

The Good Samaritan Parable (specifically)

NIV Luke 10:25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" 27 He 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." 28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." 29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Opening Prayer: Lord Jesus, I am filled with regret for questioning your Will for my life. I am sorry for ever reasoning away what you want me to do. Bring me your forgiveness for trying to fool you and myself. Help me by your mercy to show mercy to everyone that is just like me, a sinner.

Introduction: John Lennon (1940-80), member of the Beatles, in the last year of his life said, *"The pressures of being a parent are equal to any pressure on earth. To be a conscious parent, and really look to that little being's mental and physical health, is a responsibility which most of us, including me, avoid most of the time because it's too hard."* *"To put it loosely, the reason why kids are crazy is because nobody can face the responsibility of bringing them up."* Many people think that the parable of the Good Samaritan begins and ends with caring for others. John Lennon's point of people avoiding their responsibilities is the heart of Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan. The sticking point for the expert of the law and Jesus was "responsibility." Jesus and the expert on the Law both agreed on what the Law stated – Love God and Love your neighbor. All that responsibility is just too much for the expert of the Law, so he tries to shave off some responsibility and asks, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answers his problem with responsibility by telling him the Parable of the Good Samaritan. May we all hear and learn Jesus' point well today.

Help us Lord to Face our God-given Responsibilities!

- 1) Not like the unbelieving world but**
- 2) as Your Forgiven Family.**

Not like the unbelieving world but

A lawyer came to test Jesus with a question about "inheriting eternal life." Let's leave all the lawyer jokes for a different time and place. He knows the ins and outs of the wording of God's Law down to every letter counted. And even more specifically they focused on first 5 books of the bible – the Pentateuch of Moses. He knew the wording of the Law given through Moses to His people the Israelites. We say possession is 9/10ths of the law, too bad we can't say that for God's Law. Just because you own the Law doesn't mean you understand the Law of God.

Jesus knows the man's angle he's coming from and holds him to the Law he knows so well. "What is written in the Law?" The man answers with two separate quotations from Deuteronomy and Leviticus NIV Deuteronomy 6:5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. NIV Leviticus 19:18 "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Jesus approves the man's answer and adds the phrase that will cut like a knife into the man's heart, soul, strength and mind, "DO THIS and you will live." The lawyer summarized beautifully the 10 commandments of God. The first 3 commandments focus on God's demand that all people honor him as God alone. The rest of the commandments focus on God's demand that all people honor others before themselves. The lawyer has God's Law cutting through his pride. His mind is racing to avoid being guilty. His heart is cringing from the weight of his sins. He needs to find a way out, a loophole that he can sneak through unscathed, unpunished. But...But... But... "Who is my neighbor?" In other words he tries to limit the scope of God's law. The thinking is logical and reasonable we might say. No one can be held responsible for caring for everyone, right? Who are we to love as ourselves? The unbelieving world realizes this dilemma with responsibility. Who are we responsible for? It can't be everyone.

The lawyer was not a believer. He had no faith in God's Word of promise and forgiveness, the gospel. Because he is not a believer in the forgiveness of sins, it also means he was not a believer in God's Word of law that required perfect obedience, in heart mind soul and strength. Instead of taking God's Word at face value, as an unbeliever he tried to wiggle out from under that Word of God. He tried to twist the Words. He tried to prove his innocence. He tried to reason away God's punishment on disobedience. He tried to change God's requirement of perfect attitude and willing obedience to escape punishment.

Like unbelievers, all people without faith in Jesus Christ, in order to escape from death and punishment, he made up his own way out. He looked around and saw that no one was perfect in obedience to God, so they all reasoned that God must grade on a curve. The rationale goes like this. If I try my best to keep God's commands and find that I'm better than most people in obeying, then God will be happy with me and reward me for my efforts with mercy and eternal life. Now let's find some laws we can accomplish. Let's place our man made laws around God's Law to appear like we are obedient to both. Instead of asking what does God hold me responsible to do, they asked what can I do better than most. They thought their man made laws which they could keep would satisfy God's requirements for inheriting eternal life.

Through Solomon the Lord tells us that to understand correctly his Word; you must have the proper fear of God.

NIV Proverbs 9:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Obviously people without faith in God's Word, are without the proper respect of God's Word. Do we believers at times treat God's Word of law with the same disrespect and careless attitude that unbelievers do? When we attempt to wiggle out of our responsibility to authority in this world, parents, siblings, police officers, government are we any better than unbelievers? When we reason away God's Word that demands we honor God's gift of marriage by reserving sex between husband and wife are we any better than unbelievers? When we wiggle out of our responsibility to teach our children to honor God's name by hearing His Word regularly and praying to him often are we any better than unbelievers? The answer is no. Far too often we use the forgiveness we know from Jesus Christ as a free get out of hell card and simply live without proper fear of God's Law. We are all sinners. We all fall under God's anger because we have not lived up to the responsibilities that God has given to us. Now let us stop attacking like unbelievers, trying to wiggle out from under God's Law with our own reasoning and logic by pointing at others and hoping God grades on a curve. Lord help us face our responsibilities as Your forgiven family.

As Your Forgiven Family.

Jesus parable to the lawyer was pointed to the heart of his problem just like the passages he quoted from the law. Jesus told the lawyer in both cases after the Law quotes and after the parable, "*DO!*" "*DO this and you will live. Go and DO likewise.*" The lawyer and Jesus agreed on something, the law is summed up with DOING. Do DO DO. The problem for the lawyer and for many sinners is the never ending, all encompassing, perfect doing. Jesus story of the Jew who was beaten to the verge of death being helped by a Samaritan, reminds of racism in our country and around the world. But racism is just one aspect of the sin against God's demands in the 5th commandment. Unbelieving sinners try to wiggle out from God's demand to love one another with the thought that only people who are deserving of our love must we love. The lawyer and many Jews looked down on the Samaritan as unworthy of care and love. It's the same for Samaritans and their view of Jews as undeserving. But God's demand is much more – love as I have loved you. This is the love in our story of the Good Samaritan. He does not know this man except that he is a Jew who needs someone to help him. The man is helpless and at the mercy of the stranger. God's love for us in Christ does not hinge on our performance or our skin color. God loved us and saved us while we were still helpless sinners on the verge of hell forever. Jesus Christ didn't even just die for those people who would live for him later on. Jesus Christ died for the world of sinners, even the people that are locked in hell waiting for judgment today because they refused His loving payment.

God holds us all responsible for perfect obedience to his commands not just in outward actions but also in our heart, our attitudes, thoughts and willingness to respect him. He still holds the world responsibility for perfection today, but thanks be to God he gives us the victory through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ did offer perfect obedience to God for the World of sinners. We could say that no one can ever be the Good Samaritan in God's eyes, because we are not perfect. But there is one who was perfect in his love for God with all his heart,

soul, mind and strength and love others as himself – his name is Jesus Christ. That perfect life of meeting ever responsibility God gave him has been given to us. We have been forgiven and now we are members of God's forgiven family. When God looks at you and me he smiles. The Lord is excited to see us on that last day because he will then be able to say to us, *'Well done my good and faithful servant...for meeting all the responsibilities I gave to you.'*

"Am I my brother's keeper?" The Lord holds us responsible for everyone he puts into our path. Let us face those responsibilities past, present and future as believers. When we fall short and disrespect our God by showing a lack of love for Him, our fellow believers and sinners – let us honor His Word of law and confess our sins as we honor His Word of Gospel and trust His mercy through Jesus Christ. Let us face our responsibility to God, our fellow believers, our family and all our fellow sinners with the love of Christ in our hearts, minds, souls and strength.