**Family Service Talk 13th July 2025**

**Luke 10:25-37**

***25****On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”* ***26****“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”*

***27****He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2010&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25391c)*]; and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’[*[*d*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2010&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25391d)*]”*

***28****“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”* ***29****But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?”* ***30****In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.****31****A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.****32****So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.****33****But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.****34****He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.****35****The next day he took out two denarii[*[*e*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2010&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25399e)*] and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’*

***36****“Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”* ***37****The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”*

………………………………………………

**Talk**

The Bible is widely considered to be the best-selling book of all time. Christians know it to be God’s word – one of the ways he speaks to his people. We certainly have many copies of it here in church and I imagine each one of us has at least one copy at home so that we can read God’s word at any time and hear him speak through it. Sadly, although millions (or more) copies of the Bible are to be found on bookshelves all over the world, many are never opened.

However, even if people have never opened their Bible, they may know some of the stories to be found there and today’s Bible reading includes one of those. Indeed, the title of the story is part of everyday speech …. we may describe someone who has been kind and helpful as a ‘Good Samaritan’.

The passage read to us comes within a section of several chapters where Luke records Jesus teaching vital truths to many people along the way as he travelled to Jerusalem to face persecution and death. And we heard how, on this occasion a legal expert challenged Jesus, asking what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. As Jesus often did when he was asked a question, he responded with a further question which, in this case, might have embarrassed the legal expert somewhat. He asked him what the law said about it, perhaps implying that that, if the expert knew his subject, he shouldn’t have needed to ask the question. And then we heard the expert answer with those wonderful words from the law in the Old Testament….

*“…. love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind” Deut. 6:5 …. and “love your neighbour as yourself” Lev 19:18.*

He knew that the law demanded total devotion to God and love for one’s neighbour.

But Jesus went a step further …. it was not enough to simply **know** the law; he told the expert to go and **do** what the law said.

I imagine at this point the expert was getting a bit embarrassed and, perhaps wishing that he hadn’t started the conversation, he retorted “… who is my neighbour?” And that opened the way for this wonderful parable from Jesus illustrating the answer to that very question by challenging the expert, and each one of us, to consider not only ‘who is my neighbour’ but, more importantly, do I **behave** as a neighbour to them? It is not enough just to **know** the law, as the expert clearly did. Jesus reminded him, and continues to remind us today, that we must then **follow** the law…. and love the Lord your God with all your heart … soul …. strength and …. mind; **and** your neighbour as yourself.

And in the parable, Jesus shows us what loving our neighbour looks like as well as who our neighbour might be.

The man in the parable was going along the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, a journey of about 17 miles going down a steep, winding road edged with rugged rocks and caves and famously dangerous. Not a journey to be attempted lightly if you were alone. Sadly, the worst happened and robbers, probably hiding in wait among the rocks, set upon the man, took everything he had and beat him up leaving him half-dead.

Now Jericho was the country rest place for priests when they were off duty from the Temple in Jerusalem and so it would not be unusual for the priest and Levite to be passing that way. What was surprising, though not without explanation, was their behaviour as they came upon the poor, beaten-up victim of the attack…

Yes, they didn’t even know the man …. Yes, it was it was dangerous to stop on that road – they too might be attacked …. Yes, they would be considered unclean if they touched the body covered in blood and then couldn’t even go to the temple until all the purification rites had been carried out …. He might even already be dead and then they would have become unclean for nothing.

But hang on …. these were people who knew all about God and his law and indeed their whole life was about serving God in the Temple…. And yet, they passed by on the other side of the road and did nothing …. Showing no love for God or neighbour.

Finally, a Samaritan man came along, saw the beaten-up man and immediately went to him, cleaned his wounds, bandaged him up, put him on his donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him - such kindness! And even when he had to go on his way the next day, he gave money to the innkeeper and asked him to look after him until the Samaritan returned. And even then, he would pay more if it was needed.

What amazing kindness …. and when you consider that this man was a Samaritan looking after a Jew, it was even more amazing as the Jews and Samaritans hated each other

This was very extravagant, costly, self-sacrificing, culture-crossing kindness born out of love for his very unlikely and unexpected neighbour. It is the sort of kindness that becomes possible when we love God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind. It is the sort of kindness that we must show when we truly love our neighbour.

It is very significant that the legal expert first quotes Deuteronomy 6:5

“*…. love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”*

and then Leviticus 19:18

*“…. Love your neighbour as yourself”.*

We must love God first and then loving our neighbour becomes possible. Indeed, in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus was asked by another expert in the law what was the greatest commandment and his reply places love for God at the top with love for neighbour second.

*“’Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’” Matthew 22:37-39*

When we love God with all we are and all we have, then we are able to love our neighbour as ourself whoever that neighbour maybe and whatever their need may be. Not because we have to but because we want to …. in response to the way God loves us.

Jesus is like the Good Samaritan to us – when we are broken and half-dead in our sinful ways, he picks us up and loves us unconditionally in the extravagant, costly, self-sacrificing. culture-crossing action of dying on the cross for us. Because of that action, through belief in Jesus, we can inherit eternal life.

When we know ourselves loved by Jesus in this undeserved and unmerited way, we will want to show that love to all those in need around us - all those to whom we are called to be a good and loving neighbour – whatever that takes.

And as you love God with all your heart, …. soul, …. strength and …. mind, know **for certain** that he will fill you with the capacity and desire to reach out in extravagant, loving kindness to all those in need to whom he has called you to be a neighbour…. whoever they are. Amen