

Journey to Jerusalem

LENT 2022

Growth Group Curriculum

Week 2 – March 13, 2022 – Luke 10:25-37

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

As Jesus is making his way to Jerusalem a teacher of the law asks him what he needs “to do” to inherit eternal life. It is an interesting question because technically when you “inherit” something you do nothing to receive it. You receive an inheritance because someone has gifted it to you. It is possible that this teacher of the law had been born into an affluent family and had already received his inheritance and now he wants Jesus to tell him what else must be “done” so that he can be a part of God’s kingdom.

Jesus sees through his question and asks the teacher a question about what the Law has to say about inheriting eternal life. The teacher combines texts from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 for his answer. This would not have been unique to this teacher. By that time there were other religious leaders saying the same thing. Loving God and loving others was what was prescribed by the Hebrew scriptures.

In response to the teacher’s question about who his neighbor is, Jesus tells a parable about the Jericho Road. A road that he would soon be traveling as he made his way to Jerusalem for the Passover. It was a little over fifteen miles from Jericho to Jerusalem, with an elevation increase of about three thousand feet. It was not a safe passageway and was known to be a road where criminals hung out waiting to rob unsuspecting people either making their way to Jerusalem or Jericho.

As Jesus told this parable no one would have been surprised about someone being beaten up on the road and left for dead. The real surprise happened when a Samaritan became the hero of the story. This was certainly not expected. Jews and Samaritans despised each other. As the Jewish teacher listened to Jesus speak about the good work the Samaritan had done, the teacher must have been completely confounded. Samaritans did not behave like this.

In this parable Jesus moves from the question of “who is my neighbor” to “will you be a neighbor?” There is no limited neighborhood for Jesus. Everyone is our neighbor and each of us must decide whether we will be a good neighbor to others. Jesus says that the nature of the kingdom of God is seen in acts of compassion and mercy and as the story ends he challenges the teacher of the law, as well as us, to go and live in the same way.

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Exploring the Text

Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ On 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?” ²⁷ He 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’^[a]; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” ²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” ²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ In 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. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He 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. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii^[c] 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?” ³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

- 1) Share a time that you’ve been helped by a “Good Samaritan”, or when you were too busy to help someone who had been displaced or was alone.
- 2) Vs. 27 explains how to inherit eternal life. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, as well as love your neighbor as yourself.” Why is this concept important to the setup of the parable?
- 3) Vs. 29 says the “expert in the law” wanted to justify himself. What do you think that means?
- 4) Martin Luther King Jr. said that the first question the priest and the Levite asked was, "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But the Samaritan asked, “If I don’t stop to help this man, what will happen to him?” What is the difference between those questions? Why is that difference critical to this story?
- 5) The Samaritan crossed over cultural and ethnic boundaries by helping the robbed/beaten man. The priest and Levite loved God, but were not ready to do that. Which of those in the scripture passage above do you find yourself acting like most often?
- 6) Jesus changes the narrative from a WHO question “Who is my neighbor?” to a WHAT question. “What makes a good neighbor?” How can we be a neighbor to all?



- 7) We tend to think of ourselves as the Good Samaritan who showed compassion and mercy to the hurting, or as the priest or Levite. Yet we should not lose sight that each of us are also like the badly beaten man left for dead in this story. Why is it so crucial that we see ourselves this way and see Jesus as our Good Samaritan that rescued us? Why is it impossible to love and serve others LIKE the Good Samaritan until we realize that we NEED the Good Samaritan?
- 8) The Good Samaritan offered help to the man in many tangible ways. Bearing others burdens is costly. The Samaritan showed compassion. He supported with money. He spent time with the man. He physically bandaged his wounds and moved him. Is one of these ways harder for you when it comes to caring for others?

