

# DECODING THE PARABLES - Lesson 6



## THE GOOD SAMARITAN – LUKE 10:25-37

Parables carry a central meaning and we need to ask, why was this parable told? Jesus was answering a young lawyer's question.

**Luke 10:25** *"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"*

A lawyer in Biblical times was a profession focused on interpreting the Law of Moses. The lawyer knowing the law, probes for an answer. Notice that he asked two questions.

His first question was "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus did not answer his question "but used a typical legal term. What is written in the law? How do you read (interpret) the law? Jesus made the lawyer answer his own question.

**Luke 10:26-27** *"He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said, "'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND,' and 'YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF.'"*

Jesus then said to him you have answered correctly, now live out the answer!

**Luke 10:28** *"And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."*

The lawyer then tried to justify himself and shifted the conversation toward loving your neighbour by asking "who is my neighbour?"

**Luke 10:29** *"But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"*

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was a steep descent of more than 20km infested with robbers and thieves. Jericho was also called the City of Palm Trees but was labelled a City of Curse (remember Joshua conquered the city with the walls crumbling to give access for the invading Israelites). Jerusalem means "City of Peace." Jesus used three characters in the story, namely a priest, a Levite and a Samaritan. The fourth character was most likely a Jewish businessman who became a victim of robbers. One would have expected the priest to stop to help the desperate man (there were 12 000 priests living in Jericho who regularly travelled to Jerusalem to make sacrifices in the temple). This priest, called to make sacrifices for God's people, was travelling home to Jericho after serving the temple.



**Luke 10:31** *“Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.”*

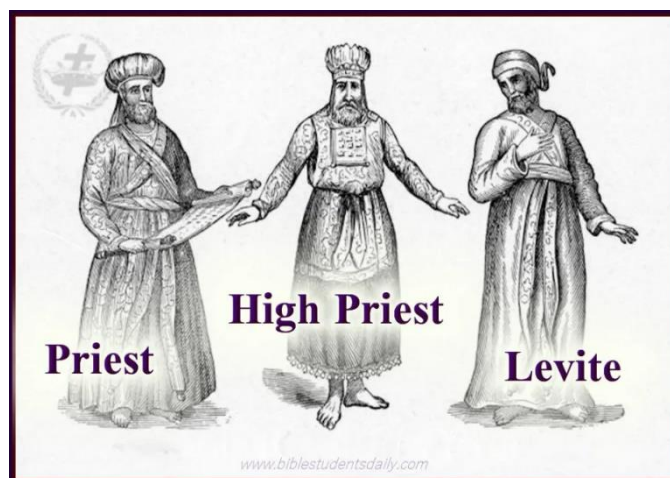
To him, serving the temple was a duty and stopping to help a desperate soul, a hindrance. Someone has said that the reason why the priest did not stop to attend to the victim is because he noticed that the man was already robbed. The poor man could be of no benefit to the priest.

The Levite does exactly the same and ignores the victim.

**Luke 10:32** *“Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.”*

A Levite was also of Jewish priestly order but carried out a lesser duty in the temple ensuring that all the items required for worship were in place. He too felt that he had fulfilled his duty of service and was eager to get home to the comfort of his family.

It took a Samaritan, the most unexpected person to rescue the victim. The Jews despised the Samaritans for they were half-casts. This Samaritan attended to all the needs of the bleeding man and demonstrated the compassion of a true neighbour.



**Luke 10:33-35** *“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So, he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’”*

The Parable answers two questions – how to be saved before the cross (now Romans 10:9 is applicable), and who is your neighbour (a sinner in need)? Remember the parable itself is an illustration and any further analogy read into the story is a departure from what the parable illustrates.

## A LESSON

A neighbour is not the person next door to you, separated from you by a fence or wall. Nearness does not constitute your neighbourliness. The priest and Levite were closely related to the Jewish victim and yet failed to help him. The Samaritan was of another race and culture yet he reached out in the true spirit of neighbourliness. V36 Jesus asked the lawyer who was the good neighbour?

**Luke 10:37** *“And he said, ‘He who showed mercy on him.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’”*

## FINAL WORD OF APPLICATION

Did not God see humanity as His neighbour in need of rescue, a world of sinners robbed of their true identity, stripped of their dignity, wounded by sin, unable to rise, forsaken and left for dead?

God, like the good Samaritan, is moved with compassion and Christ Jesus, His Son, comes to cover our sinful shame and

to clothe us with His righteousness. He gives us His Holy Spirit (John 15:26) as a comforter and like the good Samaritan, promises to return for us – Luke 10:35. Note that the good Samaritan gives 2 denarii to the Inn Keeper - this was 2 days wages. According to Mosaic Law, this was like ransom money for a soul – see Exodus 30:12-13. A half Shekel was equal to 2 denarii as in the parable. (Every Israelite had to pay a registration tax as a memorial of God's protection to be used in the Tabernacle).

## SUMMARY

The parable radiantly reflects the beauty of the Gospel. The priests are false leaders, the Levites are false teachers, the victim is a sinner, the Samaritan the Saviour who comes to rescue us and to give us His Holy Spirit as Comforter – Ephesians 1:13. With the promise, He'll come back to receive us – 1 Thessalonians 4:11-18.

## Coins of the Gospels

