



God desires to show His compassion to those in need through His servants who have been transformed by His amazing love and grace.

As we continue our journey through the Gospel of Luke in our new quarterly, we come across an encounter between an expert in the Law of Moses and Jesus. This encounter followed the seventy disciples' return to Jesus after He had sent them out to heal the sick and proclaim the Kingdom of God.

Following the discourse between Jesus and His disciples, let's see the narrative unfold as we look at **verse 25** — *“And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”* At first glance, it appears that this encounter happened in the same setting where Jesus had just met with the seventy disciples. It may have, but we don't know for sure. Either way, this *lawyer (KJV)* or *expert in the law (NIV)* had a specific question for the increasingly popular Rabbi from Nazareth.

Being well versed in the Law of Moses, it was this lawyer's business to be able to explain it. Luke knew this and used the word *tempted (vs 25)* in describing his reason for questioning Jesus. **Barnes' Commentary** speaks of this lawyer and says he *“feigned a desire to be instructed, but did it to perplex him, or to lead him, if possible, to contradict some of the maxims of the law.”*

He addressed Jesus as *Master (KJV)*, *Teacher (NIV)*. Some believe he used this term sarcastically. He was vainly trying to catch Jesus in His words. Notice his question, *“...what must I do to inherit eternal life?”* Let's follow along and see how Jesus answers in **verse 26**. *“He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?”*

So, Jesus retorts by putting the spotlight on the *expert*. After all, he should be able to explain the Law, right? **Verse 27** tells us this lawyer's answer — *“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.”

The lawyer used two Scriptures. The first is called the *Shema*, and is found in **Deuteronomy 6:5**. The second Scripture is **Leviticus 19:18**. So far, so good. Jesus gives him a green light. **Verse 28** says, *“And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.”* The lawyer just wouldn't drop it after that, as we see in **Verse 29** — *“But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?”* In his apparent belief that he could earn eternal life through the works of the law, he sought to justify himself. So, he wanted clarification from Jesus as to who his neighbor was. In all likelihood, he wanted to know just as much who his neighbor *was not*.

In parable form, Jesus will now illustrate the kind of action that demonstrates the love that can only come from an experiential relationship with God, not the letter of the law. Let's begin looking at this parable starting with **verse 30** — *“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.”*

This particular stretch of road was known for having lots of natural places for thieves to hide and ambush vulnerable travelers. The unsuspecting man in the parable fell victim to such heartless thieves. Now we'll follow the story in **verses 31–32** — *“³¹And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³²And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.”*



The priest spoken of by Jesus, was on his way from Jerusalem (*came down*). What's believed to be implied here is that he had finished his service at the temple and was heading home. He chose to ignore the obvious need of the wounded man. He walked by on the other side. Secondly, a Levite came by and saw the bleeding and dying man and deliberately chose not to help him. He too, walked by on the other side of the road.

Two points here:

1. God's will is for those who do regular works of service for Him (*the Priest and the Levite in this story*), to do so out of an open, growing, obedient, personal relationship with God - allowing **His love** to motivate them. In our day, this pertains to the Church.

2. If people who do works of service for God are not becoming more like Him (compassionate, caring, forgiving, etc.), something is definitely wrong. God seeks to transform the hearts of believers. This is a process, and for that to happen, willingness and obedience must kick in.

Moving onto **verses 33-35**, we'll see the contrast Jesus brings to life with the actions taken by the Samaritan traveler—

"³³But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came

where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, ³⁴And 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. ³⁵And 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."

The Samaritan was motivated by compassion and began helping the imperiled victim with available resources. It didn't matter to him that the wounded man was a total stranger. He applied first aid to the best of his ability, bandaging his wounds and administering olive oil and wine, which had medicinal properties.

Due to the severity of the sufferer's condition, the Samaritan went even further by putting him on his own animal and taking him to an inn where he took care of him through the night. Apparently, the Samaritan's circumstances pressed him to get on his way in the morning, so he made arrangements with the innkeeper to take care of the injured traveler. He gave him **two pence**, which was a near equivalent of two day's work for a common laborer. Again, this very caring Samaritan went yet further by promising to pay the innkeeper



for any additional care that would exceed the two pence he already paid him. As we approach the conclusion of this encounter between Jesus and the lawyer, we'll notice how Jesus gets to the heart of the matter—**Verses 36-37**, *"³⁶Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? ³⁷And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."*

Jesus flipped the question the lawyer asked Him about the **neighbor** issue, and it certainly was His prerogative to do so. He is the Master and has every right to set things in proper order. Jesus was saying here that it doesn't matter who we should perceive our neighbor to be. It's more basic that **we be** a neighbor to others. God is the ultimate initiator. He wants us to be like Him, so He wants His children to initiate friendship and neighborliness to others and not wait for them to make the first move.

At the conclusion of the parable, Jesus told the lawyer to go and do likewise. In other words, show mercy and compassion and be a neighbor to those in need.

As we grow in our relationship with the Lord, let's strive to be God's instruments, showing mercy and compassion to those He puts in our path. Let us seek His will as to the best way to help others. As we do so, we will be God's hands extended, and He will be glorified!

Parables say so much with relatively few words. On **page 15** of our quarterly, we find a very good definition of a parable, and it certainly applies to the one we just studied—

"The definition of a parable as 'an earthly story with a heavenly meaning' tells only part of the purpose. Parables evoke honest responses to real-life situations and, in so doing, uncover hearers' true attitudes. Parables appear both in the Old Testament (see Judg. 9:7-15; Sam.12:1-4) and in Greek literature prior to Jesus' day. However, Jesus perfected the use of parables in His teaching ministry."

How are you challenged by Jesus' story? In what ways could you demonstrate your neighborly love for someone this week?

