

Lifegroup notes from Sunday 11 September 2022

Reading: Luke 10:25-37

We all know it and it's been absorbed into our culture – the phrase Good Samaritan is often used to describe someone who's been extraordinarily kind, caring or helpful.

So nearly 2000 years after this story was first told, I want to examine it from a few different perspectives. The key question you need to ask yourself here is "what's it got to do with me?"

1) Maybe you're most like the lawyer in this story.

He comes to Jesus with a question that He clearly already knows the answer to and when Jesus tells him to get on with the important practical application of that He comes out with a 'but TECHNICALLY...' and tries to negotiate his way into taking short cuts. He knows the answer to eternal...However, rather than just getting on and doing that, He asks Jesus about it, it says that he wanted to make himself look good but I wonder if it was also said with a view to getting the exact criteria of who His neighbour is – He wants to do the right thing, no less but also no more!

Jesus isn't having any of it though and tells this story to demonstrate that this command goes deeper than anything the young man is imagining . If Jesus asks you to do something, to participate in His plans, He has the love and the grace to see you through with the job but it won't be half hearted.

Perhaps the message here for you is: Don't try and get Jesus on a technicality – His plans, His love and His Grace are always so much more than you can ask, think or imagine. This is extended to you but also through you to everyone else.

2) You may alternatively see yourself as the traveler – just minding your own business when life comes and ambushes you as you tread your path. Maybe after the last few years you feel battered and bruised, tired and alone, and that the people who should be helping are failing to do so.

Your message today is – take heart, the one who watches over Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. God has seen your troubles and has not forgotten you, help is on the way even from the most unlikely of places.

3) Or maybe you're the priest or the Levite? I think we all are at some points!

I wonder if there are people in our lives, and in our communities, that we shy away from helping because we may not come out of the experience 'clean'? If in our very well intentioned pursuit of holiness, we end up excluding people that we're called to help?

If you're the priest or the levite then maybe a good thing to remember would be "Who can ascend the hill of the Lord? Those with clean hands and pure hearts – but the ironic reality is that Serving Jesus inevitably involves getting your hands dirty – if you shy away from that you're likely to have missed the point."

4) Perhaps you're the Samaritan in this story, or aspire to be. One thing to remember is that Love, service and hospitality to our neighbours is an act of worship to God. Jesus is really clear that this is something He takes personally.

The Samaritan could easily have been excused for just asking the traveller if he was OK or waiting with him until someone else came along. After all it would have been more than the Priest or the Levite did. However, he goes much further. He went to him, poured olive oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey. He brought him to an inn and took care of him.

Doing things for God is often costly – It can cost us our time, our pride, our comfort and our money. But God is deserving of such things. The message here for Samaritans and Aspiring Samaritans is - When showing love and hospitality to your Neighbour in the name of Jesus – Go hard or Go Home!

There's another character in this story that you might see yourself in – and perhaps it's one you might not have thought of. The inn keeper has a very fleeting role in this story, he's more of an extra in the cast – but I think he has more in common with us and what Jesus is saying to us than we realise.

Imagine for a moment that Jesus is the Good Samaritan in this story.

When the law and all the ritualism of religion didn't save a battered and bruised world He came himself and intervened. Not only did he bring healing and restoration with him but he paid a costly price to see us back on our feet (far more than the Samaritan in the story paid – Jesus paid with his life).

The inn keeper then has an important role. When the Samaritan has to go away He charges the inn keeper with looking after the traveller until he returns. He joins the inn keeper in co-mission with him, equips and resources him and promises to pay back on his return.

So today, we have a chance to be the inn keeper. The Samaritan did all of the hard work – he came, he found, he cared, he rescued, he paid. He's gone away but promises that He'll return and in the meantime we are charged with looking after those he would entrust to us, showing them love and compassion on His behalf.

This week – who is in your inn?

Some questions

- What encouraged or challenged you in this message?
- At the moment, is there a character in the story you most relate to?
- In the past, have you been like a different character? If so, what changed?
- What was the fresh thing you saw in this message on a familiar text?
- Who is "I your inn"?
- How can we support each other in our co-mission with Christ, the greatest "Good Samaritan"?