

Week 2 - The Good Samaritan – Acting Neighbourly (Luke 10:30-37)

Intro: The importance of asking the right question (Einstein story)

“If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask... for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes.” Albert Einstein

1. **Context:** a lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? **V.25**

What is wrong with this question? What is right with it? (Think about it!)

Certainly, a question we would all like to know the answer to! But eternal life is a gift! (Romans 6:23)

Was the Lawyer hoping to justify his own self-righteous attitude?

2. Jesus' KEY questions!! Jesus frequently answers a question with another question! He wants us to THINK!

We must KNOW the Truth... 1st question: “What is written in the Law?” **V.26**

But more importantly we must know how to IMPLEMENT it! 2nd question: “How do you read it?” [What does it mean to YOU – practically?]

The Lawyer's astute answer... **V.27**

He put together two key passages – he was a great scholar! Deut. 6:4-5 & Lev. 19:17-18

Jesus Commends his answer!

Jesus DID answer his question!!! “This DO and live!” **V.28** The conversation could have been over!!

Echo: Jesus answered this way himself: Matthew 22:40 “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” This is the WHOLE of the Law! Love God & Love people!

3. The Lawyer's 2nd Question “Who is my neighbour?” (This is the WRONG question!!!!) **V.29**

Why was he not satisfied with Jesus' answer?

How did he think this would ‘justify himself’?

What is behind this question?

4. Jesus answers with a parable!!! **V.30-35**

Tell about the University experiment! (See below)

The characters:

The journeying man – ‘half dead’ = us!

The Priest – “by chance” ??? Really??? “Saw him and passed by” – why didn't he stop?

The Levite – “Looked on him” – got closer but still did not stop

"The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But... the good Samaritan reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?" Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Samaritan – why did he stop? COMPASSION! Note the **repeated word** ‘and, and, and,....’ Went over and above (JESUS!!! They said he was a Samaritan!! Echo: John 8:48)

The Inn-Keeper - Given a commission and a wage (an earnest), Take care of him! I will repay you when I COME AGAIN! (This is you and me – the inn is the ecclesia → take care of the least of his brethren!)

5. The Conclusion – Who WAS a neighbour? **V.36** (The right question!) Note: v 29 “IS” v 36 “WAS”

The importance of asking the right question – not “Who is my neighbour?” but “How can I be a neighbour?”

Go and DO likewise → BE A NEIGHBOUR!!! **V.37**

“Examined the influence of situational variables and religiosity, as measured by several personality scales (e.g., the Religious Life Inventory), on the helping behavior of 40 theology students in an emergency situation suggested by the parable of the Good Samaritan. Students going between 2 buildings encountered a shabbily dressed person slumped by the side of the road. Students in a hurry to reach their destination were more likely to pass by without stopping. Some students were going to give a short talk on the parable of the Good Samaritan, others on a nonhelping relevant topic; this made no significant difference in the likelihood of their giving the victim help. Religious personality variables did not predict whether a student would help the victim or not. However, if a student did stop to offer help, the character of the helping response was related to his type of religiosity. (18 ref.) (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2010 APA, all rights reserved)”

“The subjects of this study were undergraduate divinity students at Princeton University. Upon arrival to the experiment room, the subjects were told that the study concerned the ability of divinity students to think quickly, on their feet as it were, in preparation for a public speaking engagement. The experimenters told the subjects that they would have to walk over to another building and give a talk to a group of freshman divinity students. Half of the subjects were told to address employment opportunities for divinity students after graduation, and the others were told to discuss the parable of the good Samaritan. This manipulation was crossed with another variable that proved critical - the subjects were told either that they were already late for the talk and had to hurry, that they had just enough time to get to the talk, or that they had a few extra minutes.

Darley and Batson's experiment truly begins during the subjects' walk over to the building to deliver their talk. All subjects passed a man who was slumped over against a wall, apparently in need of assistance. The man was, in reality, a confederate of the experimenters. As the subjects passed the confederate, he coughed twice and groaned. If the subjects asked him if he needed help, he said no, but it appeared otherwise. The subject of the sermon had no effect on the rate of helping. Whether the experimenter instructed the subjects to hurry or not, however, mattered a great deal. Subjects in a hurry were far less likely to stop and provide assistance than the other subjects.

The results of the study are a stunning triumph of mundane features of a situation over social norms. The subjects were, after all, not a random sample of Princeton undergraduates who might lack a dedication to the social norm of helping those in need - they were divinity students. The beliefs that these students doubtless held dear, however, were easily manipulated from an instruction by an unknown experimenter to hurry. Furthermore, even making the parable of the good Samaritan salient had no real effect on the subjects relative to the instruction to hurry. A pro-social norm, it seems, has the most effect when acting on the norm is convenient.”