
THE POWER OF LOVE

Part 5 - Love Never Fails

A Famous Story

To be a 'good Samaritan' is commonly understood as any charitable person, especially someone who rescues or helps a needy stranger.

But is this all that we need to know about this famous passage?

AN ETERNAL QUESTION

Jesus has just been teaching the people, but before he moves on, a lawyer, or an expert in the law stands up and questions Jesus.

"Expert in the law"

- + Perhaps a Scribe someone who studied, taught, interpreted, and transmitted the Mosaic Law
- + Perhaps a practicing lawyer as in our modern understanding

What is written in the law: Love God, and Love your neighbour as yourself.
(See Deut. 6 and Lev. 19)

The expert tried to trap Jesus by the law, but Jesus trapped the expert by His love.

A Worshipping Man

Jerusalem is the "city of peace".

Jericho is the "city of the moon".

"The Way of Blood", the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, is steep and windy and not very safe.

Discipleship to Jesus is not a self-seeking pursuit. When we come to Jesus, surrender our lives at His feet, we take up a cross, and follow Him to the ends of the earth.

Jerusalem is the place of worship. Come in.

Jericho is the place of mission. Go out.

Jerusalem is the place of peace and rest. Come in.

Jericho is the place of the other side and outreach. Go out.

A Priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan

The first person to come across the half dead man is a Priest. This man, probably righteous in the Law's eyes was certainly up to date with the requirements of being ceremonially clean and perhaps he was representing the law of Moses.

Second, a Levite. Well Levites in the Old Testament were a hand-picked tribe of God. They were the worship leaders of the Old Testament. They were prophets and they were teachers and judges. So this man is meant to represent the prophets of the Old testament.

Finally, a Samaritan. But this was unheard of.

He Had Compassion

Splagchnizomai – "to be moved in the inward parts".

Compassion happens first to the Samaritan, which causes a response of love. This response is both tangible and practical!

Binding wounds, pouring oil and wine, placing him on his own animal, taking him to a place of refuge and paying for his stay. The Samaritan is radically generous with his time and resources.

What if everybody in our church had this mindset and loved their neighbour, what could happen?

- + It would be dynamic, not static
- + It would be a who and not a what
- + It would be relationship-centric, not location-centric
- + It would be primarily deployed, not primarily gathered

Jesus challenges the expert and us today, to go and do likewise.

Becoming a Good Samaritan

1. Become Compassionate
2. Become Proactive
3. Become Unhurried

Jesus the Good Samaritan

It's nice to be able to have someone call you a Good Samaritan.

However, this passage isn't about us, as much as we might think. Many early church fathers such as, Origen, Clement, Irenaeus, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Augustine all saw the Samaritan, not as a nice charitable person, but as Jesus Christ the Son of God.

It was Jesus who left His throne, to meet with the broken and wounded world. He dressed our wounds, He carried the weight of our dead-man's body on his own, as He hung on the cross. And there on the cross, Jesus' precious blood spilt as wine that would heal the wounds left by the thief and the robber.

This is the power of love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The expert in the law tried to trap Jesus in the Law. Have you ever tried to justify your beliefs and actions with Jesus?
2. The man on the road to Jericho left the city walls of Jerusalem the 'city of peace'. Where in your life do you walk on a dangerous road? What is your frontline?
3. The Samaritan man was moved with compassion for the half dead man. When have you felt this type of compassion? If you haven't, stop now and pray for God to move your heart in this way.
4. The Good Samaritan was proactive in His love. Where do you feel God challenging you with His never failing Love? Do you see any injustices or brokenness in the world at the moment?
5. The Good Samaritan had margin (or He made margin) in His life to stop for the half dead man. Are you unhurried enough to notice people? If you are rushing, what parts of your life can you slow down in?