

Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Discipleship #5 "A life of love and service" Luke 10: 25-37 w/c 7th February by Jean Davies

Lawyers are full of questions as befits their trade, and this was no less true in the days when Jesus lived on earth.

Pray before reading Luke 10:25-37. The lawyer of our study asks Jesus a question to which, as an expert in the law, he should have, and obviously did, already know the answer (vs27, 28). His question "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" was not that of a genuine seeker but was posed to test Jesus' response, to see if Jesus merited the lawyer's address of "Teacher". He soon found out, though, that Jesus had this "annoying" way of replying to questions from "learned" men that left them speechless, deflated and challenged. But, in answering the lawyer's next, rather haughty, face-saving question "And who is my neighbour?", Jesus teaches not only the lawyer, but His disciples, and us, too, if we would be His disciples.

Jesus, in effect, tells the Parable of the Good Samaritan in a way that turns the lawyer's question on its head; from "Who is my neighbour?" to "Am I a good neighbour, and how do I demonstrate it?".

The lawyer, for nationalistic and religious reasons, would have wanted the Jew to be the hero of the parable, and not the Samaritan. **Q1 Who were the Samaritans?** Read 2 Kings 17:24-41 to learn who and why they were so despised by the Jews. See Luke 9:51-56 as an example of their open mutual hostility.

Q2 Who are the Samaritans in our society, or in your own sphere of relationships?

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is a 17mile steep descent from 2,500 ft above sea level to about 800 ft below sea level through rocky "wilderness" country. Perfect for robbers; not so good for defenceless travellers (v30). We are not told why the priest and Levite failed to give help. Was the priest following the letter of the Levitical law (see Lev 21:1-3)? Did the Levite lack pity? Were they both so fearful of being attacked themselves that any love towards an injured man quickly took a back seat? Whatever their reasons, they both jumped to the conclusion that this was not something they should get involved in, and they walked by on the other side. **Q3 When have we jumped to conclusions and "walked by on the other side"?** **Q4 How do we go about ascertaining others' needs and meeting them? Can you share personal examples?**

"But a Samaritan" (v33). Here is the turning point of Jesus' story. **Love enters** in the form of someone who would normally be despised and rejected. **Love acts** "... took pity on him". **Love serves** (v34). Love and service are bonded together in heart, soul, mind and strength. The Samaritan would have no debt outstanding except the continuing debt to love (see Romans 13:8). Giving the equivalent of two days' wages as a down payment, he promises to reimburse the innkeeper, by whom he is trusted, upon his return (v35). **Q5 Where do you see these verses (33 – 35) relating to the Lord Jesus Himself?**

Our study ends with a question (v36) and a command (v37). Note that the lawyer does not answer "the Samaritan" but "The one who had mercy on him". Jesus, with his usual directness, simply gives the command "Go and do likewise!". In directing the lawyer, He is also directing us as we read and study this Scripture. With His help, we can be the good neighbours of love and service that He requires all His disciples to be.