

Our Duty to Serve Others

Luke 10: 30-37

Our text today is very familiar to even the earliest of Bible students. We have read of the Good Samaritan many times. Although it is an account we all know well, we tend to forget the context in which Jesus spoke these words. He had been confronted by a lawyer asking about eternal life. After being instructed to love God and love his neighbor as himself, the man questioned: who is my neighbor? Jesus answers his question through a parable.

There is certainly a picture of salvation presented in this passage that I hope to bring out, but the focus of Jesus' words concerned our loving and serving others. All who belong to the Lord are obligated to serve others. It isn't optional; we are commanded to do so. We are never more like our Lord than when we love and serve others as He did.

Our world has become a busy place. We are surrounded by those who need assistance in some way or another. It is easy to become unconscious of, or simply ignore the needs of others if we aren't careful. We must make an effort to be used of the Lord in service to others. I want to examine the [details](#) of this parable as we consider: [Our Duty to Serve Others](#).

I. Jesus Spoke of a Traveler (30) – [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.](#) Consider:

A. His Journey – [And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.](#) We find that he made his way from Jerusalem toward Jericho. The journey was about 15 to 20 miles in length and required going through a wilderness area. It was a dangerous path to travel because thieves and robbers often hid out along the route between the two cities.

- The traveler pictures many in our world today. They have left the place where God's presence dwells in search of the lure of the world. Jerusalem sat on a hill and one had to travel down in altitude to get to Jericho. The same is true today. The lives of many are on a downward path, heading into dangerous territory.

B. His Jeopardy – [and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.](#) As we discussed, this area was the haunt of thieves and robbers. This man fell among the thieves; they stole his raiment, beat him, and left him to die alone in the wilderness. They were totally unconcerned about his well being.

- Sadly this is often the case for those who seek the lure of the world. It looks appealing from a distance, but once one begins to travel the path of the world, it always leads to despair and suffering. Our world is filled with those who have been abused by the world and left to die alone. We are surrounded by those whose choices have led to circumstances of extreme difficulty and they are unable to overcome in themselves. They desperately need someone to care and lend a helping hand. If someone doesn't reach them, they will likely die in the wilderness of sin.

II. Jesus Spoke of a Tragedy (31-32) – *And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.* ^[32] *And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.* The traveler had been left for dead, but he would soon be noticed by others. Their actions reveal a great tragedy that we must seek to avoid. Notice:

A. Their Position – Jesus reveals that a priest and a Levite both encountered the man on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. Some scholars estimate there were over 10,000 priests and Levites living in Jericho. These men were very familiar with the Word of God and worked within the Temple. The priests and Levites would have been a continual presence on the road between the two cities.

- Many today know the Word of God and we are present in our communities, encountering the hurting each day. We know what we are expected to do and how we are to live.

B. Their Potential – Being a priest and a Levite, these men had the potential to be a great help to the traveler. They had the truth of God and all the resources available to them from the Temple. They could have helped the man while he was in a very difficult situation.

- As believers, we are in the world, but not of the world. Our communities encounter those who attend church and know what the Lord expects of us every day. At least in our area, there are enough church people to make a difference. We have the potential to make an impact on those around us. Whether we do or not is up to us.

C. Their Presumption – We find that the priest saw the man and quickly moved to the other side of the road. Clearly he didn't want to be bothered with the man. The Levite also saw the man, and even approached him, but he too moved to the other side of the road and continued on his way. These men decided the poor, beaten traveler wasn't worthy of their time. They quickly moved on without any concern or a second thought.

- How do we view circumstances we encounter each day? We can make a difference, but we must seize the opportunities we have. We cannot behave as the priest and Levite did, assuming there is nothing we could do. Many times we are judgmental and think that folks have gotten what they deserve. Some are just facing difficult circumstances and need someone to care!

III. Jesus Spoke of a Touch (33-35) – The traveler was in desperate need, and two men had already passed him by without helping. The priest and Levite were not the last to encounter the man. Consider the details of his encounter with a Samaritan.

A. The Character (33a) – *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was.* While those who should have shown compassion didn't, one who was not expected to did. Samaritans were despised by the Jews. They were viewed in the same light as Gentiles. Jesus makes a strong point that the least expected, and even those considered unworthy by society, can make an impact and be used of the Lord. God doesn't see people as we see them. He looks on the heart instead of the outward appearance. He gave His life for all men, regardless of race or any other factor. All can be saved, and all can be used of the Lord for His glory.

B. The Circumstances (33a) – *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was.* We find the Samaritan happened upon the traveler as he journeyed. He wasn't expecting to find someone; he came across a need as he traveled. This reminded me of the need to be open to opportunities to be used of Christ. The Lord is at work around us every day and we need to be mindful of opportunities as they arise. The Lord places people and needs within our lives for a purpose. How we handle them is determined by our obedience to the Lord.

C. The Compassion (33b-34) – *and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,^[34] 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.* The Samaritan reacted much differently than the priest and Levite. He didn't notice the man's need and leave him in his situation without offering help. He had compassion on the man, binding up his wounds and treating them temporarily the best way he could. He placed the injured man on his animal and brought him to a place where he could be cared for. His compassion moved him to act in response to the need of another.

- Compassion is a distinguishable trait of Christian character. Jesus Himself was moved with compassion many times. In fact, He cared so much for us that He was willing to bear our sin, suffering the judgment we deserved, and die in our place. He loved us so much that He was willing to die for us!

D. The Cost (35a) – *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.* The Samaritan didn't just take the man to the inn and leave him there for someone else to care for. He spent the night himself, likely seeing to the welfare of the man, and before he departed, he left money for the continued care of the traveler. We find it cost the Samaritan personally to care for the man and he was willing to make the sacrifice.

- There will be times when we are called upon to sacrifice for the needs of others. Most are willing to help as long as it is convenient or doesn't cost anything. Few are willing to make real sacrifices to help another. Jesus certainly was willing to pay the cost for us. He assumed a debt he didn't owe and paid our account in full. He paid the ultimate price by giving His life in our place.

E. The Commitment (35b) – *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.* Although the Samaritan had to continue on his journey, he did not forsake the man. He left provision with a promise to come again and repay any further expenses that were incurred. He was determined to ensure the man's needs were met entirely. He was committed enough to do all he possibly could to meet the needs of the man.

- I realized the Samaritan would have to make another trip to check on the man. This was not a "once and done" encounter. I wonder if we are willing to make that type of a commitment. It is easy to talk with someone and offer words of encouragement, or the promise of prayer, here at worship, but are we willing to follow up tomorrow and the next day. Are we committed to seeing the needs of others through to the end? Are we willing to inconvenience ourselves again and again if necessary to meet a need? We certainly need to be committed to the cause of Christ while showing His love toward others.

Conclusion: *Vv.36-37 – Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?* ^[37] *And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.* Although the lawyer hated to admit it, he knew the Samaritan had shown compassion while the Jewish priest and Levite refused. Jesus commanded him to go and do as the Samaritan had done. We too are expected to serve others, even if it comes at a cost or creates an inconvenience. Our world is filled with those who need to experience the love of Christ. We are to love and serve others as the Lord commands, even as we love ourselves.

How is your commitment to serve? Are you being obedient to the Lord and His desire for you? If not, I urge you to seek Him for strength and guidance. If you are unsaved, seek the Lord in salvation. He alone can provide for your need. I can serve you, but I can't save you!