

Theme: THIS PERSON NEEDS ME NOW!

15th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME!

13 July 2025

We've all encountered people in need, whether it's a friend, family member, or stranger. But have you ever stopped to think about what it means to be a neighbor to someone?

A lawyer once asked Jesus, "*What must I do to inherit eternal life?*" Jesus responded with a question of his own, "*What is written in the law?*" The lawyer recited the two greatest commandments: "*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.*" Jesus told him that he answered correctly, adding, "*Do this and you will live.*" But the lawyer wasn't satisfied with generalities, so he asked, "*Who is my neighbor?*"

Jesus replied with the PARABLE OF THE **GOOD SAMARITAN**, a story about the least likely person showing love to someone he was supposed to despise. A man on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho fell victim to robbers. He was beaten and left half-dead on the road: A priest and a Levite both saw the man, but they crossed over to the other side of the road and continued on their journey.

Then, a Samaritan came by the victim. Moved with compassion, he went up to him, cleaned and bound up his wounds, and placed him on his beast. He brought him to an inn and cared for him the whole night. The following day, he asked the innkeeper to care for him in his stead and left him with some money. If more was spent, he would pay for it on his way back. For him, the dying person had become more important than his comfort and even a delay in his journey. The Samaritan's actions

demonstrate the kind of love and compassion that Jesus calls us to show others. By putting the needs of the victim above his own, the Samaritan showed true neighborly love.

There's something significant in a Samaritan helping a Jew. The Samaritans were the historical enemies of the Jews, despised as half- caste descendants of northern Jews who had inter-married with foreign settlers. When the southern Jews returned from exile, they refused to allow the Samaritans to help them rebuild the temple. In retaliation, the Samaritans established their rival priesthood and temple. For the Jews, to love one's neighbor meant to love someone who belonged to the Jewish community. Thus, the Samaritans were not worthy of their love or help. This historical context highlights the radical nature of Jesus' parable and challenges us to consider who we might be excluding from our love and care. By showing love to a Jew, the Samaritan was breaking down barriers and challenging societal norms.

Jesus' story challenged the lawyer's understanding of who a neighbor is. A neighbor isn't just someone dear to us, like our parents, brothers, or sisters, relatives, and friends. A neighbor can be anyone in need, regardless of age, sex, race, ideology, or religion. It's not about geography or religion; it's about the heart, about love. Our faith tells us that we cannot love God without loving our neighbor. Conversely, we cannot love our neighbor without loving God.

But it's easy to find excuses to avoid helping others. We might say that our limited resources don't allow us to help everybody. Or we might say that charity begins at home, and we have many relatives in need. If this is our attitude, we may end up helping no one at all. The parable provides us with a practical rule to guide our actions: to come to the assistance of someone who needs our help at the precise moment we come across them.

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After narrating the story, Jesus asked the lawyer, "**Which of *these three* was neighbor to *the robber's* victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with**

mercy." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise!" With this, Jesus went beyond the initial question, "Who is my neighbor?" It has now become, "How **do I prove myself a true neighbor to others?**" The answer is simple: "Go and do likewise." When we come upon a person in need, we're to act in the same manner as the Good Samaritan did. Let's strive to be neighbors to those around us, showing love and compassion to those in need. By doing so, we'll not only be fulfilling Jesus' command to love our neighbors, but we'll also be demonstrating our love for God.

IN CONCLUSION, THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN CHALLENGES US TO RETHINK OUR UNDERSTANDING OF WHO A NEIGHBOR IS AND HOW WE CAN SHOW LOVE AND COMPASSION TO THOSE IN NEED. BY FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN, WE CAN LIVE OUT OUR FAITH IN PRACTICAL WAYS AND DEMONSTRATE OUR LOVE FOR GOD. MAY WE BE INSPIRED BY THIS PARABLE TO SHOW LOVE AND KINDNESS TO ALL THOSE WE ENCOUNTER, REGARDLESS OF THEIR BACKGROUND OR CIRCUMSTANCES. BY DOING SO, WE'LL BE LIVING OUT THE MESSAGE OF JESUS AND FULFILLING OUR CALL TO BE NEIGHBORS TO THOSE AROUND US.