

## THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10:25-37

Key Verse: 10:28

“You have answered correctly,’ Jesus replied. ‘Do this and you will live.’”

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for Jesus’ words of life. Please cleanse me of my sins and stand me as a servant of your words. I pray in Jesus’ name, amen.

In this passage, Jesus teaches the most exquisite parable, “The Good Samaritan.” Jesus doesn’t just lecture, rather he is a really good teacher who asks questions, let’s his student go deeper, and makes the lesson come alive and profoundly impact the student’s life. In this case, Jesus’ student is also a teacher, an expert in the law. He knows the Bible really well, but he missed the point. Sadly, his knowledge doesn’t lead him to eternal life and he stands condemned and dying. We have many students before us in our classrooms who are dying in their sins. Let’s see how Jesus the Good Teacher leads him to eternal life.

### 1. Love God and your neighbor (25-29).

Verse 25 says, “On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he asked, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’” This teacher of the law was like an honor student who likes to ask challenging questions to his teachers and try to stump them. This expert in the law had thoroughly memorized the Bible. He liked to show off his knowledge and receive praise from others in public debates. Yet his question reveals that he did not have eternal life. He was dead in his sins. His extensive Bible study should have led him to eternal life, but he missed the point. Although this teacher of the law knew all there was to know about the Bible, the Law and its traditions, he was anxious and empty. His underlying intention in questioning Jesus was not just to be a smartypants but to solve his meaninglessness of life. We often meet arrogant honor students in our classes. They try to treat us or point out some contradiction or weak spot in our teaching. We should not be offended but understand them that deep inside is a person longing for the meaning of life and suffering under the power of death and anxiety without eternal life. Ecclesiastes 3:11b says, “He [God] has also set eternity in the hearts of men....” This man like many honor students are desperately seeking eternal life in their souls. How did Jesus help him?

Jesus didn't collide with the teacher of the law; rather he embraced him. Jesus helped him to reflect on his own understanding of the Bible. Verse 26 says, "What is written in the Law?" he replied. 'How do you read it?'" Like a good teacher, Jesus asked many good DOK 4 questions that require effort and sincere struggle. In verse 27, the expert in the law 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"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" His answer was perfect. In fact, Jesus gave this same answer when he was asked what was the greatest commandment was (Mt 22:37-39).

Verses 28-29 say: "You have answered correctly,' Jesus replied. 'Do this and you will live.'" .Jesus gave him an A+. But Jesus went further. He didn't praise him and puff up his ego. Rather, Jesus challenged him to practice what he knew. Our teaching should go beyond the classroom and impact students' way of life to live with justice and mercy.

But the teacher of the law wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Although he perfectly knew what the Bible taught, doing it seemed too hard. In his self-righteousness, he wanted to justify himself. So he asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" It meant who do I not have to love and still keep the law? Maybe he hoped his neighbor wasn't the Gentiles, so he did not have to love the Roman oppressors. Or maybe he hoped it was not public sinners like the tax collectors and prostitutes, whom he regarded as scum of the earth. Maybe he hoped it was not his rival teacher of the law. In the same way, we struggle when we meet those we just can't love. The workplace is especially full of people we can't love by our own strength, people who truly get under our skin and make us want to quit our jobs. So, we wonder who is my neighbor? Do I have to love students who are a pain in the neck and make my day miserable everyday? Or worse, do I have to love their parents who never believe their child would do anything wrong? Do I have to love that competitive teacher who is always sticking her nose into my business? How about the teacher bully who dominates the staff lounge? Or how can I love my boss who puts too many demands on me, or administrators who forgot what it was like to be a teacher? In our sinful hearts, we also want Jesus to set some limits on the unconditional love which God demands. Jesus answered the teacher of the law and us with a parable.

## 2. Those who passed by (30-32)

Verses 30-32 say: "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. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.'" Here, a victim of a ruthless crime was left dying by the roadside. He could not possibly help himself. He needed someone to save him. The first two men to discover the injured man were religious leaders. Of all people, they should have had pity and compassion. That's what

they're paid to do. Possibly, the priest remembered Numbers 19:11, justified himself that he must not touch anyone unclean, and crossed to the other side of the road. The Levite possibly felt some emotions of tragedy and even fear that he would be the next victim. He, too, passed by on the other side. It is easy to be like them and not get involved and pass on the other side when we see students who are in distress or suffering trauma. Yet, they are still children and can't do anything for themselves. They need mentors, they need trusted adults, they need real help to get out their dilemma. It is easy to say that's not my job, that's the counselor's job. Or I don't have enough time to help, I'm on my way to a meeting -- I'm already 5 minutes late. Or they don't pay me enough to do anything extra. Or, I already volunteer enough in after school activities and committees; I can't take on this as well. Or, I might get a grievance filed against me; I could lose my job if I get involved.

No matter how good a student looks, I find that eventually his or her moment of need comes out, and I have to make a decision whether to get involved. It always involves interrupting my lessons plans, my schedule, and my resources, including money. As a teacher, we are hired to serve students and to be with them, even we are with them more than they are with their own parents. The law says we local parenti, which means that we have parental rights over students under our care from the first bell until the end of the day. Though I want to escape sometimes, I must always think that they are my children whom God himself has put under my care for a time. He has given me an opportunity to shine his love and light into their tender, palpable hearts. They are my responsibility. May God help us to see our students freshly as the flock Jesus himself has given us and lay down our lives for them.

### 3. The man who had pity (33-37)

Verses 33-35 say: "But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 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. The next day he took out two denarii 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.'" The man who stopped was not a religious man. He was a despised Samaritan. But he showed the compassion of God for the man in need.

Verses 36-37 say: "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.' Jesus told him, 'Go and do likewise.'" Jesus' parable melted the expert in the law's heart and he recognized true mercy. Likewise, Jesus wants us to know the character of the good Samaritan and to practice the love of God. This starts with a compassionate heart. It involves a willingness to sacrifice. In fact, our Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate good Samaritan. When he saw the misery of mankind under the power of sin and death, he did not remain on his heavenly throne, saying, "That's too bad. I'm so sorry for you." Instead, he gave up his glory and power in the heavenly kingdom and came down to this world to live among us. No matter how tired he was or how busy he

was, he made time for all who came to him and healed their sicknesses and planted the living hope in the kingdom of God in their hearts. In order to heal our wounds, however, he could not just pour on oil and wine. He had to suffer and die on the cross. Isaiah 53:4-5 says, "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."

Through this passage we hear Jesus' words, "Do this and you will live." Jesus urges us to put God's love into practice by taking care of needy students. Taking care of one person, risking our jobs to give them the word of God and prayer is costly. It requires heart devotion and sacrifice. It is not convenient. It requires the humbleness of Jesus. Let's not be escape artists in this fall semester who avoid needy students. Let's be like the good Samaritan and like our Lord Jesus Christ. When we practice the love of God, we can experience the life-giving power of God and have the assurance of eternal life in our souls. May God richly bless you and make you like the good Samaritan.

Last year, like every year, I met my share of challenging students and people. I did my best to love, forgive and pray for them. I was also given a group of very low and dysfunctional students. Other teachers deemed them the worse class. During the moment of silence at the beginning of each day, I invited the students in my homeroom to bow their heads and pray to Jesus with me. Many of them did and eventually all of them joined in. Later, they became known as the really nice class and even the best class. God helped us. One student was the son of a chief in a gang and threatened the other children and their families. I had to handle him firmly but with love and gentleness. By Christmas, he became so meek and gentle and volunteered everyday to help the lowest student in reading. He even made me a Christmas card. One child was the school bully but I found his mother was removed from the family. He just needed a mother's love. Later, he was the class leader and supported me to manage the classroom. Another girl confessed that she was molested by her grandfather. I had to stand up to much opposition from the family to get her help. Another girl was always fainting. Her single mom struggled hard to make ends meet, and they suffered from homelessness. I could only listen while she talked a lot until she got everything off her chest, and then I told her I would pray for her. There were girls cutting themselves, boys bullying and fighting, families with unexpected deaths, a student who was diagnosed with a brain disease, students suffering from domestic violence, suicidal students, and so on. All these things required me to practice mercy and love.

But I reached the end of my rope with a seriously mentally ill child who brought a gun and 2 clips of bullets around Valentine's Day, when he was rejected by a pretty girl. While awaiting the expulsion process, the principal informed me that he would be transferred to my room because in his words, I was the teacher with faith. I really needed faith, mercy and justice that could only . Before he entered the room the next morning, I told my students he would be joining our class. The reaction was one of shock, fear and anger. I told the students that any one of us or our family members

could suffer from mental disease in the future and we should treat him the way we would want to be treated. We would want a second chance and a clean slate. We would want forgiveness and mercy. My students listened and followed my encouragement. But the weeks and months that followed were terribly hard. He imagined and heard things, was paranoid, and escalated fights quickly. I listened to him compassionately because in his sick mind, he really believed he heard these voices and saw these things. I prayed for him and with him. I shared with him Jesus' hope and power for him. But part of the problem was that his mother really didn't want to believe her 11-year-old son was mentally ill. She didn't respond to my contacts. Finally, he was beaten up by a bigger boy, and she came to the school. Though no one invited me to the meeting, I went to the office and talked with her compassionately that I loved and forgave her son for all the things he did in the classroom, and that we have a good relationship. Her son said agreed with me. I told her I hope that in the future he will be fine. Then a week later I was so broken by the strain of having him in my classroom because he is violent and hurts other children and makes them cry. Moreover, my health was in terrible shape from the stress. I had high blood pressure, a stomach tumor and congested pelvic syndrome that made it painful to walk or stand much. I prayed to God that he would take this boy to a mental hospital to get the help he needed. I could do no more. An hour later, his mother emailed to tell me that she knew that I loved her son and wanted me to know that she took him to the mental hospital and he would be out for the remaining three weeks of school. Praise God! He was diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, mood disorder, anxiety disorder, and severe depression. Later I saw him again at summer school. His face was dark, but when he recognized me, he lit up and said, "Mrs. Lee!" I walked with him and encouraged him. I met with the summer school staff frequently to check up on him and plead with them to pass him, because he is above-average intelligence, but he is sick and didn't have the proper medicine. I also visited him and encouraged him. I could only do this by Jesus' love and mercy in my heart. I pray for him that in God's time, he will be healed and he will remember this kindness of Jesus that I showed him. I pray for him that he will be restored in God's image and reveal the glory of God in his life. In Jesus' name, amen.

During the summer, I was afraid of encountering another hard year and difficult students. My health was in shambles. Should I give up teaching altogether? I began to read the Bible from beginning to the end. God's word is living and active. It led me to believe God's power and eternal life. God's word was a double-edged sword working in my soul to divide joint and marrow and drive out all the fear and reservation lurking deep in my bones. God's word healed me and helped me to repent and to restore his life in me and strengthen me to serve him another term. I cannot do it by own experience, skill, or strength. I can only do it with Jesus' words of eternal life in my soul and his calling to practice his mercy, justice and compassion. May God use us as his instruments of mercy and compassion this year in the classroom. May God help us to overcome the political environment and all kinds of circumstances to be Jesus' salt and light and to give healing and guidance to our students under our care.

One Word: Do this and you shall live!