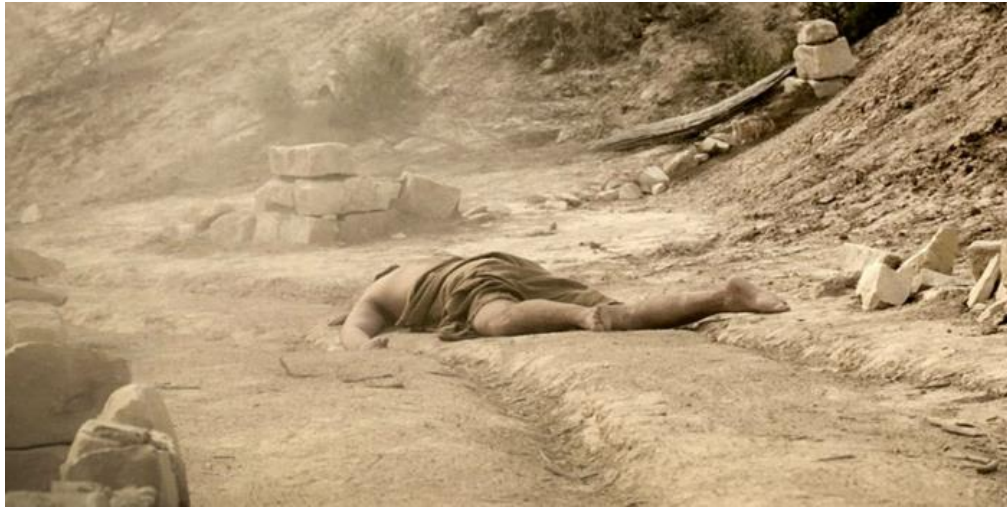


THE PARABLES OF JESUS, #027

A Chronological Study

*"To Him who opened His mouth in parables and
uttered things hidden since the creation of the world."*
Psalm 78:2



"The Good Samaritan"

Luke 10:25-37

In the background of the story is the Jewish religious establishment continuing development of an attempt to build a legal case against Jesus who was preaching the grace of God and not works. Our parable story begins with a legal expert in the Law of God (a theologian lawyer. In the context of the story he would be an "expert" in the laws pertaining to the Jewish culture of the day. That legalistic culture was steeped in the "Oral Tradition" of the Pharisaic interpretations of the Laws given to Moses. Those interpretations had wandered from their original meanings into a system of "works" under these oral traditions. The major problem with this "Oral Law" was that it required "works" that were attempting to force each individual to be "more holy" than God required in His word – this would technically be heresy. In general the religious hierarchy found the common man (and woman and child) to be loath-full and steeped in the mire of sin. These oral traditions were taught in the synagogues and preached in the

market places as the leadership sought to control the population with these works based laws. They became a tremendous burden to the Jewish people, and still are.

Luke Chapter 10 begins with Jesus choosing 70 of His followers and sending them into various cities that He would eventually visit Himself. They have gone with the message: "The Kingdom of God has come near to you!" – Yes, Jesus the King of the Kingdom of God has come near to them. Jesus told His disciples that those places that rejected Him, His words, and His miracles would, "be brought down to Hades!" and, "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."

Jesus then makes comments about the Father's hiding His will and His Word from the intelligent and wise and revealing it to those who are as infants.

Jesus turns to His disciples and lets them know that they are truly blessed in seeing Jesus and His miracles – and that prophets and kings wished they had seen such things – but they did not see nor hear them.

This then introduces us to our story of The Good Samaritan.

Jesus is surrounded by "students" and He is being their teacher, their Rabbi. They are all seated around Him like in a class. Thus this one educated intellectual, steeped in the Law, comes with a question in order to test Jesus, hoping Jesus will fail and be brought to court for it.

Jesus' approach is to use a technique that He often uses when being questioned by others – He answers the pointed question with a question of His own. In this way He is able to control a conversation and make spiritual changes in the lives of many.

Jesus knows why this man has come. His answers will be completely "by the Law of God." The legal expert stands up, as a student would in those times, and the scripture tells us that he is about to ask his question of Jesus "to put Jesus to the test."

Luke 10:25-37 [NASB]

The Lawyer's Question

25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him (Jesus) to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

At first glance the lawyer's question seems like a good and positive question to ask, but in his heart he desires to catch Jesus in a statement that would convict Him of heresy.

Jesus will then tell a parable to this lawyer that will trap him into having to consider his own shortcomings "according to the Law of God." This man has come with great hubris. He has come thinking, "Ah, yes, I know the Law and I can trap Him – and we can destroy Him and His teachings." But, Jesus wants to bring change into this lawyer's heart, He wants his life to be changed and consider the Grace and compassion that God requires of those who belong to Him.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

Our legal expert, a man of "works," asks his first question, "What do I have to **DO** to inherit eternal life?" D.A. Carson¹ – a renowned Bible professor, remarks, "what must anyone do to inherit? ... but, to be born to the right family." And what a telling statement that is. If you wish to "inherit" eternal life, you must be a member of the Family of God. His question, "What can I do...," well, here's not a lot anyone can **do** to get born into the right family! This studied man of the law clearly believes that one has to do something in order to inherit eternal life.

Jesus's Question to the Lawyer

26 And He (Jesus) said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?"

Jesus, the Son of God, who is totally knowledgeable in His Father's desires, answers the lawyer by asking our expert 2 more questions, turning the table on him. "What is written in the Law? How do you interpret it?" Jesus uses an appeal to a higher authority as His way

to move our lawyer into God's Word to find the answer to his own question.

The Lawyer's answer to Jesus' Question

27 And he answered, "You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself."

The Lawyer's answer is totally accurate as he speaks the Jewish "Shema," about how to please God. "Love Him with your all of your heart, soul, strength and mind – and love your neighbor as yourself." [1](#)

Jesus approves the Lawyer's answer

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

Jesus sees that the expert has accurately quoted from the Mosaic Law, but what he says is not how he lives his life. Jesus tells him, "You have answered correctly; (you) do this and live." Jesus was probably looking him right in the eyes when He said this. The Lawyer now must deal with his own shortcomings in not being able to keep the law perfectly as it commands.

The Lawyer asks another Question

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

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR

Having not caught Jesus in his first question, and having to justify himself – finding himself guilty under the law, he asks a second question. He's driven by his inner convictions that only holy people [holy Jews] can ever be considered as neighbors – certainly not sinners, Jew or otherwise. In the background of the expert's answer is his interpretation of [Leviticus 19:18](#), where the text preceding the Shema [[Leviticus 19:16-17](#)] says, "your people" and "your countryman." Therefore he thinks: "I need to love my Jewish

righteous brothers, because they too love God by keeping the Law, but not the sinner or the common man or foreigner." We know his heart because of the content of Jesus parable. So he asks Jesus, in order to again try to catch Him in His interpretation, "And, who is my neighbor?" And this introduces us to the content of the parable.

The Parable that sets up Jesus' next question

30 Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.

THE PARABLE

Jesus introduces us to "a man." We have no other identification – white, brown, black... we don't know. Good, bad, rich, poor, Jew, Samaritan, foreigner, we don't know. Just a man on a seventeen mile downhill trip from Jerusalem to Jericho... when, "he fell among robbers." Again, we don't know anything about these robbers except they are excessively violent. They stripped him [humiliating him], and removing any indication of what cast of society he belonged to. They beat him [doing him great physical harm], and went away – leaving him half-dead. This was no simple beating.

So, there he is laying in the dirt, on the side of the road, naked, brutally damaged, and dying of his wounds.

31 And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

TRAVELER #1

"And by chance [Jesus' words] a priest [Jewish temple priest, a covenanted mediator between man and God] was going down on that road [from Jerusalem to Jericho, probably after his two week shift at the temple, and this journey is a steep downward trip]. When he saw him [our beaten dying man]. He passed him by... on the other side of the road. Apparently as far as possible from our victim. We can take it from the earlier explanations that our priest fully believed that his office of Temple Priest elevated him to a position where he must not encounter the "unclean." To do so would

require him to take special measures under the Law to regain his holy position. In the mean time he would be “un-clean” and temporarily expelled from his temple and synagogue duties. Apparently this would have been, for him, “unthinkable,” that the life of this man would merit that. So he totally avoided any encounter or closeness with our victim. I think this part of the story touched our expert lawyer. This part of the story matched his own position and condition. A man left for dead... and the Priest of God did nothing.

32 Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

TRAVELER #2

“Likewise, a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him and passed by on the other side.” The tribe of Levites were selected by God to care for the Ark of the Covenant, and the Tabernacle articles, and later the care of the Temple. They were so special that they were the ones to undertake the task of moving the Ark of the Covenant when God changed their locations – both in the wilderness and after they crossed the Jordan. No others could touch those things – God only allowed them to do so – they were special. Again, they were so clean... it was unthinkable to be involved with a beaten naked man, dying on the side of the road. “I carry the Ark of the Covenant, I absolutely must not be contaminated by this commoner.” I think too that this part of the story touched our expert lawyer. A man left for dead... and the Levite of God did nothing.

33 But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.'

TRAVELER #3

"But," Oh how I love to see the "Buts" of the Old and New Testaments. They often teach some of the most important lessons found there. This is one of them. The Priest passed by, the Levite passed by, **But...** It just can't be clearer... not only was this traveler not a Priest or a Levite, but... he was **a Samaritan** (They were the remnant of the ancient northern Kingdom of Israel, descendants of the tribes which survived the Assyrian captivity who remained there). They would not worship in the Jerusalem temple. The Samaritans were the remnant of Northern Hebrew tribes but were not religiously or culturally bound by God's Law. Their whole nation had been taken into captivity by Assyria. They largely intermarried with their captors and were considered half-breeds. Both sides hated each other.

Who was his neighbor?

The one who was in need – he was just a certain man, his nationality and race [or religion] was of no consequence to this Samaritan. The Samaritan was possibly a man of means – he rode his own donkey and put the broken man upon it to ride in his place, so the Samaritan thus walked along side his donkey. He had clothes to share and shared them. He had money to share and shared it. He traveled some distance to find an inn. That first night this man stayed at the inn with the victim. He cared for him all through the night, then, the next day he put the man under the care of the inn-keeper at his own expense. He even gave the inn-keeper instructions to care for this unknown broken man, and if more expense accumulated, he would pay it. The injured man was now saved from death, and because the robbers had taken all his money... our Samaritan has also saved him from slavery (paying his bills for the cost of recovery).

So, as to the Law... **[Deuteronomy 6, excerpts]** Here's what God has to say:

**4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!
You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and
with all your soul and with all your might." 6 They [these
words] shall be On Your Heart;**

7 You Shall Teach Them;

You Shall Talk of Them;

8 You Shall Bind Them on your hand, and forehead;

9 You Shall write them on your door posts and gates."

13 You shall fear only the LORD your God.

You Shall Worship Him and Swear by His Name.

15 "Otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth."

And... [Leviticus 6:18b]

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD."

[Mark 12:29-31] Jesus said, **"The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."**

[Matthew 22:37-39] **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."**

Jesus' direct Question to the Lawyer

36 Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?"

The Lawyer's answer to Jesus' direct Question

37 And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him."

BACK TO THE PARABLE

Jesus is scolding this learned "expert in the Law" that he and the Priest and Levite in the story no longer worship the One God in the

manner He requires. "To Love the LORD your God... is equivalent to "Love your neighbor as yourself!"

The plan and program that God covenanted with Abram was to create a nation of people by whom the whole world would be blessed and brought to God [Genesis 12:3c]. By loving their neighbors (all kinds of neighbors) the nation of Israel should have won all nations around them to Love the Lord God who is One – and they failed miserably at every turn with that calling. In this parable Jesus is telling them of this failure.

The nation would continue to fail even as they put the Son of God, who came to save the world from sin, to death on the Cross. The nation of Israel did fail and they are now temporarily rejected from the plan of spreading the Gospel, however, in the sovereign foreordained program of God, the death of the Son of God on the Cross has brought forth that promise of blessing to the entire world through the salvation offered to mankind as the result.

A final note on the grace and mercy of Almighty God:

The story of the Prodigal Son reveals to us the heart of God the Father. The unfolding of that story is known by untold millions of people. How often, in our daily lives, we forget the heart of our Heavenly Father toward us, and how often that forgetfulness results in our not loving our neighbor – no matter who they are or what they are. Our nation is full of rage – because we have turned away from our loving God. In that story, as the wayward son returns home to his father, he understands that his sin was against his father and no one else. In our current world that would split a family and stop all love and concern for each other. But, in Jesus story, about the love of His Heavenly Father, [Luke 15:20-24] as the son returns in expected shame,

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on

his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate."

Perhaps we, after studying this parable and hearing of the Father's love, can change our attitudes and begin to "Love our Neighbors... no matter who they are, no matter what they believe or don't believe, no matter what their color, no matter what their origin, no matter what their sin... as ourselves." Do this for the sake of the Gospel, for the sake of the Love of God expressed through the Cross of Christ. Let us not be guilty of loving God whom we cannot see and not loving our neighbors who we see everyday.

Jesus gives a directive to the Lawyer

Then Jesus said to him, "(you) Go and do the same."

Jesus finally asked this learned lawyer, "*Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robber's hands?*" And he said, "*the one who showed mercy toward him.*"

His answer may show some change in his heart; perhaps he was present when Jesus also said, "*It's not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.*" For it was there that Jesus referred to **Hosea 6:6**, where The Lord says "***For I delight in chesed*** [Heb. Mercy, kindness, loyalty, goodness, constant love, faithfulness] *and the knowledge of Elohim* [God, the three-in-one]."

It's also interesting that the verses that follow this one speak of "*Those whose heelprints are bloody, like the tarrying of a bandit. The priests are hiding in the way... Israel is defiled.*"

Our heavenly father says, "*For I delight in chesed,*" Then Jesus says to our expert lawyer – and to us, "*Go and do the same.*"

¹ D. A. Carson, Professor, an evangelical biblical scholar. He is a Distinguished Emeritus Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and president and co-founder of the Gospel Coalition.

¹ The Hebrew Shema Prayer

The Shema gets its name from the first Hebrew word of the prayer--"hear" or "listen", a translation of the Hebrew word *shema*. Ancient Jewish people combined lines from Deuteronomy 6:4-5 with other passages from the Torah (Deut. 6:4; 11:13-21; Num. 15:37-41; Lev. 19) and prayed these words every morning and every evening. This prayer has been one of the most influential traditions in Jewish history, functioning both as the Jewish pledge of allegiance and a hymn of praise. <https://bibleproject.com/articles/what-is-the-shema/>

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Jeremiah 18:15

"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path"

2023-11-01 updated