

# The Good Samaritan

(Luke 10:25-37; Luke 6:27-36; and Matthew 5:43-44)

## Introduction

In Matthew 19:19 Jesus said, "*Honor your father and your mother*", and, "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*"

Who are our neighbors? [Teacher, allow time for responses.] Are the kids here in this class our neighbors? Are the sick and the unwanted our neighbors? What about old people? What about the poor and homeless?

Today we're going to learn about a day a lawyer came and asked Jesus, "*Who is my neighbor?*"

## Opening Prayer

Father, we want to be the kind of people You want us to be. We pray this morning that You will give us the power of the Holy Spirit to understand the lesson You have for us today. Then help us to apply the lesson to our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:10)*

And/or

*But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. (Luke 6:35)*

## Lesson

One day a lawyer came and asked Jesus a tricky question.

Luke 10:25

*One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?"*

The Jews in Jesus' day believed that a person must obey the *Ten Commandments* perfectly in order to go to Heaven after they die. They thought that they could earn eternal life by doing good works.

Jesus came to earth to tell people that it is impossible to earn eternal life. The good things we do don't make us right in the sight of a holy God. You can't do enough good things to make up for the sin in your life. Jesus wanted people to understand that they needed a Savior and that He came to be our Savior.

When the scribes and Pharisees heard Jesus teach about God's kingdom, His teachings were so radically different than anything they'd ever heard before, they thought He was being wicked.

Because the religious leaders were jealous of Jesus' popularity with the people, they would try to trick Jesus into saying something contrary to the Word of God. Their hope was to bring Him before the high priest and have Him punished.

This lawyer in our story this morning was an expert in explaining God's laws. He, of all people, knew God's laws very well. So, when he asked Jesus, "*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*" he was just testing Jesus to see what He would say.

Luke 10:26

*Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?"*

Jesus answered the lawyer by asking him another question.

Luke 10:27

*The man answered, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

The lawyer answered Jesus' question by summing up the *Ten Commandments*. The first four commandments tell us to love God. (Don't have any other gods, don't have any idols, don't take God's

name in vain, and keep the Sabbath holy.) The last six commandments tell us to love others. (Honor your parents, don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't lie, and don't covet.)

The whole law is summed up with, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart ... and your neighbor as yourself.*"

When it says to *love your neighbor as yourself*, what does it mean? Just as you love and care for your own needs, you are to love others. When you're hungry, you get yourself something to eat. If a friend of yours came over you wouldn't get yourself something to eat and not give anything to your friend, would you? You wouldn't make a houseguest go sleep out in the back yard while you went and slept in a nice warm comfortable cozy place. In the same way you take care of yourself, so you are to treat your neighbors.

Luke 10:28

*"Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"*

Jesus knew that it is impossible to do this. No one in his own strength could ever love God or his neighbor with all of his heart, soul, strength and mind. And, the lawyer was probably feeling very uneasy at this point, knowing that he didn't love God with all his being and his neighbor as himself. So he asks Jesus to define the term "*neighbor*."

Luke 10:29

*The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

As a Jew, the lawyer probably believed that his neighbor was only his fellow Jew. So, Jesus used a parable to show the lawyer what God's love is like. Remember a parable is a true-to-life story about common, everyday things that teaches a spiritual truth about God.

Luke 10:30-31

*Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of*

*his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. (31) "By chance a **priest** came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by.*

Surely a priest, who served God and lead others in the worship of God would care about his "*neighbor*." But he didn't. He glanced at the injured man and passed by, choosing not to dirty himself.

Luke 10:32

*A **Temple assistant** walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side*

The Levites were servants at the temple, assisting the priests in God's work. They spent their lives teaching people about God's law. Surely this Temple assistant would have known the law. But he, too, refused to help his neighbor. He stopped and looked at the victim and then passed by.

Luke 10:33-34

*"Then a despised **Samaritan** came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. (34) Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.*

The Jews and the Samaritans had been enemies for years. The Jews despised Samaritans. The lawyer listening to Jesus tell this story would never have considered a Samaritan his neighbor. Yet it was a Samaritan, who usually would not help a Jew, who showed himself a "*neighbor*" to the wounded Jew!

Luke 10:35

*The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, "Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here."*

The Samaritan paid all costs, left money, and promised more!

Luke 10:36-37

*“Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked. (37) The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.” Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”*

It was probably hard for the lawyer to admit that the Samaritan was the hero in Jesus’ story. Yet the Samaritan was a wonderful example of what it means to be a true neighbor. He showed kindness to a man who probably hated him. The Bible says we should love our enemies [Teacher, review today’s memory verse.]

Sometimes it’s even hard to show love to our friends. It may require sharing, giving in to their way, or letting them be first. It’s even harder to reach out and love our enemies. It takes God’s love to be kind to someone who has been mean to us. You can’t do it in your own strength, you must ask Jesus into your heart and then you can call upon the Holy Spirit to give you the power you need.

We need to ask God to help us notice people who are in need. Look for practical ways to be of help each day. [Teacher, lead the children in a discussion using the following questions.]

- How can we help the sick or the old or the poor? (Visit the sick, send cards, be a friend, say a kind word, or invite them to church.)
- How can we be good neighbors to people who live on the other side of the world? (Support mission work, write letters, and pray)

Regardless of who they are, God will give you the power to love them.

So, who is your neighbor? Anyone you can help is your neighbor — any friend or enemy in trouble. Showing love and kindness shows that you truly love God. God loves every person, no matter what church he goes to, or if he’s been mean to you, or if his skin is a different color. God wants us to do good to all.

**Closing Prayer**

Father, we usually know what is right. We pray that you will empower us to do what we know we should do. Help us to always be loving and kind to everyone, no matter which church they go to or what color their skin is. We want to be Good Samaritans, helping people in need, no matter what the cost is to us personally. Amen.

**Special Note to the Teacher**

Confronting the needs of others brings out various attitudes in us. Jesus used the story of the good, but despised, Samaritan to make clear what attitude was acceptable to Him. If we are honest, we often will find ourselves in the place of the expert in the law, needing to learn again who our neighbor is. Note these different attitudes toward the wounded man:

To the...	The wounded man was...
• expert in the law	...a subject to discuss
• robbers	...someone to use and exploit
• religious men	...a problem to be avoided
• innkeeper	...a customer to serve for a fee
• Samaritan	...a human being worth being cared for and loved

To Jesus, all of them and all of us were worth dying for.

**Learning Activities**

**Craft Corner**

Using the pattern on pages 27 and 28, have the children make a Good Samaritan booklet.

**Game Center**

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

**Review questions:**

1. How did the Jews in Jesus' day believe that a person got eternal life? (By obeying the *Ten Commandments* perfectly and doing good works)
2. Why did the scribes and Pharisees think that Jesus was wicked? (His teachings were so radically different than anything they'd ever heard before.)
3. What did Jesus teach the people that made the scribes and Pharisees so angry? (That you couldn't keep the *Ten Commandments* perfectly; that's why you need a Savior)
4. If a lawyer is an expert in explaining God's laws, why did he ask Jesus what to do to inherit eternal life? (He was trying to trick Jesus into saying something contrary to the Word of God.)
5. Why did the religious leaders of Jesus day try to trick Him into saying something contrary to the Word of God? (They wanted to bring Him before the high priest and have Him punished.)
6. Tell the parable of the Good Samaritan in your own words.
7. Which of the three was the "*neighbor*" to the guy who fell among the thieves? (The Samaritan)
8. When Jesus said to *love your neighbor as yourself*, what was he saying? (Just as you love and care for your own needs, you are to love others.)
9. How can we help the sick or the old or the poor? (Visit the sick, send cards, be a friend, say a kind word, or invite them to church.)

10. How can we be good neighbors to people who live on the other side of the world? (Support mission work, write letters, and pray)
11. It's impossible to love God with your whole being and your neighbor as yourself. So, what must you do? (Ask Jesus into your heart and call upon the Holy Spirit to give you the power you need to be loving.)

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