

LOVE THE LAND: WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

November 19, 2017

INTRODUCTION

The story of the Good Samaritan is one of the most well-known stories in the Bible. Even in our culture, hospitals are named “Good Samaritan”, news stories feature people who act as “Good Samaritans”, and most of our states have “Good Samaritan Laws” which provide basic legal protection for those who assist a person who is injured or in danger. It’s a great story! But it’s more than that...Jesus told it to answer an important question many of us have: “Who is my neighbor?”

SCRIPTURE

²⁵On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
²⁶“What is written in the Law?” He replied. “How do you read it?” ²⁷He answered, “‘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.’” ²⁸“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” ²⁹But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³²So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’ ³⁶“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” ³⁷The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Luke 10:25-37

GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What was the kindest thing a stranger did for you? How did this make you feel?
2. Read Luke 10:25-37. What was the lawyer’s (expert in the law) question, and where did Jesus send him for the answer? What do his answers indicated about his knowledge of God’s commands?
3. Are you surprised with the answer to “*what must I do to inherit eternal life*”? If you were to be asked that question, would this be your response?
4. What does the follow-up question reveal about the lawyer’s heart?
5. On Sunday, Aaron stated that the lawyer was looking to do the bare minimum expected from him. How do you think God views those who do the “bare minimum”? Do you ever feel like you’re doing the “bare minimum”? If you do, why?
6. In Jesus’ story of the Good Samaritan, why do you think the priest and the Levite did not feel morally obligated to help? Is there ever a good reason to not help someone in need?

Study Questions for Community Groups

7. Jews and Samaritans did not get along. Though there are many complex reasons why, for the Jews it boiled down to prejudice: not only did the Samaritans have mixed ethnicity, they also had a mixed religion. Jesus’ use of a Samaritan as the one who helped (while two religious Jewish men passed by) would have been outrageous and offensive to the lawyer and any other Jewish people who were listening. Why would Jesus choose this character as the hero of the story?

APPLICATION

Who is your neighbor? Aaron challenged you to find this out by starting in your own neighborhood. What are the names of those who live around you? Where do they work? Do they have children? Start with just one family – have a conversation that ends with you inviting them to a meal in the next few weeks. Open your home and heart and listen to their story. BE a great neighbor.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

The Mosaic Law had love for God and neighbor at its center (Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Leviticus 19:18). The Ten Commandments divide into two categories – how to love God, and how to love your neighbor. Read Exodus 20:1-17, and then fill out the chart below. List whether the commandment shows how to love God, or how to love your neighbor, and then write out as many ways to do this that come to mind. Consider Matthew 5:21-28 as you write your answers. (The first has been started as an example; please add your own answers.)

COMMAND	GOD OR NEIGHBOR	HOW I CAN DO THIS
<i>1. You shall have no other gods before Me</i>	GOD	Submit to God Trust in Him, not \$
<i>2. You shall not make idols.</i>		
<i>3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.</i>		
<i>4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.</i>		
<i>5. Honor your father and your mother.</i>		
<i>6. You shall not murder.</i>		
<i>7. You shall not commit adultery.</i>		
<i>8. You shall not steal.</i>		
<i>9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.</i>		
<i>10. You shall not covet.</i>		