

St. Paul Lutheran Bible Study

The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

[Click here to read](#)

Background

The old enemy, the Samaritan is the merciful hero of the piece. Crossing the boundary of prejudice to show love to his neighbor. The cue for Jesus telling this story is a lawyer trying to catch him out (v25) and then wanting to justify himself (v29). It seems Jesus then has to get the lawyer to see who his neighbor is, to challenge his established ideas. Not only does it turn out that the true neighbor is the one who is the untouchable outsider whom the lawyer presumably was highly prejudiced towards; but turns out also that the neighbor is the one who helps, who is 'neighborly', crosses the boundary, shows the compassion.

Samaritans were from the same roots as the Jewish people but there had been a separation many years before the time of Jesus, so now there was great animosity.

Under Jewish law, the Priest and the Levite would be forbidden to have contact with the bloodied man lying on the roadside. They were doing the right thing by the law, but Jesus is wanting to show a different way that breaks free from the law and is driven by mercy and love.

Crossing the road

What would make you cross the road? Examples: someone with a big dog; someone who is shouting; someone we have fallen out with.

Reflect: sometimes this is understandable. It is about keeping ourselves safe. The Samaritan takes a risk in helping the man who has been attacked.

One risk might have been rejection.

Watch this story of a Holocaust survivor and his German roommate: [Click here](#).

These two demonstrate reaching out to support a stranger—even when they could have been total enemies.

Who might the group struggle to give help to or receive help from? Who from the world today might we put into the story as the Samaritan? As the two who cross the road? As the one suffering on the side of the road?



Think about it

Think about this quote on the parable of the Good Samaritan: "I imagine that the first question the priest and Levite asked was: 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?' But by the very nature of his concern, the good Samaritan reversed the question: 'If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?'" Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, Strength to Love

- How does this reframe your thinking about serving others?
- What if this was how you looked at the world? What if your family acted this way? Your church?

Let justice roll...

It is really good that for thousands of years this story has inspired act after act of kindness. One danger with this story is that it can just become a justification for lots of individual/token, but nevertheless good, acts of kindness.

We should not overlook the way that Jesus and the Samaritan in his story were challenging the way society, religion, law worked at that time. In our time we should do positive things that challenge injustice more widely and provide help not only individually, but more widely as well.

Look at Micah 6:6-8, Amos 5:24 or Isaiah 58:1-12. What do you think is the difference between charity (mercy) and justice based on these passages?

How do organizations like [Lutheran World Relief](#) and [Heifer International](#) do both charity and justice work?

With great thanks to Baptist Union Racial Justice Hub, Wonderful Youth <file:///C:/Users/Pastor/Downloads/WonderfulYouth2019.pdf>.

[Click here](#) for a story of people helping in the COVID-19 pandemic.

- If you are on facebook, go to the public group and read a story there. If not, find another story of people supporting others in the pandemic era.
- Discuss, is the story you read like the Good Samaritan story? Is it a story of generosity? Or of

Prayer

Loving God,

Help us to worship and serve you. Help us to learn from what Jesus shows us. Please forgive us when we have crossed over the road to avoid people. Forgive us when we hide behind rules or even reasons when we could actually do more to help. You showed us how to live alongside each other. You showed us how to be good neighbors. Help us to live this out, to live as you want us to live, to walk in the footsteps of the Good Samaritan, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Amen.

