

Daily Discipleship

Luke 10:25-37

Stories of Discipleship: *A Kind Man's Story*

Focus Question: *What ways have you exercised compassion this week?*

word of life

“Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” Luke 10:36-37 (NRSV)

Read Luke 10:25-37

The lawyer tests Jesus by asking questions to which he already knows the correct answer. Why bother asking a question when you already know the answer? The lawyer probably thought he could outwit Jesus. Perhaps he felt he knew the law better than Jesus. Clearly, the lawyer is outmatched.

The lawyer proceeds to ask two questions – one involves eternal life and the other question concerns the definition of “neighbor”. He understands the law to include loving God with all of oneself as well as loving your neighbor. So what is the problem? Jesus encourages the lawyer to go and live his faith. But the lawyer is discontent. Who is my neighbor? He wants to reduce and limit love into a narrowly-defined category. Jesus responds with a story known as the “Good Samaritan”.

1. *When do you remember first hearing the story of the Good Samaritan?*
2. *What is so shocking about this story?*

In telling the story, Jesus uses a believable situation told in the setting of familiar towns and with realistic characters. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was well-traveled in the first century. It was a rocky road with rough terrain, hills, and crevices where attackers could easily ambush unwitting travelers. In the story, Jesus describes a violent crime which leaves the victim half-dead and in need of more than a mere band-aid.

Since the road is well-traveled, it is probable for travelers to see the injured man and offer assistance. Both a priest and a Levite pass by, but they do not help. It is possible these men were compassionate, but could not respond because they were bound to stay ritually pure and could not be near the blood on the wounded man.

3. *Why do you think the priest and Levite chose not help the injured man?*
4. *Do you believe they left to get help for the injured man? Why or why not?*

Surprisingly, it is a Samaritan who stops to provide care and compassion. In the time of Jesus, the Samaritans were treated as outcasts because of their ancestor's decision to intermarry and not follow the religious laws during the time of exile. Keep in mind, the Jews returned from exile between 538 BC (edict of Cyrus) and 515 BC (completion of the temple). Thus, this attitude towards the Samaritans had been harbored for over five centuries.

5. *Tell this parable using a modern-day setting and characters.*
6. *In your opinion, who would be cast as the least likely to help today if someone was in need?*

The Samaritan himself bandaged the wounds of the injured man, placed him on his animal, took him to the inn, and paid for his care. The Samaritan walked the walk of kindness and compassion. Jesus concludes, “Go and do likewise.” (Luke 10:37)

word among us

Kindness! Acts of kindness! Generous acts of kindness!

People of faith worked together to respond to the tremendous pain and agony from Hurricane Katrina and the breach of the levees. Homes were open to evacuees who needed a bed. Places of worship were open to strangers who needed shelter and food. Stories of kindness and compassion continue to be told as people share their Katrina tales.

One family left New Orleans with their fifteen-year-old son for a weekend tennis tournament in Jackson, Mississippi. The tournament went well. But by the time they got the news of the severity of the hurricane, the roads into New Orleans had been reversed in order to speed the flow of the evacuation. There was no access back into the city. They never saw their home in tact again. It was totally destroyed. Thus, the family was left with only their clothes from the tennis weekend. Their pain is apparent as they tell their Katrina tale, but they also share their gratitude for the acts of kindness extended to them and their neighbors.

1. *Share a Katrina tale – yours or one you have heard from someone else.*
2. *What motivates people to become Good Samaritans in times of need?*

In the aftermath of the devastation in the Gulf Coast area from Hurricane Katrina, Jews, Muslims, and Christians worked together in new ways to extend compassion. Baptist men, women clergy, and Hindus rolled up their sleeves and helped each other to relieve suffering. People of faith who disagreed on doctrines and theology found ways to reach out with a unified purpose and spirit, overcoming long-held barriers and walls.

3. *Why does it take the devastation of a disaster to tear down barriers between people of faith?*
4. *How does God bless those who extend care?*

Long-term recovery from Hurricane Katrina will take decades – note the plural. Volunteers are still needed to help in the Gulf Coast area to restore lives, homes, and communities. Victims still need to tell their story again and again. Healing comes through that process. Prayerfully consider traveling to the area on a prayer pilgrimage. (See a sample of a self-guided prayer pilgrimage on www.futurewithhope.org.) Become a Katrina Good Samaritan.

5. *How did your community respond to Hurricane Katrina and the breach of the levees?*
6. *How might you respond in the coming year?*

In the parable, Jesus was clear in his definition of a good neighbor. The Samaritan showed deep compassion and personally got involved in the injured man's care. Jesus concluded, "Go and do likewise."

7. *How might you "go and do likewise"?*

Prayer

God of compassion, it is easy to walk past those who are in need. It is not that we do not care or are selfish, we simply are too preoccupied and busy. We confess our mis-directed priorities and ask for your guidance and patience. Open our hearts and eyes to those who are in need. Amen

Dig Deeper

Colossians 1:1-14

last word

Each day this week,
do one unsolicited act of kindness.



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