

The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

MEMORY VERSE

MATTHEW 5:7-8

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Three gifts (two worthless gifts wrapped beautifully and one valuable/desirable gift wrapped shabbily) and as many small prizes (stickers, pencils, erasers, etc.) as the number of children in your class.

As many papers and pencils or crayons as the number of children in your class.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

You Can't Tell a Book by Its Cover!

Prepare three gifts. For two of the gifts put something completely worthless like a rock or a stick into a small box. Wrap these as beautifully as you can. In the third box put something special like a piece of candy or a toy. Wrap this package as shabbily as possible; the object is to make it look completely undesirable.

Pick three volunteers from your class and have them choose and open their gifts. The shabbily wrapped package should be the last chosen. After the contents are revealed, explain to the class that “you can't always tell a book by its cover.” In today's lesson we will learn that help sometimes comes from the least expected place.

Give the child who got the special surprise the privilege of passing out the small prizes.

LESSON TIME!

Have you ever had something hard like a baseball or a stick hit you right between the eyes? It sure hurts, doesn't it? After the pain goes away and we gather our senses, we become very focused. The first thing that comes to our mind is how did I let that happen and why was I not more careful? In our lesson today, a lawyer gets smacked right between the eyes with a hard truth. **Jesus wants us to show love and mercy toward others.**

Sometimes as Christians we become so comfortable and satisfied with our attitude and surroundings that we lose our desire to live a life pleasing to God. We will learn that it is very easy to be religious without having the heart of God towards others as this lawyer did. Let's look at our lesson and see what Jesus teaches this lawyer and us, about having a heart of compassion for others.

LUKE 10:25-26

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"

A lawyer in Jesus' day was an expert in the Law of Moses. His life was dedicated to studying it thoroughly and teaching it to others. This lawyer was very familiar with the Word of God; he would seem like a very religious man if we saw him. He was a man with a lot of head knowledge, but his heart was far from God.

The lawyer had no interest in the truth; he was just looking to start a fight with Jesus. It was his intention to trap and test Jesus. This man's pride made his heart insensitive toward God and others.

Though this man had wrong motives in desiring to trap Jesus, he does ask the greatest question that can be asked, "What can I do to inherit eternal life?" He had thought that somehow he could do something to become acceptable before a righteous and holy God and receive a place in heaven with Him forever. In other words, he wanted to know what works (things) he could do to become holy and receive eternal life. But he failed to realize he could not do anything other than trust Jesus for salvation.

Jesus lovingly turns this lawyer back to God's Word, "What is written in the Law?" Through God's Word, this man will see the reflection of his heart. It is important to know what God's Word says, but it is much more important to obey it.

LUKE 10:27-28

So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'"

And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

The lawyer's answer is perfect. If anyone wanted to get to heaven by doing things, this was it. If someone were to perfectly love God with all of his heart, soul, strength and mind, and his neighbor as himself, he would meet God's standard of perfection. Can you imagine being able to live so that every thought, word, and action or motive was pleasing to God? Would that be very difficult? NO! It would be impossible!

Jesus was pleased with his answer; "Do this, and you will live." It seems as though the lawyer remained silent for a moment. What do you do when you realize that you have not been perfect?

We cannot do all of those things to be perfect. It is impossible. When we realize our sinful condition, we gratefully rejoice for the wonderful salvation that God provided through His Son. We do not have to try to be perfect. We must simply believe on Jesus to save us (John 3:16). It is His righteousness that is put to our account, and we can be forgiven.

LUKE 10:29

But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

The lawyer's response should have been to ask, "How can I do this? I am not able. I need help." But instead of asking Jesus for help, he feels like he is on trial and tries to justify himself against the implications of Jesus' words. He goes on the defensive and raises a legal question to muddy the water; "...who is my neighbor?" In other words, he was asking Jesus who he was responsible for loving.

Because of the religious leaders' manipulation of the Law, they felt that they did not have to love the Gentiles or the Samaritans. They had redefined the meaning of neighbor because they did not want to consider these "heathens" and "half-breeds" neighbors. The Jews hated the Samaritans.

Jesus loved everyone the same, and His love was far deeper and greater than we could ever love on our own. As a Christian, His love can work through us as we open our hearts to Him. **Jesus wants us to show love and mercy toward others.** When we do this, others will see Jesus living in us.

LUKE 10:30-32

Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

"Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

"Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.

Most priests lived in Jericho, which was not too far from Jerusalem. When it was their time to serve in the Temple, they would travel to Jerusalem. There was constant traffic between these two cities. The road everyone traveled was known as the Bloody Way. Everyone who traveled it knew of the dangers they would encounter from robbers on this steep and windy road.

Jesus tells a story about an ordinary man, probably Jewish, who had been robbed, beaten, and left for dead. Think about how he looked in that horrible condition. In one minute his life is in desperate need of someone to show compassion to him.

A priest came along. Surely if you wanted anyone to find you in that condition, it would be a priest. You would think a priest, of all people, would be willing to help someone in need. But this priest ignored his needs and avoided the man in a merciless way. This priest had a great title, with great head knowledge of God's Word and His love and mercy, but only a tiny heart that felt no concern for others. **Jesus wants us to show love and mercy toward others.**

Then a Levite came to the scene. He was someone who helped the priests in the Temple serving God. And although there was a fellow Jewish man lying on the road in desperate need of help, he did nothing but look at him, passing by on the other side of the road.

To both of these religious men, the wounded man was a problem to be avoided. What a bother it would be to help this hurting man. I do not have time; I have more important things to do. Perhaps

these were the thoughts that passed through the minds of these men.

The needs of others bring out various attitudes in us. All too often we just look at a problem or a situation, but we choose to do nothing to help. We see the need that has to be met, but we leave it for someone else to deal with. Both these religious men did nothing. They had no compassion for others. **Jesus wants us to show love and mercy toward others.**

LUKE 10:33-35

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.

"So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

"On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.'

Now a Samaritan man came along, a person who was hated by the Jews. Most likely, Jesus had seen Samaritans meeting the needs of others, showing compassion with acts of kindness. The religious leaders on the other hand were nothing more than observers. The Samaritan showed that he had compassion for this Jewish man in need.

Compassion means to "suffer along side." It is kind of like putting yourself in someone else's shoes, but it is even stronger than that. It means that you do something about the problems you see other people having. To have compassion on someone is to put yourself

in their position or condition. How would you want someone to respond to you in this condition?

The Samaritan put himself in the man's position and demonstrated God's love and mercy to him. He could identify with what he was feeling. We need to respond to others as Jesus did. The Samaritan made a big sacrifice giving two days wages to care for the wounded man. Action is greater than words. **Jesus wants us to show love and mercy toward others.**

Do You Know a Good Samaritan?

Tell the children an example of a time that a "Good Samaritan" helped you out. Explain any similarities in your experience to that of Jesus' parable.

Give the children an opportunity to share any examples from their lives of when they have been helped out by a "Good Samaritan."

LUKE 10:36-37

"So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"

And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Jesus made the question simple; He asked, "Who was the neighbor?" He was trying to teach this lawyer that everyone near him who is in need is his neighbor. The issue is not who is my neighbor, but whom am I being a neighbor to? Who is it in my life right now that has a need that I can help meet? When was the last time I compassionately met someone else's need?

When the lawyer responded to Jesus' question, he could not even say the word Samaritan. He had just been hit right between the eyes with the hard truth. He had failed to live up to God's standard

with the heart of love and mercy that God wants us to have for others. Jesus lovingly tells him to "Go and do likewise." Do something! God wants us to respond to others with compassion, to meet their need. You have to wonder what the response of this lawyer was. Did he just listen or did he respond by showing love and mercy to others?

This story is a picture of the love Jesus has for us. Like the traveler, we have been left to die in our sin, and we can do nothing to save ourselves. But Jesus, the Good Samaritan, came along and took us to a place of healing.

Our salvation is His doing and not our own. Jesus showed love and mercy to us so that we could be saved. You can be healed from your sin today, by putting your trust in Him to save you.

As Christians, let's not have the heart that this lawyer had. Let us come to the Lord with an attitude that desires to please Him. Jesus wants us to show love and mercy toward others.

Who Is My Neighbor?

Have the children each take a pencil and paper and write down who their "neighbors" might be. Have them write down specific names and circumstances that would categorize their examples as neighbors. (Younger children can draw and color pictures to express whom their neighbors might be and how they can be practically helped.)

Next to each name have your students write down some things that they could do to help their "neighbors." Make sure that they put down practical things that they could really do.

These sheets of paper are confidential. Your students do not have to share their contents with anyone, but encourage them to pray for the Lord to give them opportunities to serve their neighbors.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer asking the Lord to give each of us a compassion for our neighbors. If there are any children who have not received the Lord, give them an opportunity to respond to His free gift of salvation.