

# Who Was the Good Samaritan?

## Ո՞վ էր Բարի Սամարացի

**Luke 10:25-37**

The Parables of Jesus are wonderful and timeless stories. Many of us grew up hearing them in Sunday school. Yet these stories are more than entertaining illustrations. These stories have deep theological meanings. Jesus wanted his audience to learn God's magnificent hand in our history.

Generally, all parables have four levels:

- The Entertaining story
- The Ethical message: **doing the right thing**
- The Theological message: **revelation of the secrets of the Kingdom of God**
- The Christological message: **some hint about the nature of our Lord Jesus**

I have taken this interpretation from my teacher Dr. Kenneth Bailey. I believe he has one of the best interpretations of the parables of Jesus from a Middle Eastern perspective.

Let us analyze the story. The story was not told in a vacuum. The story was told when a **lawyer came** to Jesus and asked a question about the **inheritance** of eternal life.

It is a strange or curious question.

The question is, "**How do we inherit anything?**"

The answer, we cannot. **Inheritance is a gift given.**

Jesus does not ignore his question; he asks another question, "**What about the law?**"

The lawyer answers:

**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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (27)**

Interesting, in **Leviticus (19:18)** we learn about loving the neighbor, then in **Deuteronomy (6:5)** we learn about loving God. The lawyer changed the order.

-I believe this lawyer heard from Jesus (Matthew 22:35–40, Mark 12:28–34) his teachings about loving God first then the neighbor second.

There is wisdom in this. No one can love the neighbor without God's love. If we try to serve humanity based on their response to us, we will fail. We serve and love humanity because of God's love for us.

The lawyer gave the correct answer and Jesus said, "**Go and do it.**" (Do this and you will live...)

Now the question is, "Can he do it? Can we do it? Can we inherit the kingdom of God by loving God and loving our neighbor?"

You all know that the **answer is no.** If we could have done it, we would not have needed Jesus to save us.

This is my interpretation; it is not written in the Bible. The lawyer started to think: "OK, love God, I know how to love God, obey commandments.

Love neighbor, OK, I should love only my kind of people, of course I have nothing to do with the 'gentiles, Samaritans, strangers.'"

### **The lawyer asks yet another question, "Who is my neighbor?"**

-Don't you think this is a strange question to ask Jesus; I mean this lawyer knew the commandments and quoted from the Torah. By this time you think he should know who the neighbor is. Right?

Remember his intention in asking questions; he wanted to test Jesus. Also, when he asked this question "who is my neighbor?" we read "**But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, who is my neighbor?**"

Here comes the parable of Good Samaritan. It is a story that tells us:

What does it mean to love our neighbor? (friend, any other person)(fellow)(even enemy)

Who is our neighbor?

What does it mean to become a neighbor? "To whom must I become a neighbor?"

And most importantly, who is the Good Samaritan?

### **1. The location:**

From Jerusalem to Jericho it's a 5000 feet elevation "going down"

Dr. Bailey calls this parable the Story of seven scenes:

- Scene 1: Robbers
  - Scene 2: The priest
    - Scene 3: The Levite
      - Scene 4: The Good Samaritan
        - Scene 3': First aid (What the Levite could have done)
          - Scene 2': Transporting to Inn (What the Priest should have done)
            - Scene 1': Pay money (Make up for what the robbers did)

**2-The Robbers:** It seems our fellow resisted because we read his money was taken and he was beaten, stripped and left unconscious.

**3 The Priest:** Priests were generally wealthy. They probably traveled on a donkey. This priest was coming from Jerusalem to his town Jericho. This means he was at the Temple in Jerusalem and was clean after going through the cleansing ceremonies. He did not do anything, why?

According to the law, he should have taken care of his neighbor.

In the Middle East, people generally identify a person's identity through his speech (the accent) and his clothes. Even today, you go to the mountains of Lebanon, and you can tell whether a particular person is Druze or Shiite by their clothes and speech.

The priest was on his donkey, I assume. He looked at this poor fellow. No speech and no clothes. What if he is not one of us? What if he is dead? That would defile him. What a bad system. This was their interpretation of God's law.

**4-The Levite's** attitude was the same as the priest's.

**5-The unexpected help from an "enemy," the Good Samaritan.**

**Why did Jesus give this example? Did he want to insult the Jews?**

I don't think so. Here is the unexpected climax of the story. **Jesus is talking about himself. He is the Good Samaritan.**

-The leaders of the religious community failed. They became so **legalistic** that they created a system that **was rotten** and unacceptable to God.

The system needs healing and change. A surprise visit from a "foreigner." God sent His Son, who came to save humanity. And this was going to be **costly**.

A. The Good Samaritan “**bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.**” Do you see the image of Jesus?

Let me read **Hosea 6:1-2**

**Come, let us return to the LORD.**

**He has torn us to pieces  
but he will heal us;  
he has injured us  
but he will bind up our wounds.**

**<sup>2</sup> After two days he will revive us;  
on the third day he will restore us,  
that we may live in his presence.**

**God is healing our wounds through Jesus Christ.**

-Are we wounded?

*Of course, we are.*

-We are wounded from the situations that we live. The pandemic, because of that the economic situation;

or we are hurting because of losing of dear ones,

or we are hurting because “someone” neglected us; “I am not loved by anyone”

we are hurting because a loved one hurt me.

we all go through this.

B.

Let us go back to the parable and retell it as if it is happening in the US in the 1700s.

A Native American man puts an injured cowboy on a horse. The guy was critically injured with an arrow that hit him on his back. The Native American brings this wounded man to Abilene, Kansas. He takes this wounded man to the inn. He pays the innkeeper. Do you think Abilene inhabitants will keep this Native American alive?

Of course, not.

Now stop thinking politically. Let me reverse the “actors”. A cowboy took a wounded Native American to a Native American reservation. A Turkish man takes a wounded Armenian to an Armenian city; or an Armenian man takes a wounded Turkish man to a Turkish city.... What will happen? This person will be killed... Do you see the bigger picture that Jesus is trying to draw?

**C-The Samaritan pays the innkeeper.** Why? There was a law, that if the person could not pay his bill, the innkeeper had the right to sell this wounded man to slavery. You see the “Good Samaritan” did not just rescue this man, but he **SAVED this man from slavery.**

Paul describes it best about Christ rescuing us:

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of **slavery.**” (Gal 5:1)

### **Application:**

**There are layers in this parable**

**-The Entertaining story**

**-The Ethical message**

**-The Theological message: revelation of the secrets of the Kingdom of God**

**-The Christological message: some hints about nature of Jesus Christ.**

### **1. Who is our neighbor? Isn't it better to ask, “To whom must I become a neighbor?”**

Answer: Anyone who is in need, whether we know them or not. Whether they belong same ethnicity or not...language, religion, race...name it.

Helping the unwanted, the marginalized, the forgotten..

Helping the lonely.....be practical....

### **2. What does it mean to love our neighbor? How will I become a neighbor?**

**Jesus also asked to the lawyer:**

Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” (36)

I see here Jesus asking the lawyer to learn to become a neighbor instead asking who is my neighbor.

Calling, cooking, showing compassion, caring, sending gifts, donation, doing mission, offering your talents and time, a cup of water, it is unlimited what we can do for others

### **3. Theological Layers**

- The law versus grace and compassion

- The Kingdom cannot be inherited by good deeds. It is a gift of grace.

- We are wounded and enslaved to sin. We need salvation

- Someone paid the price...

#### **4. Who is the Good Samaritan?**

**The Good Samaritan is Christ himself who:**

- stopped, had compassion, bandaged the wounds, carried us, transported us to secure inn, paid the price so we would be free, and risked his life for our salvation.

**This was and is a “costly demonstration of unexpected LOVE.” This is where Jesus paid the price on the cross. A very high price....**

Can I inherit kingdom of God?

Only through Jesus we can be children of the kingdom of God

<sup>37</sup> **The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”**

Can I act with mercy?

Jesus told him, **“Go and do likewise.”**

Can I go and do likewise?

Only when I know Jesus and I have Him in my life to guide me to become a neighbor.

Today while we are approaching the Table that our Lord prepared for us. Let us approach with humility and broken hearts so that Christ will restore us and heal our wounds.

Amen

## The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37 NIV)

<sup>25</sup> On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

<sup>26</sup> “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

<sup>27</sup> 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<sup>[a]</sup>; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>[b]</sup>”

<sup>28</sup> “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

<sup>29</sup> But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

<sup>30</sup> 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. <sup>31</sup> A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii<sup>[c]</sup> 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.’

<sup>36</sup> “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

<sup>37</sup> The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”