

“Mercy to All” Luke 10:25-37

When we think about the parable of the Good Samaritan, most of us probably think about helping a stranger, or more specifically helping a stranger in need. That idea is certainly a key aspect, but it is not the primary thrust of Jesus' message to the lawyer & consequently, to us. The main encouragement is simply this:

I. Be a neighbor

- The lawyer wanted to justify himself. He wanted to justify his current view and current practice, in extending love to a certain group of people. He was looking for manageable righteousness.
- In short, he wanted to put limits on his responsibility to love his neighbor. So he asks the question: “And who is my neighbor?”
- After telling the parable, Jesus turns his question on its head. Though the lawyer wanted justification for who should be considered a neighbor, Jesus only answers that question indirectly. The thrust of the parable is found in **Verses 36-37**.
- Jesus asks the lawyer, “Which of these three, do you think, proved *to be a neighbor* to the man who fell among the robbers? [The lawyer] said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said, “You go, and do likewise.” Jesus says, just go and *be a neighbor* whenever you are needed.
- The Lawyer was looking to limit love. Jesus was looking to liberate love. Jesus establishes love without restriction.

Question: Do you limit your love? Or do you love without limits? Jesus says the way of the kingdom is to love without limits.

II. Be a neighbor to everyone

- We would expect the priest and Levite to be the first to come to the rescue, but Jesus exposes them as those who seek to insulate themselves from the needs of others.
- We, like the priest and the Levite, need to reread the words found in **Hosea 6:6: “For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgement (or knowledge) of God rather than burnt offerings.”** (NIV)
- If Jesus' hearers would have been *surprised* by the response of these religious leaders, they would be *shocked* by what they heard next. A Samaritan is the last person Jews would expect Jesus to lift up as an exemplary neighbor.
- Jesus heightens the effect of the story by having the Samaritan, who would not be considered a neighbor, actually being a neighbor to teach the Jews who their neighbors really are.
- Who is my neighbor? Jesus answers: “EVERYONE!” “Anyone in need!”
- When God calls us to love our neighbor we are to *love without discrimination*.
- Love sees beyond skin tone, personal preferences, and one's socio-economic background. Love does not extend friendship and mercy to only those people who live in our neighborhood, work at the same company, and scored in the same percentile on the SAT.
- God's love calls us to love all people. God's love calls us to eradicate the category of “non-neighbor.”

III. Be a neighbor to everyone by showing mercy

- After re-examining this parable, it seems truer to the text to call the Samaritan the “Merciful Samaritan rather than the “Good Samaritan.”

- To show mercy is to give of oneself in order to help someone in need.
 - How do we see this in the passage? What does the Samaritan do? There are eight actions in all:
- 1) **He had compassion (33).**
 - i. Compassion “implies a deep feeling of sympathy” or pity – Liefeld
 - ii. Compassion drives us to merciful action. When someone possesses compassion, they become acutely concerned about the condition of those in need.
 - iii. Matthew 9:36 tells us that **“When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”**
 - iv. When you see needs around you, does your heart break? Is your heart moved to action out of a desire to see that person flourish?
 - 2) **He went to him (34).**
 - i. People in need, need people to go to them. Love takes the first step. The ministry of mercy moves toward others. One of the greatest hindrances to the advance of God’s mission today is the mentality that people will come to us.
 - ii. We must go to them! **“As the Father has sent me, even so am I sending you.” (John 20:21)** This is the essence of what it means to be missional. Jesus has given us a mission to live out in our different spheres of influence.
 - 3) **He bound his wounds (34).**
 - i. Here he begins to meet his physical needs. The man was beaten and bleeding. He needed medical care.
 - 4) **He poured oil and wine on him (34).**
 - i. The wine would have had a medicinal effect to disinfect his wounds and the oil would have provided some measure of comfort to him as he laid there in pain.
 - 5) **He loaded him on his animal (34).**
 - i. He took his own resources and put them to work for the one in need.
 - ii. True love, merciful love is not preoccupied how much it is going to cost. The merciful are ready to sacrifice for the sake of others.
 - 6) **He took him to an inn and cared for him (34).**
 - 7) **He paid for his stay and provided extra money for him to recover (35).**
 - 8) **He indicated that he would follow up.**
 - i. It is often in those moments of follow up that relationships deepen and further opportunities to display and declare the gospel surface.

The merciful Samaritan lives out 1 John 3:17-18: **“But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.” (1 John 3:17-18)** Do you see how radically others-centered the Samaritan is? The self-consumed will not extend mercy to others.

- People are hurting in this city. People have real needs. If you ever ride the bus or the train, you can see it on the faces of so many. God, help us to open our eyes to see the need around us.
- Don't think you have to give \$ in order to extend mercy. How about lending a helping hand of service? How about lending a listening ear? How about lifting up a prayer for that person in need, perhaps with that person in need? Be in ready position to meet needs around you this week. Be ready to extend mercy to those who need mercy.

“The one who showed mercy (the Samaritan) risked his safety, destroyed his schedule, and became dirty and bloody through personal involvement with a needy person of another race and social class. Are we as Christians obeying this command personally? Are we as a church obeying this command corporately?” (Keller, 11)