



parables:
secrets of the kingdom of heaven

August 2022

1/ The Good Samaritan : Luke 10:25-37

Background:

The story takes place on the road between the city of Jerusalem in the mountains and the city of Jericho, about 20 miles away in the Jordan river valley. The terrain between the cities was rough, desolate, with few inhabitants and frequented by robbers.

Different types of people are mentioned in the story. The person who is robbed would be understood to be a Jew. The priest and the Levite are Jewish religious leaders who have a good knowledge of God's laws. The final person in the story is a Samaritan, a person from the province of Samaria. The relationship between the Jews and Samaritans was very similar to the relationship between Jews and Arabs today, or to any relationship marked by strong racial or cultural prejudice.

The Jews considered Samaritans as social outcasts, untouchables, racially inferior, practicing a false religion. Any close physical contact, drinking water from a common bucket, eating a meal with a Samaritan, would make a Jew ceremonially unclean - unable to participate in temple worship for a period of time. The Samaritans responded quite naturally with strong dislike or hatred for Jews.

Understanding this cultural prejudice makes the end of Jesus's story all the more surprising to us.

Questions:

- 1/ **v 30-35** - How does Jesus answer the lawyer's second question
- 2/ What is the big surprise in the story?
- 3/ Why might we have expected the priest or the Levite to help?

- 4/ What reasons do you think they might have had for walking by on the other side?
- 5/ What reasons might the Samaritan have had for going on by like the others?
- 6/ Why did he stop to help?
- 7/ What is Jesus' point in having the Samaritan exemplify brotherly love toward one's neighbour?
- 8/ **v 36-37** - Jesus asked the lawyer, "Which of the three acted like to the victim of the robbers?" The answer was obvious, the Samaritan. How does this story answer the lawyer's original question, "Who is my neighbour?"
- 9/ In the conversation between the lawyer and Jesus, who is testing whom?
- 10/ What final test does Jesus leave for the lawyer?
- 11/ How would you apply this story to your own life?

Ask for any questions that the group might have.

Close with a simple prayer, asking for God's help to go out and live like the Samaritan did.

2/ The Friend at Midnight : Luke 11:5-13

Objective:

To understand that our Father in heaven loves us as his children. He desires for us to seek him and bring our needs and problems to him. He will care for us and give of himself to us when we look for him.

Questions:

- 1/ How do you react when you realize that God wants you to ask for requests audaciously? Does that feel uncomfortable or not?
- 2/ According to this passage, why should we feel comfortable boldly asking God for our requests?
- 3/ How might God being the perfect father affect how he responds to your prayers? What would cause him to say "Yes"? "No"? "Wait"? or "Maybe"?
- 4/ The passage concludes differently than we expect by saying that the Father will give the Holy Spirit (instead of "good gifts"). What do you learn about the role of the Holy Spirit by reviewing the following selections

Rom. 8:15. The Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

Rom. 8:26 We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

John 14:14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

- 5/ How are your prayers affected knowing that the Holy Spirit interprets your prayers to God as if God were hearing Jesus' own voice?
- 6/ Despite asking for "this cup to pass," Jesus accepted God's will in the Garden of Gethsemane for his eventual suffering and death in our place. How does Jesus' act, help us in our prayers to God the Father?

Ask for any questions that the group might have.

Close with a simple prayer, that we can pray without fear, but with the eagerness because we have complete access to our heavenly.

3/ The Rich Fool: Luke 12:13-21

Objective:

To understand that love of wealth and its accumulation are very dangerous to our spiritual health.

“A person’s true life is not made up of the things they own.”

Questions:

- 1/ Jesus says a man’s true life is not made of the things that he owns. What do you think are the important things in a person’s life?
- 2/ Jesus talks about being rich toward God or rich from God’s point of view. What do you think it means to be rich toward God? How will a person who is seeking God’s riches live differently than a person who is working hard to accumulate money and things?
- 3/ Why do you think Jesus told this story? What did he want to accomplish by telling it? What type of people need to hear this story?
- 4/ If Jesus were commenting on our lifestyle today, what do you think he might say?
- 5/ What are the priorities in your life right now? Where are your riches? How would you like to be remembered?

- 6/ In the story, what is Jesus saying about wealth and the pursuit of wealth?
- 7/ How will a person who is seeking God's riches live differently than a person who is working hard to accumulate money and things?
- 8/ At the end of the story, God calls the rich man a fool. Why do you think God considers the man to be a fool?
- 9/ How would you like to be remembered?
- 10/ Why is it difficult for us to accept the fact that our life and things are temporary? What step can you take this week to become less dependent upon your possessions?

Ask for any final comments or questions from the group.

Close with a prayer asking God to help us to recognize what is truly important in life.

4/ The Barren Fig Tree : Luke 13:6-9

Objective:

"The characteristics/fruit of a person's life that God is looking for, is a life that recognizes Jesus for who he is."

Questions:

- 1/ Who is the Man? Who is the Fig Tree?
What are the Fruit?
- 2/ After reading **Luke 13:6-9**, read **Luke 12:54-13:5**
Why is it important to have this background as we look at the Parable of 'The Barren Fig Tree'?
- 3/ Does anything happen without God's knowledge of it? Does this comfort you or make you anxious or something else. Why?
- 4/ What is the main concern of the God? Is His concern justified? Is it reasonable?
- 5/ Read **Luke 13:7-9** and **John 15:1-8**. Talk about the relationship between the vine and the branches. What does God desire from our lives?
- 6/ What does the master say *will* happen to the tree that does not bear any fruit? What warning did John the Baptist give about the urgency of repentance (**Luke 3:9**)?

- 7/ What did the keeper recommend? How did the master's response show his mercy and patience? What does Paul tell us about God's patience in **Romans 2:4-5**? What does Peter say in **2 Peter 3:9**?
- 8/ What was one reason that God showed mercy and patience to Paul (**1 Timothy 1:16**)?
- 9/ Has God shown mercy and patience to you? What is your response to God as a result of that?

Ask for any final comments or questions from the group.

Close with a prayer asking that you might be an example of His mercy and patience this week.

5/ The Invited Guests : Luke 14:7-14

Objective:

Jesus exposed our secret (or not so secret) desire to be admired. Acceptance by others is important to us all. However, making oneself look important in order to be accepted is not what God desires. When we focus on ourselves, we cannot focus on the needs of others. Our preoccupation of gaining acceptance interferes with our ability to love and care for others.

Questions:

- 1/ What did Jesus notice in **Luke 14:7**?
- 2/ How did Jesus respond to that situation (**Luke 14:8-10**)?
- 3/ Have you ever seen this kind of thing happen? If so, where and how did it make you feel?
- 4/ What are the two important principles Jesus identifies in **Luke 14:11**.
- 5/ What does it mean to 'exalt oneself'? Give an example.

- 6/ What does it mean to 'humbles oneself'?
Give an example.
- 7/ How does God exalt the humble, what does this look like?
- 7/ How does this parable build up our faith so that we can rightly live out our lives by humbling ourselves?
- 8/ Why is this parable so important to those in God's kingdom?

Ask for any final comments or questions from the group.

Close with a prayer. maybe confessing when you have lacked humility and committing yourself to serving even if others don't notice you.

