

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10:25–37

A lawyer asks Jesus the most important question anyone might ask, *“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”* [v25] Our Lord counters by requesting his informed opinion. The lawyer quotes from Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18b: love the Lord with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, all your mind, and then *“Love your neighbor as yourself.”* [v27] Jesus agrees, endorsing his answer by saying, *“Do this, and you will live.”* [v28]



Nicolaes Roosendael, *The Good Samaritan Heals the Traveler*

But the lawyer isn't satisfied. Knowing his devotion to God fails to reach the high standard set by Scripture, he wonders if love for certain people would be suitable. Luke perceives that the lawyer's next question is posed in subdued desperation. Hoping for self-justification, he asks Jesus to explain exactly what the word really means. *“And who is my neighbor?”* [v29]

Jesus responds with a parable, a story about a man traveling down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Everyone knew that road to be difficult and dangerous. Indeed, robbers set upon and beat the man, leaving him nearly dead. Later a priest and then a Levite happen to see him, but despite his helpless condition, neither stops to render assistance.

Then a Samaritan who happens to be on a journey finds the beaten man. Even though *“Jews have no dealings with Samaritans”* [John 4:9b], the Samaritan, unlike the others, *“had compassion”* [v33]. He goes to the beaten man to administer aid and bind his wounds. Then, lifting him on his own animal, the Samaritan carries him to an inn, paying from his own purse for lodging while the man recovers. Kingdom disciples are reminded that while we were dead in our sins, Christ had compassion and cared for us. [Rom. 5:8]

Jesus asks, *“Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?”* Obviously, the one who showed mercy. Our Lord responds, Go and do likewise. The lawyer's question, who is my neighbor? is academic. Jesus demonstrates the real question to be, Am I a neighbor to those unfortunate people the Lord places in my path, those in need of love and help? Or am I uncaring like the religious men in the parable? Do I ignore those in need and go on about my business?

The Lord followed the lawyer's response to the question on eternal life by saying, *“You have answered correctly . . . Do this and you will live.”* Kingdom disciples understand what Christ teaches here:

“by works of the law no one will be justified.” [Gal. 2:16b] Jesus says, I found you alone, helpless and dying. Out of my love and grace, I have given you new life. Go in the strength of the Holy Spirit and live in victory as I have commanded!



Rembrandt, *The Good Samaritan*

Evening Lesson, Wednesday, October 9, 2019