

# THE GOOD NEIGHBOUR

From Luke 10

One day, an expert in God's Law asked Jesus a hard question to test him. 'What must I do to get eternal life?' 'Well, you know God's Law. What does it say? How do you understand it?' Jesus asked him. 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind,' came the quick reply. 'And love your neighbour as you love yourself,' he added. Jesus responded, 'You have answered well. If you do this, you will have eternal life.'

But the lawyer wasn't satisfied, so he asked Jesus another question. 'Who is my neighbour?'

Jesus answered him with a parable. 'There was a man who travelled from Jerusalem to Jericho. He found himself surrounded by thieves who tore the clothes off him and gave him a severe beating. They left him for dead on the road and went on their way. Soon after, a priest was walking down that road. When he saw the poor man, he walked past him on the other side. The same thing happened when a **Levite** came walking by. Then a **Samaritan** arrived. When the Samaritan saw the poor man, he had mercy on him and helped him. He cleaned his wounds and bandaged them up. He then lifted him onto the back of his own beast and travelled to an inn where he continued to care for him. The following day he gave two denarii to the innkeeper and asked him to care for the injured man. "Look after him, and whatever more you spend on his care, I will pay you back when I return,"



'Then Jesus asked the lawyer, 'Which of these three men do you think was a neighbour to the poor man who was beaten by the thieves?' The lawyer replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.' Jesus told him, 'Well then, you go and do the same.'

## WHAT'S THE POINT:

The expert in God's Law wanted to know how to earn a place in heaven. Jesus taught him that he needed to live a perfect life to be good enough for God's kingdom. Of course, that was impossible because the man's heart was sinful and full of self-righteousness. We never love God and others, perfectly. We can never be good enough to get to heaven by our own good works. We need someone to rescue us from our slavery to sin and to offer us God's gift of eternal life. We need Jesus.

## LOOK BACK:

Read Leviticus 19:2, 18, 37 and Deuteronomy 6:5-7

There is only one true God, and he is holy. God's people must love him completely. They must treat God's Word seriously. Each person is to love his neighbour as himself.

## CHECK THIS OUT:

Read Deuteronomy 28:64-68, 1 Kings 11:1-13 and 2 Kings 17:24-31

When King Solomon turned from God and went after false gods, God was angry and split the nation into two kingdoms. These kingdoms were called Israel (10 tribes in the north) and Judah (2 tribes in the south). Israel and Judah had different kings. They often fought each other. God allowed the northern kingdom to be conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC. The southern kingdom was conquered by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Both kingdoms were exiled from their land. In 722 BC, the Assyrian king brought foreigners to live in the Israelite city of Samaria. Some Jews had remained there, and they married the foreign Assyrians who were Gentiles. They also embraced Assyrian culture. So, the Samaritans had partly Jewish and partly Gentile ancestry. These differences meant there was a lot of bad feeling between them as well.

## THINK:

Do you love God and your neighbour? Can you be good enough to get to heaven without Jesus?





# COUNT THE COST

From Matthew 10 & Luke 14

Large crowds were with Jesus, and he began to teach them about the cost of being his disciple.

'If you want to be my disciple, you must love me more than your father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and even your own life. If you do not love me more than these then you cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not deny himself and follow me wholeheartedly cannot be my disciple. If any of you wants to build a tower, do you not first of all sit down and work out if you can afford it so that you can finish the job? If you do not do this, you may not be able to complete the job once the foundation has been laid. Then everyone who sees what has happened will ridicule you. They will say, "This man started to build a tower but couldn't finish it!"

Or suppose a king is under the threat of war with another king. Will he not sit down first of all to work out if he can win the war with his army of ten thousand men against the other king's army of twenty thousand men? If he concludes that he cannot win, then he will send his ambassadors to the other king while he is a great distance away to negotiate terms of peace. So, if you want to be my disciple, you must give up everything you have and surrender your life to follow me.

Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, it is impossible to make it salty again. It is worthless, not fit for use in the soil or the dung heap, so it is thrown out. Those of you who can hear, listen carefully to what I am saying!

## WHAT'S THE POINT:

What does it cost to be a Christian? Nothing, because God's mercy is freely offered. You could also say it costs a lot, because those who receive God's mercy surrender their lives to King Jesus. The two illustrations of the farmer and the king described the personal cost of following Jesus and encouraged the hearer to consider the cost. The man who built the tower was free to build or not. However, the king had a greater king coming against him. His choice was to be defeated or surrender. Therefore, consider the personal cost of following Jesus. And consider the dreadful cost of failing to surrender to the greatest king, Jesus Christ.

## CHECK THIS OUT:

Read Leviticus 2:13, Numbers 18:19, Job 6:6 and Luke 14:34-35

Salt was useful for many different things in the ancient world. The priests used it in sacrifices; to make covenants; to enhance flavour in food, and to mix into manure piles to make fertiliser. When speaking about discipleship though, Jesus challenged his hearers to be undeniably different in every way to the world. They have surrendered their lives completely to him and are useful in their service of Jesus, bringing glory to him.

## THINK:

To be a Christian, or not to be a Christian?  
That is the question!

