

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

154TH AVE NE



CURRICULUM-THEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS

BIBLE STUDY

Luke 10: 25-37

²⁵ Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷ He answered, "You shall love the Lord your and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." ²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was neighborly to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Question: What do *you* think Jesus is saying?

Interpretation for Discussion:

A lawyer in the crowd stands up to test Jesus. When Jesus easily answers the question, it seems that the lawyer feels slightly embarrassed; he then asks a follow up question to justify the complexity of his question. Instead of outright answering his question, Jesus tells a story and flips the question.

The story that Jesus tells is one of violence on the outskirts of town. It describes a man who is beaten and left for dead. When made aware of such violence, the men of faith turn their gaze and steps, avoiding the mess. They were not willing to respond to the violence that occurred or offer their help and support to a person whose very life depended on it. Later, when a Samaritan passes by, a person of a different social, ethnic, and religious background, he is moved with compassion. The Samaritan stops, tends to the wounds of the hurt man, carries him to a safe place. Once at the inn, the Samaritan pays the innkeeper the equivalent of two days wages, which could house

the man at the inn for two months, with the promise of more, to ensure that the injured man would continue to be cared for.

Instead of answering what the lawyer asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus asks the lawyer, "Which of these three do you think was neighborly to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" The answer that Jesus affirms and commands the man to carry out in a similar fashion is to show mercy - to show kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them.

The question that the lawyer originally asked of Jesus was a way of determining who was in and who is out. He essentially asks, "who are the people I *have* to love?" Jesus' response to him tells us, "The question is not who do you *have* to love, but rather how can you be certain that you *are* acting in a way that shows love through mercy."



FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How do you feel about the suggested interpretation of the passage?
2. How might the priest and Levite interpreted the commandment quoted in verse 27?
3. How does Jesus encourage a different interpretation?
4. What reasons do you think the priest and Levite had for passing by?
5. What reasons could the Samaritan have for passing by?
6. For you, what does it mean to act neighborly?
7. How do the words “love,” “compassion,” and “mercy” relate to one another?
8. How could this parable be told using your local context as the setting?
 - Are there places in your community plagued by violence?
 - Who attends to those affected by that violence?
 - Can more be done to support those affected by gun violence?

LEADER'S GUIDE FOR BIBLE STUDY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

2. "Love your neighbor as yourself" is an exact citation from Leviticus 19:18, however, for Leviticus, "neighbor" is the equivalent to "sons of your own sons" or Israelites. This commandment could be interpreted rather narrowly.

3. Jesus reverses the question from one of legal obligation (according to Jewish law - who deserves my love?) to one of moral action (to whom can I act as a neighbor). He is not concerned so much with defining who is worthy of love, but considering how do one's action reflect neighborly intent.

4. Certainly, we cannot know the motivation of these nameless characters for their actions in Jesus' story, however it can be helpful to understand cultural implications to which the listeners would have been attuned.

Priests were particularly enjoined to avoid uncleanness, which would ritually occur if the priest were to come in contact with a dead body. Levites assisted priest with rituals and performed certain duties in the temple. The priest and Levite may therefore have assumed that the fallen traveler was dead and avoided him to keep themselves ritually clean.

Though, it should also be noted that the depiction of travel downhill (Jerusalem literally lies at a lower altitude than Jericho) may indicate that their temple duties had already been completed, making this argument less likely.

5. There was much tension between Samaritans and Jews. In fact, just one chapter earlier ([Luke 9: 51-56](#)) a Samaritan village refused to receive Jesus because he was Jewish. Samaritans were descendants of intermarriages between the people of Samaria and non-Jewish people who inhabited Samaria after the Assyrians invaded the land around 722 BC. They opposed rebuilding the temple and Jerusalem and constructed their own place of worship on Mount Gerizim. They were ceremonially unclean, socially outcast, and religiously a heretic.

By stopping, the Samaritan also made himself vulnerable to potential violence on the road. He also made generous use of his possessions (oil, wine, donkey, and money) and time to care for the hurt man, with no expectation of receiving something in return.

7. definition of Greek word translated as:

"mercy" - kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them

"compassion" - to be moved as to one's bowels, hence to be moved with compassion, (for the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity)

"love" - to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly

OTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGES ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE



OLD TESTAMENT

- **Genesis 1:27** - We are created in the image of God
- **Exodus 20:13** - Thou shall not kill
- **Leviticus 19** - God's shalom to reign in all aspects of life
- **Deuteronomy 21:1-9** - Take Responsibility for a murder
- **Deuteronomy 30:11; 19-20** - Choose life that you may live
- **Isaiah 2:3-4** - Beat swords into plowshares
- **Isaiah 9:5-7** - Unto us a child is born
- **Isaiah 11:1-9** - A vision of peace
- **Isaiah 30:9ff** - Those who spurn God's call to righteousness
- **Isaiah 40: 1-11** - Comfort for God's people
- **Isaiah 58:12** - Being a repairer of the breach
- **Jeremiah 29: 1ff** - Seek the Welfare of the City
- **Zechariah 8:1ff** - Zechariah's vision of New Jerusalem

NEW TESTAMENT

- **Matthew 5:9** - Blessed are the peacemakers
- **Matthew 5:13ff** - You are the salt of the earth, light of world
- **Matthew 6:10** - Thy Kingdom Come on earth
- **Matthew 19:19** - Love your neighbor as yourself
- **Matthew 26:52** - Those who live by the sword die by it
- **Luke 10:25-28** - Thinking is important The Great commandment
- **Luke 22:47-53** - Jesus and Violence
- **I Corinthians 13** - Greatest of these is love
- **II Corinthians 5:16ff** - God gave us the ministry of reconciliation
- **Galatians 6:7-10** - Don't lose heart
- **Ephesians 6:10ff** - Wrestling against a gigantic evil
- **Philippians 2:1ff** - The Mind of Christ
- **Revelation 5:9-13** - The victor over evil is Lamb who was slain
- **Revelation 11:15** - Kingdoms of world become kingdoms of Christ
- **Revelation 19:6** - God's certain victory over evil

These texts certainly do not exhaust the Biblical witness against humanity's bent to call evil good and good evil. The Bible presents God's recurring call for us to love mercy and do justice and to fight against violence, injustice and exploitation as we trust in the ultimate victory of God over all that negates and degrades human life.

The Bible is brim full of hope because God is sovereign. "Though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet." God's word encourages us to be a reconciler, a peacemaker, to love neighbors, to do justice, to build shalom (the well being of all people in human society.)

NOTES

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