, is one thing, to know what you're supposed to do, it's another, to actually go, and put that into practice, at times.

Because the law, is difficult to fulfil. The Jews, had taken God's law, and turned him, into a complex act, of rituals, and rights.

For example, in Deuteronomy 14, 21, it instructs us, that you shall not, boil a young goat, in its mother's milk.

[10 : 30] Quite, straightforward, instruction, of what we have not to do. But under Jewish law, this became so elaborate, that it actually means, that we don't serve, in kosher food, under Jewish law, you don't serve, meat, and dairy, in the same meal, to ensure, that there's no contamination.

The spirit, of the law, has been lost. And man, has added, his own interpretation, into how it should be practiced. And so we see, that the young lawyer, has two ways, of responding, to, Jesus' answer, to go, and do, what he's just said.

He could have, said to Jesus, but this is too difficult, for me to do. I cannot, fulfill, all, of God's laws. He could have, repented, of the mistakes, that he has made, in the past, and the mistakes, that he will make, in the future.

And asked, Jesus to guide him, in the way, that he could, come to eternal life. Could say, that it's not possible, to do this.

And is there another way? After all, we see in John 3, for example, that he shows, Nicodemus, a new way, to salvation. That, he has to be born again.

[11 : 59] Has to repent, of his sins, and put his old life, behind him. But no. Trying to justify himself, he says to, Jesus, in verse 29, but designed, to justify himself, he says to Jesus, and who is my neighbour?

So, he tries to, show his own pride, and to justify, his way of life. The lawyer, chose, to question Jesus, about, who really is, his neighbour?

He was looking, to be vindicated. So Jesus, tells the story, of the good Samaritan. A story, which we've all heard, and which I'm sure, he's didn't hear, for the first time tonight.

Of a man, who, goes on a journey, from Jerusalem, down to Jericho. It's known, as a treacherous road, where, there is much danger, of being robbed, and being assaulted.

Sure enough, the man travelling, on his own, is an easy target, for the robbers. He's robbed, he's stripped naked, and he's left to die. In the man's desperation, he sees, hope, as a priest, comes down the road.

[13 : 25] What better person, could you want, than a man of God? This is a man, who will have compassion, and will care for me. What do we find? The man is actually, more concerned, about his own well-being, than his fellow man.

He doesn't just pass by, but he crosses the road, to make sure, that he's a distance away. Just in case, there's any robbers, lurking in that dark corner, where the man's lying, I'll just cross over here, and give it a wide berth.

Man's hopes are shattered. His health is failing. He's becoming weak. But, hope, continues to spring, as he sees a Levite, coming towards him.

Ah, again, the opportunity, that aid, may be at hand. And what does he experience? Once more, the man of God, the man who serves in the temple, crosses the road, makes sure he gives him a wide berth, and passes on by.

Now, there's been, many reasons, given over the years, for, why, the priest, and the Levite, the servants in the temple, would be worried, about, getting too close.

[14 : 46] Why, would they want to make sure, that they gave him, a wide berth? Well, both were going down, and, often it's thought, that it's because, they were going to serve, in the temple.

And because, they were going to serve, in the temple, they didn't want, to become unclean. That would mean, if they, had went to the man's aid, and he was already dead, they'd be seen, under Jewish law, as being unclean.

So, if they're going to serve, in the temple, they can't risk, going to the aid, of the, the robbed, man, in case, he's already dead.

But that's wrong. Well, give us three reasons, why it's wrong. One, both, we're told, are going down the road. They're going from Jerusalem, down to Jericho. So, they're going away, from the temple. It means, that they've already, done their, their stint. They've already, did their time of service. And they're travelling, back to Jericho. And it means, that if, the traveller, had been dead, then, they didn't need to worry, about being unclean.

[15 : 56] Because they'd, done their time of service. But even if, they become unclean, after seven days, they would have the opportunity, to do the appropriate, rituals and rites, that would, make them be seen, again, clean, in the eyes of the law.

And seven days, would have gave them, plenty of time, before they were next due, to go, and serve once more, in the temple. The truth is, they simply, lack compassion.

their desire, to care for themselves, trumped that, of, their fellow man. And we can probably think, what, the, Jesus hearers, were thinking to themselves, at this time.

They're probably thinking, that, Jesus is an axe, to, to grind, with, the religious leaders, of the day. After all, this isn't the first time, and it's not the last time, that he comes into conflict, with religious leaders.

It's not the first time, that he criticises them. So, they've been fairly happy, with his story so far. But the next bit, of the parable, is something, that the Jews, would have found, almost, unbelievable.

[17 : 15] Almost, intolerable. And it's certainly, something, that they wouldn't have expected. The traveller, is lying there, having been robbed, and beaten.

Possibly, on the verge of death. Read it in verse 33. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.

This would have been, an unbelievable statement, for the Jews, at the time. A Samaritan, stopped, and had compassion, on a Jewish traveller.

The Samaritans, to the Jews, were outcasts. They were a people, that they would have, nothing to do with. And this was the man, who would, stop, and give care, to the Jewish traveller.

And his compassion, doesn't just stop, when he comes, and tends to the man's wounds, puts him in his beast, and takes him to an inn. But then, the next day, as he travels on, he pays for the man's care, and promises, that he will settle, any extra cost, when he returns.

[18 : 47] The Jewish heroes, by this time, heads would be spinning. A Samaritan, is he real? A good Jew, wouldn't even look, in the Samaritans. And here Jesus is, telling them, that the man, who would come to the rescue, was a Samaritan.

They wouldn't even, pass through. A Jew, wouldn't even pass through, Samaria. They would rather, walk around it, and spend, an extra two or three days travelling. Because, Samaria lay between, the province of Galilee, and the province, Judea, in Jerusalem.

So, if people were having to travel up to the temple, rather than travelling direct, through Samaria, they would actually, go round about. It's a bit like, say tonight, he decided to go to France.

The easiest way, would be, to drive, straight down the 74, through England, and onto the channel, very, or through the tunnel.

Or up to Glasgow, fly straight over, English, airspace, and land in France. But, imagine, deciding, that you're never going to go through England.

[20 : 04] Instead, you need to go to Ireland, travel south, and then get to Long Ferry Ride. Or, travel to Scandinavia, Central Europe, and drive down, to France.

That's what it was like, for the, the Jews. They would rather, take that long journey, than pass through Samaria. But, that is the person, who came to the rescue.

And Jesus, now asks, the final question, in verse 36. Verse 36, sorry.

Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbour, to the man who fell, among the robbers? Jesus, turns the question, from, who is my neighbour, to, who acted, like a neighbour?

To first century, first century, hearers, the difference in the question, is massive. It really, turns things, on its head. If you remember, the lawyer, earlier, had responded, in two parts, when asked, what the law said.

[21 : 21] He said, that he must love your God, with all your heart. In verse 27, you shall love your God, Lord your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and secondly, and your neighbour, as yourself.

Remember, how we'd said, that the religious leadership, of the Jews, had built a series of rules, and regulations, regarding, how the law, and the scriptures, had to be fed, had to be read.

Well, the same happens here. The second part, of the lawyer's answer, distorts scripture, and the reply comes, from Leviticus, 19, in verse 18.

It says, you shall not take, vengeance on, or bear a grudge, against the sons, of your own people, but love your neighbour, as yourself.

I am the Lord. So the Lord, our God, has been quite clear, that, we have to love, our neighbours. There's no, disputing in that.

[22 : 34] But religious leaders, had formed this, into, a particular, group of people, were to be your neighbours. And they would be concerned, about, those only, who fitted that group.

And that was, it was to be those, who were the same as them. Their neighbours, were to be, their fellow Jews, and Israelites. And if you were, an Israelite, then really, you didn't matter.

Because you were seen, as not being, a person of God. Remember, the Jews, seen themselves, as a chosen people, chosen by God. And before, we get too pious, are we really, any different today?

Do we, not today, make up the same, restrictions, and rules, as the Jewish leaders? Where we, see ourselves, as being important, or, those who belong, to our groups?

Do we care, as much for the foreigner, as for ourselves, and our people? Do we care, as much, for others, as we care, for our own families?

[23 : 57] We see, the constant headlines, on the television, that suggests, that actually, we may speak, of compassion, for others. But our, concern is about, what we have, and holding on, to what we have.

Think about it. We hear, a constant barrage, on the wireless, on the TV, about stopping the boats. About stopping, the immigrants, and for those, who are fleeing here, for protection, and need. Even the new, President of the United States, talks about, immigration, and stopping, the migrants. Stopping, those who come, out of need, out of need, for protection, and yet, at times, out of need, for financial, security.

It's tempting, to ensure, the well-being, of our own, and ourselves, to the exclusion, of others, who are different, and from outsider groups.

The fifth question, moves us from, who is, our neighbour, to who, acted, like our neighbour. It moves the focus, for believers, to, the practicalities, of their life.

[25 : 17] It moves us to, does our faith, transfer, into actions? Or, do we simply say, one thing? Read scripture, read it, hear it, but then, go on, a journey, of self-protection.

Remember, we're not, saved by good deeds, that's not what, we're talking about here. We're not talking, about, going out, and doing good deeds, to earn ourselves, salvation. We're saved, simply, by faith, in Christ alone.

But all, who are saved, all, who know, the grace, of God, in their life, should be transformed. And the Holy Spirit, in their lives, should enable us, to bear fruit, in their lives.

And that means, that we should, have a care, and compassion, for others. If you remember, the parable, of the sower, or rather, the parable, of the soils.

Are you, the soil, that throws up, seed, and also, throws up, the weeds, and the thorns, that strangle, out, the seed.

[26 : 30] The seed, is choked out, because it comes, the person, becomes so concerned, with the concerns, of this world. Or are you, like the, good soil, that produces, an abundant harvest.

people, who, follow God's word, and put it, into practice. And just care, for one another, and for the foreigner, and the outsider, shows God's, loving practice.

If you think about it, a heart, that follows God's, desires, is one, that follows, in his word, in his commands.

One, that follows, our own desires, is one, that goes far, from God. The road, to our own desires, is a road, that leads away, from God, to death, and destruction.

It's like that road, from Jerusalem, down to Jericho. It's a constant, downhill gradient, all the way. It goes past Jericho, and goes all the way, to the Dead Sea.

[27 : 43] So, is our way, if we turn our backs, in Christ's teachings. If we turn our back, in Christ's teachings, then, we obviously, have not, taken it personally, to heart.

He has provided, for us, an example, of how we have to live. And if we are transformed, by the Holy Spirit, so, that should be, reflected in our lives.

Our, future, is only secure, if our faith, is in Christ. And we must show, that, our salvation, has fruit, that it, is put into action.

As believers, we must open our eyes, to see, those who are in need. And to reach out, and offer, assistance to them.

And at times, that will involve, the risks, that the Samaritan, himself, placed himself at. The people of God, the priest, and the Levite, pass by, on the other side, making sure, they were far, from harm's way.

[29 : 03] We don't have, that choice. If we are to walk, in God's ways, then we have to, have a direct, care for others. If you look, at the Good Samaritan, we see that, he, sorry, if you look, at the story, of the Good Samaritan, we see that, a traveller, has made, bad choices.

Number one, he decided, to travel alone. He decided, to travel on the road, which we knew, was dangerous. But he still, was deserving, of the Good Samaritan's, compassion, and care.

How much more, are we, if of value to God, are in the same boat? We, regularly, make wrong choices. Some of them minor, some of them major.

But in those, wrong choices, we so often, turn away, from God, our help, and our saviour. But even as we, turn away from him, in his grace, he offers us, the chance of redemption, the chance, of a new life, through the gift, of his son.

We're not told, how the lawyer responds, but he's simply, sent, off to, go, and do likewise.

[30 : 32] It's a bit of a cliffhanger. But it doesn't need, to be a cliffhanger, for us. If we don't, already know, Christ is our saviour, we still, have the opportunity, to accept him, and come, to a new life.

If we have, accepted Christ, as our saviour, we have the opportunity, to take, his teachings, and turn, those teachings, into reality.
to show, his love in action, and to transform, the world, that he has placed us in. That others, may come to know, his son, is their saviour.
Let's bow our heads, and give thanks, for the gift, that he has given us, and for the challenge, that lies ahead of us.