

“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 neighbor as yourself.”

Luke 10:27, NKJV

This command sums up the heart of the entire Law (cf. **Matthew 22:37-40**). But a critical question arises: **Who is my neighbor?**

Let's explore this through a powerful parable Jesus shared, found in **Luke 10:25-37**, and draw out the theological meaning behind His words.

The Context: A Lawyer's Question

“And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying,
‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’”

Luke 10:25, NKJV

The man questioning Jesus was an expert in the Law of Moses. Yet his motive was not to learn, but to test Jesus. Jesus, knowing his heart, answered with a question of His own leading the lawyer to quote the correct answer from the Law: love God and love neighbor (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18).

But then the lawyer, seeking to justify himself, asked:

“And who is my neighbor?”

Luke 10:29, NKJV

This was more than a question it was a challenge to Jesus’ understanding of the Law. And so Jesus responded with a parable to shift his thinking from **legal definitions** to **spiritual truth**.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves...”

Luke 10:30, NKJV

Jesus told of a man attacked by robbers, left beaten and dying. Three individuals pass by him:

1. The Priest

A man devoted to religious service an intermediary between God and the people. Priests were highly respected and tasked with offering sacrifices (cf. **Leviticus 1-7**). Yet, this priest **walked by** the wounded man.

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

2. The Levite

Levites assisted priests in the (cf. **Numbers 3:5-10**). Although close to God's work, this Levite also passed by without helping.

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

3. The Samaritan

Samaritans were despised by Jews for religious and ethnic reasons (cf. **John 4:9**). They were viewed as religiously impure and socially unacceptable. Yet this outsider **had compassion**.

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

The Samaritan **bandaged his wounds, poured on oil and wine**, placed the man on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and paid for

his recovery. His actions reflected sacrificial, unconditional love the kind of love Jesus Himself embodied.

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

John 15:13, NKJV

Theological Reflection: Who Really Was the Neighbor?

Jesus ends the parable with a question:

“So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?”

Luke 10:36, NKJV

The lawyer responded:

“He who showed mercy on him.”

Luke 10:37, NKJV

Then Jesus said,

“Go and do likewise.”

This phrase “**Go and do likewise**” is a command to actively embody **mercy**, not just think about it. True love for neighbor is **not theoretical**; it’s practical, sacrificial, and inclusive.

Who Is My Neighbor Today?

This parable challenges the idea that loving God is limited to rituals, services, or religious gatherings. Both the **priest** and the **Levite** failed to love their neighbor, even though they served in God’s house. They were bound by **legalism and tradition**, not by **compassion and mercy**.

“For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”

Hosea 6:6, NKJV

The **Samaritan**, though rejected by society, understood the heart of God. He loved someone in need not because it was required by law, but because it was **right**.

In our modern context, “neighbors” are not just our family or friends, nor the people we serve at church events. They include:

- The addict down the street
- The single mother struggling in silence
- The unbeliever in your workplace
- The friend living in sin who’s been wounded by life

“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar.”

1 John 4:20, NKJV

Oil and Wine: Symbols of Restoration

When the Samaritan poured **oil and wine** on the man's wounds (Luke 10:34), he used **symbols of healing and holiness**:

- **Oil** in Scripture often represents the Holy Spirit (cf. **1 Samuel 16:13**)
- **Wine** can symbolize joy, healing, and the atoning blood of Christ (cf. **Isaiah 55:1; Matthew 26:27-28**)

As believers, we are called to minister **spiritual healing** to the broken bringing them not only comfort, but also the message of salvation through Christ.

Application: Go and Do Likewise

You may not be a preacher. You may never speak on a stage or go on mission trips. But Jesus is not measuring your love by numbers. He's measuring it by **compassion in action**.

To truly love your neighbor is to see the wounded, recognize the need, and **respond**.

“Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

1 John 3:18, NKJV

So, who is your neighbor?

Anyone God places near you especially those in need of compassion, truth, and spiritual healing.

May God bless you .

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