

Luke 10:25-37 – The Good Samaritan

Luke has been teaching us many lessons about discipleship. Do you know what that is? Christianity is not a way to get a ticket to heaven, and then live our own way. It teaches us the way we must live on God's earth. Many have the name of Christians; but there are few true disciples. In this passage we find a very religious man – but he was not ready to be a disciple. Yet Jesus also welcomed those very far from God to become disciples. How is it with you?

1. Do you know you have fallen short? (v25-28)

A man came to question Jesus – an expert in God's law (a teacher, not a “lawyer” who was in court). He came to test Jesus. We do not know his exact desire – but how do you approach Jesus; to trip him up and make excuses for your life, or to learn from him? He asked: “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” A great question! Do you desire eternal life? Jesus asked him a question back – what does the Bible say? How would you answer; do you know the way to life? The lawyer answered from two places in the Old Testament – Deuteronomy 6:5-6 and Leviticus 19:18. There it tells us to love God with all of our being. God is first and deserves our whole heart and strength. Does he have it? Next, we must love our neighbour as ourself. What we would desire from others, we must give to them. Do you do that? God's law is not hard to understand and is not unreasonable – it demands love that shows always, always itself in our words and lives. The lawyer's answer was right – if you do this, then you can live. But have you done it? Had he? Nobody has – we are all sinful and corrupt at heart. We desperately need a Saviour. Jesus challenged the man. Would the man now cry out to Jesus for mercy because of his evil heart? Do you?

2. Do you know what love is? (v29-37)

The lawyer heard – but he wanted to prove that he was right. So he asked, “who is my neighbour?” The truth was that Pharisees did not treat others like neighbours – only their fellow Pharisees, and sometimes their fellow Jews. But if they thought someone was not obeying the law themselves, then they would separate from them. Yet the law said (Leviticus 19:34) to treat the strangers equally to. Jesus was different – he showed love to the unclean and sinful people. The lawyer was also challenging Jesus as to why he did this.

Jesus told the famous story of the “Good Samaritan”. The priest and Levite were very careful about the sacrificial laws – but they passed by. They did not see a neighbour, and they had other business. Is that how you are? The Samaritans were unclean in the Jews' eyes (John 4:9). But this Samaritan crossed the boundary, and gave himself to serve the needy man. He did so at cost to himself, stopping his journey and giving his money. Who acted like a neighbour? He did. That is how we must serve in the kingdom. Do not say “this is not my neighbour – let me pass him by”. We must make all people – even those far from the right path – to be neighbours, by lovingly giving ourselves. That is what Jesus did. He saw us, lost in sin and heading for hell. He came and gave his body on the cross to save us. He made those who repent and believe to become neighbours – and friends, brothers. To those who turn to him he is Saviour, Lord and God. There is no salvation in our own good works. We must receive the mercy of Jesus, and then learn to follow him – not like the proud lawyer of this story.