

JCB

The Good Samaritan
and
The Helpless Sinner

Radio Sermons



by
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Introduction

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him." Luke 10:33.

The Good Samaritan parable is one of the most misunderstood passages in the Bible. This encounter between the lawyer and our Lord is recorded only by Luke.

The Good Samaritan in Type

The story of the Good Samaritan is in keeping with the rest of Luke's gospel. It presents the Lord Jesus Christ as the Perfect Man and Perfect Neighbor.

Many people think the parable of the Good Samaritan simply sets forth a lesson in charity. This passage has been used to promote the social gospel, the teaching that we are saved through our good works.

God's Grace

When told of their need for God's saving grace, many frequently comment: "I don't need a Saviour. The religion of the Good Samaritan is good enough for me." Those who react in this manner are basing their hopes for eternity on doing good to their fellow man and are completely overlooking the fact that they are under condemnation. No one (except our Lord Himself) has ever *truly* loved his neighbor as himself!

To face the Good Samaritan story honestly is to realize the impossibility of obtaining eternal life by works. Eternal life only comes through what Christ has done. When we realize our fallen condition, when we realize that we are helpless as this dying man on the Jericho to

Jerusalem road, we are ready to submit to God and receive the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the thrust of the Good Samaritan parable. It presents the Gospel of God's grace in understandable terms.

We should recognize that the Lord *was* trying to awaken the lawyer's conscience to his responsibility to his neighbor. Yet it is evident that there was something far more than that in His mind. What we have is not primarily a lesson in charity, but rather, the story of a man trying to maintain his own righteousness and totally failing to recognize his lost condition!

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1.

The Insincere Questioner

“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 readest 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. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?” Luke 10-25-29.

The setting of the Good Samaritan story is when “a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him (the Lord), saying, Master what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

A Tempting Question

This lawyer was not a sincere inquirer. Scripture says, “A certain lawyer stood up, and *tempted* him (Jesus).” The word “tempted” means “tested.” This smug lawyer was attempting to lead the Lord Jesus Christ into a trap. He was trying to trip Him up so that he could discredit His testimony.

“Lawyer” as it is used here means one who was schooled with respect to the law of Moses, that is, the Old Testament Scriptures, particularly the Pentateuch. This man was looked upon as a religious authority by the people of his day and would be comparable to a Doctor of

Divinity today.

This lawyer, of all people, should have known that no one could obtain eternal life by keeping the law of Moses, because no one had ever yet obeyed its precepts fully.

Eternal life does not come from "doing." It comes only from what has been done by God. Even the Old Testament Scriptures, of which this man was supposed to have expert knowledge, makes that principle clear. His ignorance of God's Word is announced to all by the very question he asked, "What must I *do* to inherit eternal life?"

A Counter-Question

The Lord Jesus Christ answered this inquirer by asking him a question. This technique was often used by our Lord during His earthly ministry. The Lord asked, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?"

The Lord Jesus Christ never argued with one who was unreal. In this case, He put the lawyer on the defensive and left him to answer his own question. This would lead the lawyer to expose his attitude toward both God and his fellow man.

The law was given to show the corruption of the human heart. Paul says it was our "schoolmaster" to lead us to Christ. The law was given to reveal the specific character of sin. It was given to reveal the utter helplessness of man to obtain salvation by his works. The law was given to convict those who sought to establish their own righteousness.

A certain Gospel tract asks the question, "Do good people go to heaven?" The answer to this question is obviously "yes." The lawyer based his hope for eternal

life on the affirmative answer to this question.

But why do we need God's grace if good people go to heaven? The answer is that there are no "good people." All men are sinners. Romans 3:23 condemns Adam's race with the words "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

When the Lord Jesus Christ was addressed by the rich young ruler as "good Master," He responded by saying, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but God only." The Lord was pointing out that the young ruler could call Him good only if he recognized Him as God. But He also confirmed that no natural man is good in God's sight through his own merit.

The Lord and the Law

The Lord's question comes with terrific force. "What is written in the law? How readest *thou*?" The lawyer failed to recognize the implications of the law upon himself when he replied, "*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.*"

With his reply, the lawyer summarized the "two tables" of the law as did Moses in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. Deuteronomy 6:5 reads, "*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 reads, "*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.*"

It was a sad commentary on the state of this lawyer's soul that he could cite those words so easily and yet give no evidence that he in any way sensed his lost condition.

What son of Adam has ever totally lived up to these commandments? And James writes, *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."* James 2:10.

To the lawyer's quick answer, the Lord Jesus Christ calmly replied (no doubt with a touch of irony in His voice), *"Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live."* This was a sharp thrust with the two-edged sword of the Word of God. All the lawyer had to do was keep the whole law every moment of his life without a single violation at any time or any place, and he would inherit eternal life. This awesome requirement seemed to make very little impression on the smug, self-righteous, scheming lawyer. Yet all the Lord was doing was pointing out what the law demanded.

A Dead Conscience

Had there been any true exercise of conscience on the part of this insincere questioner, he would have realized that he had violated the law many times already. He would have realized that he was condemned by the law, and that should have struck terror to his heart. He would have then asked how he might be delivered from the law's curse. Certainly he could not be saved by keeping a law that he had repeatedly violated.

But his conscience was dead. The lawyer attempted to justify himself by asking another question. "Who is my neighbor?" This telltale question showed up the true state of this man's heart. He hoped to inherit eternal life by his "works"; yet, he was indifferent to the human needs about him.

This man might just as well have asked, "Who is my God?" His question about the neighbor proved that he had no real knowledge of God. If one has not discovered his neighbor whom he can see, he certainly can have no

real love and awareness of the God whom he has not seen.

It was in reply to the question "Who is my neighbor?" that the Lord told "the parable of the Good Samaritan."

2.

Jerusalem and Jericho

"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." Luke 10:30.

The Lord begins His story by speaking of a certain man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. This man fell among thieves. They wounded him and robbed him. They stripped him of his garments and left him half dead by the wayside.

Jerusalem

This story is rich in types. It is not an accident that Jerusalem and Jericho are mentioned. Throughout Scripture, Jerusalem typifies heaven and the estate of God. Hebrews 11:8-10 tells us, *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."*

In Hebrews 12:22 we read, *"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels."* Jerusalem is a type of man's lost estate. It is a

type of that perfect dwelling place in the presence of God. It represents that which man lost in the Fall and what he cannot regain in his own right.

Jericho

Jericho typifies the lowest depths of man's lost estate. Jericho is the city of the curse. In Joshua 6:25-26 we read these words: "*And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.*" Thus Jericho became the city of the curse.

Did God forget the curse that He had caused Joshua to pronounce upon Jericho? No, God forgets nothing. Many years later, in the days of Ahab, king of Israel, Jericho was rebuilt. Against the express commandment of God, Hiel the Bethelite rebuilt Jericho.

A brief record of this rebuilding of Jericho is in I Kings 16:34. "*In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.*"

So Jerusalem represents the city where man may dwell in the presence of God. Jericho represents the place of the curse, the place of the sons of Adam who are separated from God by sin. It represents the place from which man must climb if he is to live in the presence of God. But it also represents the place from which man has no ability to climb. It represents the state of spiritual death.

3.

The Man, the Priest and the Levite

“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.” Luke 10:30-32.

The Man

In the man who was robbed on the Jericho Road, we see pictured the unfortunate victims of sin and violence of every type. The sons and daughters of Adam have been ravished by sin and are in the place of the curse. They have been stripped of their garments of innocence by sin just as Adam and Eve lost their garments of innocence in the original sin. Without garments of righteousness, their nakedness is exposed. They are wounded unto death by sin and are eternally separated from that heavenly Jerusalem of God's promise. They have no ability to climb from Jericho to Jerusalem by their own power. They are spiritually dead in the place of the curse.

The stricken man on the Jericho Road is a vivid picture of man in his natural state. Natural man has been robbed of his innocence and purity by the Fall. In his natural state he is helpless and defiled. And within himself he is totally unable to regain his former estate.

He needs one who can save him from his sin and its consequences.

Several people observed the dying man in the dust of the Jericho Road but made no move to help him. The Lord said, *"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."*

The Priest

These two men represent "legal religion." The priest is one who represents man before God. This man represents the Godward side of the two tables of the law. He represents that side of the law that was summarized when the lawyer 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."*

The priest represents the spiritual side of the legal covenant. He saw the afflicted man but feared to defile himself by touching one so near to death and so polluted by his own blood. So he "passed by on the other side" without rendering any aid to the stricken man.

The Levite

The Levites were the tribe of Israel that was assigned to the ministry of the temple. The Levite was to minister to his fellow man. The Levite represents the manward side of the table of the law. He represents that part of the law spoken by the lawyer when he said, *"And thy neighbor as thyself."*

The Levite seemed to have more interest in the dying man than the priest did. We are told that he "came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side." Because

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of his assigned ministry of "helps," the Levite was interested in evaluating the condition of this dying man. However, after his observation, he did not consider it his duty to assist one in so deplorable a condition. So "he passed by on the other side."

Religion

These two men represent "legal religion." They represent what the lawyer cited as his means of obtaining eternal life. But neither of the two men brought life to the afflicted man. Neither was able to help him.

Insofar as the law was concerned, there was no help for this dying son of Adam. The lawyer had placed his hope for eternity in a system that had no power to save. The answer to his question "What must I *do* to inherit eternal life?" is there was nothing he could "*do*." Help must come from an External Source that has the power to save.

The dying man on the Jericho Road needed One who in His grace would be able to lift him out of his state of spiritual death and help him to the place of life. He needed a qualified "Good Samaritan."

4.

The Good Samaritan

"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." Luke 10:33-34.

Help finally did come, and from a most unexpected source. We must recall that Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. But the Lord's words tell us, "A certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him." This is probably the last man in the world from whom the poor, wounded Jew could expect mercy. But the Samaritan's heart was filled with sympathy for the helpless sufferer.

Jesus and the Samaritan

There is another man of whom this could be said. The Lord Jesus Christ, the very One who stood before this mocking lawyer, also had been rejected by the Jews. They held as much contempt for Him as they did for the Samaritans. In fact, the Jews had sought to express their contempt for Jesus, calling Him a Samaritan. In John 8:48 we read, *"Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?"* To the Jews of our Lord's day, the most degrading name they could call an enemy was "Samaritan."

In a technical sense, the Lord Jesus Christ after the flesh was a Samaritan. Samaritans were a mixed racial people. They were the descendants of the racial mixing that took place after the northern kingdom of Israel was carried into captivity in Assyria. To the Jews, the Samaritans were "half-breeds." The Lord Jesus Christ after the flesh, though descended from King David and the patriarchs, also had a Gentile strain in the seed of His humanity. The genealogy in Matthew 1 makes this clear. In that genealogy, three women are mentioned: Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth. All three were Gentiles, and all contributed to the line of the Lord Jesus Christ. There was a Gentile strain in the royal lineage of the House of David. The Pharisees may have had these facts of our Lord Jesus Christ's genealogy in mind when they said, "Thou art a Samaritan." John 8:48.

The Rejected Saviour

The one who helped the dying traveler pictures our blessed Lord Himself. He was despised and forsaken of men just as the Samaritans of His day were. Isaiah prophesied of our Lord's rejection, writing, "*For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*" Isa. 53:2-3.

It was the Lord Jesus Christ who came to us in our need. He manifested His boundless grace toward us. Ezekiel prophetically recorded the Lord's own words that relate directly to the story of the Good Samaritan and that show beyond doubt that He was referring to Himself as the Good Samaritan in this story. Ezekiel wrote, "*None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to*

have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." Ezek. 16:5-6.

The Good Samaritan is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He was despised and rejected of His own people when He came to help and save them in their time of need.

Oil and Wine

The Samaritan, without any thought of receiving something for himself, came to where the helpless man was and bound up the poor man's wounds. He poured in "oil" and "wine" and sat him on his own beast and brought him to an inn. Thus the Samaritan proved himself a real neighbor to the afflicted Jew. He did not leave him by the roadside but took him to an inn where he might have proper care.

"Oil" and "wine" were the medicines of that day. These were used as disinfectants in treating open wounds. Then clean bindings were placed upon the wounds.

Even these medicines are not without spiritual significance. "Oil" is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The olive oil in the temple lamps in the Old Testament symbolized the Holy Spirit of God in His illuminating and never-failing power. The oil used in the Old Testament to anoint priests and kings was symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Here oil represents the regenerating and life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. The Good Samaritan applied the "oil" of the Spirit of God to give life to this helpless man.

The Good Samaritan also poured in "wine." Wine is

symbolic of joy and spiritual fellowship. Wine is also symbolic of the life-giving power of the poured-out blood of the Saviour. These spiritual medicines were able to restore life and well-being to the helpless traveler. These are the spiritual medicines that our "Good Samaritan" pours into the putrifying wounds of our fallen nature as He comes to give us life.

Using the best remedy he knew, the Samaritan proved himself a real neighbor to the afflicted Jew. This is what the Lord Jesus Christ does for every sinner who will receive what He has to offer. He has come "to seek and to save that which was lost." He was the True Neighbor needed by this lawyer who had come to test the true "Good Samaritan."

5.

The Halfway House

“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.” Luke 10:34.

After applying medicines and treating the wounded traveler's wounds by the roadside, the “Good Samaritan” did not leave him there. Rather, he took him to an inn where he might receive proper care. And that inn was not located in Jericho, the city of the curse. It was a half-way house, located midway between Jericho and Jerusalem.

The Compassionate Samaritan

Speaking of the Good Samaritan, Luke tells us that “he 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.” Verse 34. Although he went out of his way to help this dying man, the Samaritan extended every effort for his salvation. He turned aside in his journey, poured in the oil and the wine and bound up the man's wounds. Then he placed the wounded man on his own riding animal and took him to a place of refuge.

The man's enablement to move from his place of death to the place of life came by the grace of the Good Samaritan. And for the wounded traveler to ride on the man's beast, it was necessary that the Samaritan himself walk. All the power for this man's salvation came from One who was despised and rejected by the Jews.

The Compassionate Saviour

The Good Samaritan brought the wounded traveler to a halfway house on the Jericho Road. This inn pictures formerly helpless sinners who have been brought back from death by the Divine Samaritan. Those saved by the grace of God are in this accursed world, but they are not of it. They have been brought to the inn of the Good Samaritan to await the day when they can complete the journey to the heavenly Jerusalem. But in this inn they are not abandoned to their own strength or means. The Good Samaritan, the Saviour, left the means of support before He departed from the earth.

Those rescued by the Good Samaritan now reside at the inn, daily gaining spiritual strength, awaiting the return of the One who befriended them. When He returns, they will complete their journey to the heavenly Jerusalem.

6.

The Samaritan's Return

"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." Luke 10:35.

The Good Samaritan's interest in his patient did not cease when he had brought him to the inn. Before he continued his journey, "he took out two pence (that is, two 'denarii')." "Denarii" are Roman coins about the size of our twenty-five cent piece, but they had the purchasing power in those days of many times that amount. From the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, recorded in Matthew 20, we know that a denarius was the normal daily wage of the common laborer in our Lord's day. A man worked 12 hours in the fields for one denarius.

The denarius was also the amount required for one day's lodging at the better inns. Since the Samaritan left two denarii, it seems he anticipated the time of his absence — "two days."

The Samaritan gave the money to the innkeeper and said, "Take care of him." He promised to meet all further charges on his return. Note his exact words: "When I come again, I will repay thee." How suggestive this promise is! It reminds us that our blessed Lord is coming again. And when He returns, He will repay everything that has been done for Him.

No doubt the object of the Samaritan's grace grew

stronger day by day. Perhaps as the traveler's strength increased, he went to the door of the inn and looked up the road expectantly. If someone had asked him why he continued to look up that road, his reply might have been, "I'm looking for my friend, the one who was such a good neighbor to me in my need, the one to whom I owe my life. He said, 'I will come again.' I'm waiting for his return so I can express my gratitude for what he has done for me."

The Lord's Return

The traveler at the inn pictures this present age. We see the Lord's visible church, those saved by His grace, waiting in the halfway house of this earth, expecting momentarily to see the return of her Benefactor. He had promised to come and take His church home to His Father's house, the heavenly Jerusalem at the end of the long inclined road. We are in His care, covered by the bounty He left in the hands of the innkeeper.

The sum of two pence is significant because it anticipates a period of absence. Two pence covered the mending traveler's expenses for two days. And two days in God's sight represents 2,000 years of earthly time.

Hosea 6:1-2 specifies the time that the children of Israel will be kept in their present state of rejection and dispersion, during the Lord's earthly absence. Hosea prophesies the words that the remnant of God's chosen people will speak at the end of this present inter-advent age. *"Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."*

The "two days" of Hosea's prophecy coincide with the two days lodging paid for by the two denarii of the Good

Samaritan. Those who in this age are the objects of His grace can anticipate the time when their Benefactor will return for them. Peter provides the key needed to translate these heavenly "two days" into earthly time: *"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."* II Peter 3:8.

Should we not anticipate the return of our heavenly "Good Samaritan" after an absence of approximately 2,000 years?

7.

The Effects of the Story

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

After the Lord told the story of the Good Samaritan, He turned to the smug lawyer and asked, *“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?”*

Missing Salvation

That was a searching inquiry. It was designed to expose the selfishness of the lawyer's heart and to cause him to realize that he was *not* the Good Samaritan but, rather, the broken man on the Jericho Road. The lawyer needed someone to deliver him from sin.

But apparently the question was unsuccessful. The lawyer showed no realization of his need. He simply replied, *“He that shewed mercy on him.”* Of course, no thoughtful man could have answered otherwise.

The lawyer convicted himself by his own mouth. There was nothing further the Lord could say. Jesus simply enjoined him, *“Go, and do thou likewise.”* The lawyer missed the spiritual message, but perhaps he learned something. Jesus then left the lawyer to his own thoughts.

Had this man been an honest inquirer, he would have acknowledged that eternal life could not be obtained by law-keeping. He had violated the law many times and was under its curse. If his attitude toward God had been right, he would not have been indifferent to the plight of his neighbors.

Finding Salvation

There was no evidence of conviction; otherwise he would have exclaimed, "I am that man on the Jericho Road; I am the one who needs mercy!" And the Lord Jesus Christ would not have pointed him to the priest or the Levite for help. Rather, He would have said, "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost; I can heal your soul and undertake for you. I have come to give eternal life to all who put their trust in Me."

The point of the story of the Good Samaritan is that religion can do nothing for a fallen and defiled man. The priest and the Levite represent the two tables of the law, the Godward table and manward table. But once broken these two tables become a ministry of death and condemnation.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself bore that condemnation and died in our place. He died the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. He has manifested Himself as able to meet every need and to save for eternity all who put their trust in Him.

The End