

# STUDY NOTES ON THE PARABLE OF THE

## GOOD SAMARITAN: -

- A Jewish Lawyer – that is, someone who was learned in the Hebrew Law, asked Jesus, with the motive of tempting Him, “*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*” This he did, because he was trying to deceive or mislead Christ, to say something that could be used against Him, by the Jewish authorities. Jesus responded by asking the Lawyer what was written in the Law – that is, within the writings of Moses. The Lawyer gives the correct answer – he quoted the Two Great Commandments – Supreme Love to God; and Love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus assured the Lawyer, that he had indeed given the correct answer, and if He practiced these two supreme principles of love, he would indeed have eternal life.

Luke 10:25 – 28: - “And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readeest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.”

- The Lawyer’s first answer was based upon the Two Great Commandments, which originated in the Scriptures, or what we today call the Old Testament writings.

Deuteronomy 6:4 & 5: - “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

Leviticus 19:18: - “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.”

- The following New Testament Scriptures make it clear that keeping the Second Great Commandment – “**Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**” – is fulfilled by obedience to the Last Six Commandments of the Decalogue, which outline our duty to our neighbor – our fellow man or woman. This is what the Second Great Commandment looks like in practice.

Matthew 19:16 – 21: - “And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.”

Romans 13:8 – 10: - “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly

comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.”

Galatians 5:13 & 14: - “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

James 2:8 – 12: - “If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.”

**NOTE:** - How would our Supreme Love to God therefore be manifested? In obeying from an heart of love, the first four commandments, which outline our duty to our Maker!

- The Lawyer responded to Jesus’ straight forward answer, with the question, “*Who is my neighbour?*” This question was not asked from a good motive by the Lawyer, but in an attempt to justify himself. Jesus then tells the well-known Parable of the Good Samaritan.

In brief, a certain man was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho, and was attacked, beaten and robbed by a group of thieves, leaving him, battered and half dead. A Jewish priest came down right past him, saw him lying there wounded, did nothing to aid him, and passed by on the other side. A Jewish Levite actually went over to examine him, rendered no aid, and passed by on the other side. Eventually a despised Samaritan [from the Jewish perspective], saw the wounded man lying there, he was moved with compassion towards him; he rendered first aid and attended to his wounds. He set him upon his own beast, traveled to an Inn, continued to care for him all through that night. On the next day, as he was leaving to continue on his journey, he paid the Inn-keeper funds to continue to look after him, and if he spent more on the wounded man’s care than the Samaritan had supplied him with, when he returned again on his next journey, he would repay the Inn-keeper the extra money he had expended.

Luke 10:29 – 35: - “But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*, and went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.”

- Jesus then asked the Lawyer, who he thought had been a neighbor to the poor man who had been attacked by the thieves? The Lawyer’s answer while being correct, showed his deep seated Jewish prejudice – he couldn’t even bring himself to say the word “Samaritan”. He replied – “*He that showed mercy on him.*” Jesus told the Lawyer, that he should do likewise. Thus ends the Parable.

Luke 10:36 & 37: - “Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.”

- The Jewish prejudiced mindset and attitude towards the Samaritans is revealed in the following passages, as well as by the Lawyer’s refusal to use the word “Samaritan”.

John 4:6 – 9: - “Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.”

John 8:48: - “Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?”

- The Samaritan practiced mercy and goodness to his neighbor – someone who desperately needed his help. He showed compassion to a person who was from a race [that is, a Jew<sup>1</sup>] that hated the Samaritan’s for who they were, simply because of the fact that they were Samaritans. He practiced mercy to his people’s enemies, just as the Scriptures have exhorted us to do.

Exodus 23:4 & 5: - “If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.”

Proverbs 25:21 & 22: - “If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.”

Matthew 5:43 – 45: - “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

Luke 6:35 & 36: - “But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to* the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.”

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<sup>1</sup> While the text of the Parable does not specify if the victim of the assault and robbery was Jewish, we can draw that inference from the fact, that often in the gospels, non-Jewish individuals are clearly identified in the gospel narratives.

For example: - The woman of Samaria – John 4:7; the Greek – Syrophenician woman – Mark 7:25; the Greek who desired to see Jesus – John 12:20 & 21; Simon a Cyrenian – Luke 23:26. When no mention is made of the individual’s specific race in the gospels, generally this indicates that the individual was a Jew.

Not only did Jesus teach His disciples to live by this moral conduct towards their enemies, He actually put it into practise Himself under the extreme provocation of His arrest and crucifixion.

Luke 22:49 – 51: - “When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.”

Luke 23:34:- “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.”

Romans 12:20 & 21: - “Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

- Let us not forgot that the Samaritan was actually demonstrating some of God’s characteristics, by showing compassion, mercy and pity upon the wounded man. God is described as being compassionate, merciful and full of pity.

Psalm 86:15: - “But thou, O Lord, *art* a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.”

Psalm 103:13: - “Like as a father pitieth *his* children, *so* the LORD pitieth them that fear him.”

Psalm 111:4: - “He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.”

Psalm 112:4: - “Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: *he is* gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.”

Psalm 145:8: - “The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.”

Luke 6:36: - “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.”

James 5:11: - “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

- Being merciful is clearly more important in the Lord’s eyes, than practising religious observances, without mercy. The unmerciful attitude and the complete lack of compassion to the assault victim, demonstrated by the Jewish Priest and the Levite, demonstrated the heartless attitude of the Jewish Pharisees, which attitude Jesus rebuked.

Hosea 6:6: - “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”

Micah 6:7 & 8: - “Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression, the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

Matthew 5:7: - “Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”

1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:8: - “Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous.”

Matthew 9:10 – 13: - “And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Matthew 23:23: - “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

James 2:13: - “For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.”

**Living out the Two Great Commandments from a heart of love to God and to love our neighbor as ourselves, as the Samaritan demonstrated by helping the assaulted and robbed victim in the Parable, is verified by these simple words of Jesus – “this do, and thou shalt live.”**