Tonight as we continue our series of messages on “The Parables of Jesus” we are going to be looking at one of the most popular of all of Jesus’ parables, and that is “The Parable of The Good Samaritan.”

- This parable is so familiar to Christians and non-Christians alike, the “Good Samaritan” has actually become a complimentary name we give to anybody who demonstrates “sacrificial kindness” toward someone in need.

- And I don’t know whether you realize this or not, but most states actually have what is called a “Good Samaritan Law” which prevents anyone who offers help to someone who has been victimized in an accident or crime, from being sued by that individual or their family.

Our scripture text this evening is found in LUKE chapter ten, verses 25-37. For now I would like for us to just read VERSES 25-29.

READ: LUKE 10:25-29

P R A Y E R

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If you remember last Lord’s Day evening we studied “The Parable of The Unmerciful Servant” in Matthew chapter eighteen. If you will remember, Jesus told that parable in response to a question asked by the apostle Peter, “How many times shall I forgive a brother who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “Not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

Jesus then proceeded to tell “The Parable of The Unmerciful Servant” to illustrate how true forgiveness knows no limits or bounds.
Likewise the “Parable of The Good Samaritan” that we are looking at tonight, was prompted by NOT ONE, BUT TWO QUESTIONS.

I. The Questions Jesus Was Asked (vs. 25-29)

1. It was Patrick Murray who said, “A lawyer will do anything to win a case. Sometimes he will even tell the truth.”

   Lawyers didn’t have any better reputation in Jesus’ day than they do in ours.’

2. In these verses preceding “The Parable of The Good Samaritan” we meet a “lawyer” or “an expert in the Law” as he’s called in verse 25.

   Experts in the Law in Jesus’ day were those who were well-versed on Mosaic Law. And any time a citizen had any question regarding what was required of them by the Law of Moses, they could go to one of these “Experts in the Law” to get their answer.

3. Well on this occasion, it was “the lawyer” who was asked the questions.

   (A) In verse 25, the lawyer asked Jesus the first of his two questions:


   Now that is a great question! In fact, it is the greatest question anyone can ask. But we see in this verse, this lawyer didn’t really want to know what he needed to do to inherit eternal life, he was setting a “trap” for Jesus. He wanted Jesus to incriminate Himself by saying something that contradicted the Law of Moses.

   The wisdom of Jesus is seen in His response. You notice in verse 26, Jesus answers the lawyer’s question with a question, in fact, two questions:

   v. 26  “What is written in the law?” “How do you read it?”
The lawyer responded to Jesus’ questions by citing the two greatest commandments: “Love the Lord your God with all your hear and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself.” (v.27)

Jesus commended the lawyer for answering correctly. Then Jesus issued a command to the lawyer: “Do this and you will live.”

Now pay very close attention to VERSE 29………

v.29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, ‘WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?’

In all likelihood this “expert in the Law” was a Pharisee and Pharisees prided themselves on “maintaining an outward appearance of righteousness.”

Sensing that Jesus is about to “blow his façade” the expert in the Law skips right over the first commandment, as if to say to Jesus and everyone present, “How dare you question my love for God!” Of course I love God, after all I am an expert in the Law.”

Feeling hemmed in, the expert in the Law asks Jesus his second question: “And who is my neighbor?”

The cynical tone of the lawyer’s question would sound like this: “Not only is everything right between God and me, everything’s right between me and my neighbors too, that is unless you have a different definition of “neighbor.”

That question prompted JESUS to tell this wonderful “Parable of The Good Samaritan.”

Let’s look at..........
II. The Parable Jesus Told (vs. 30-37)

1. The distance between Jerusalem and Jericho is about 19 miles.

When Jesus said, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho” that was a great understatement. There is a 4,000 foot drop between Jerusalem and Jericho.

The road between Jerusalem and Jericho was so dangerous the Jews called it Adummim, which meant “Bloody pass.”

The road was very narrow with lots of twists and turns. Some stretches of the road had 300 to 400 drop-offs on both sides, while other stretches had jagged rocky mountains on either side.

It was in those mountainous stretches thieves would often set up ambushes and attack unsuspecting travelers.

2. Jesus introduces us to one of these victims in verse 30, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him for dead.”

3. As the parable progresses, Jesus now introduces us to three individuals who encountered the dying man and shows us how each responded.

(A) We meet the first man in VERSE 31. He was a PRIEST.

v. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

On the surface it would appear this would be the best possible person to come along if you were that dying man.

The priest was one of God’s “finest.” He was a temple servant who offered sacrifices for God’s people. He
was one of the godliest, most righteous men in the Jewish community.

Surely this man would stop to help the dying man. But he didn’t! He didn’t! He passed by on the other side of the road.

(B) In verse 32, Jesus introduces the second man, a LEVITE.

v. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

A Levite as an assistant to the temple priest. The Levite handled many aspects of the temple worship. They had to have knowledge of the LAW of Moses. And they had to be of upright CHARACTER.

Surely this Levite, being a temple assistant would stop to help the dying man. But he didn’t! He didn’t! He too passed by on the other side of the road.

There is something in the original Greek wording of verses 31, 32 that we miss in our English translations.

It appears the Priest and the Levite both responded in the same exact way when they came upon the dying man. But in the original Greek their responses were different.

-When the priest came by he didn’t even STOP or SLOW down. He simply moved to the other side of the road and went on.

-When the Levite came by, the original Greek indicates he stopped and lingered over the dying man for a time, then made a conscious decision to leave him there. Which response of the two was more cold and calloused? I’ll let you be the judge of that.

(C) Then in verses 33-35, Jesus introduces the third man who came by that day. He was a SAMARITAN

v. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was;
and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

v. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.

v. 35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,” he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

While the “expert in the Law” and everyone else who heard Jesus tell this parable were still getting over the shock that those two “righteous men” didn’t stop to help, imagine their shock when they heard Jesus say those three words: “But a Samaritan………..”

JEWS and SAMARITANS hated each other. Samaritans were considered “half-breeds.” They were the off-spring of inter-racial marriages between JEWS and the inhabitants of the northern parts of Israel who remained in the land after it was taken over by Joshua and the Israelites.

If the SHADOW of a Samaritan happened to touch a Jew as they passed each other on the street, the Jew would consider himself ceremonially unclean and promptly go home to bathe.

This was the last person on earth anyone would expect to stop and help the dying man. But he did! He did!

There are many valuable lessons this parable teaches you and me. Let’s consider just a few of them.

III. The Lessons Jesus Teaches Us In This Parable

(A) In this parable, Jesus teaches us we are HELPLESS to SAVE ourselves.

Remember the first question asked by the expert in the Law? “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” And in verse 29 it says, “He wanted to justify himself.”

The “beaten and robbed man” in this parable is a picture of all lost SOULS. The man was HELPLESS! He was totally dependent upon the love and compassion of another to SAVE him.
Likewise, all of us were HELPLESS! We could not “JUSTIFY” ourselves! We could not SAVE ourselves by our observance of the law……or by keeping the commandments……or by our works……or by our good morals. We were entirely dependent upon the GRACE and MERCY of the Lord Jesus Christ, our “Good Samaritan.”

(B) In this parable, Jesus also teaches us “Loving GOD and loving our NEIGHBOR” are inseparable.

You see, to keep the whole law, I must obey both the great commands. If I claim to LOVE THE LORD MY GOD WITH ALL MY HEART, SOUL AND MIND, but I don’t LOVE MY NEIGHBOR AS MYSELF, then I am guilty of of breaking BOTH of the GREAT commands.

Like the “expert in the Law” I think many Christians want to narrow their definition of “NEIGHBOR” to mean their closest FRIENDS and people they LIKE.

But in this parable Jesus is teaching us “Our neighbor” includes the whole brotherhood of HUMANITY” even those we may consider an ENEMY.

Boy that’s a hard pill to swallow isn’t it!

(C) In this parable, Jesus also teaches us a valuable lesson on the COST of sacrificial LOVE.

Look how much it cost the Samaritan to show love toward the dying man:

1. It cost COMPASSION True compassion is more than feeling sorry for someone. True compassion moves us to take action.

2. It cost CONSIDERABLE RISKS There was a great risk to the Samaritan that he might be viewed as the robber if someone passed by and saw him with the dying man.

    There was a considerable risk the dying man might
just be a “decoy” and the Samaritan himself could be beaten and robbed.

There’s always a risk in showing love to others. The risk of rejection. The risk of ingratitude and lack of appreciation.

3. True love costs CONTACT. One reason why the Priest and Levite passed by the dying man was because if they came in contact with the blood of the man they would become “ceremonially unclean” to perform their temple duties. They put the “ritual” thing over doing the “right” thing.

True love isn’t afraid to touch someone in their moment of need regardless of whether they are bleeding, dirty, sweaty or smelly.

4. And true love costs CONVENIENCE. From what we can gather from verse 35, the Samaritan had apparently been on his way to conduct business when he encountered this dying man. It certainly wasn’t “convenient” for him to stop. Stopping cost him time. And it cost him money. And yet he chose to stop.

(D) In this parable, Jesus also teaches us the truth about OURSELVES.

When you look at this parable you see at least four different views of the dying man.

1. To the “expert in the Law” he was just a philosophical issue to discuss.
2. To the robbers, he was a victim to exploit.
3. To the Priest and Levite he was a inconvenience to avoid.
4. To the Samaritan he was a NEIGHBOR to SERVE.

Ask yourself, “Which of these four responses best describes my attitude toward people in need?”

(E) In this parable, Jesus also teaches us one person truly can make a DIFFERENCE.
Who knows how many people have been inspired to be a “Good Samaritan” to someone because of the loving, compassionate example of this one man who stopped to help someone one day

APPLICATION

As we close our study of this wonderful parable tonight I want to issue a challenge.

This week pray this prayer: “Dear Lord, help me be a Good Samaritan to someone today.”

Be prepared to respond to the doors of opportunity the Lord will open. It may not be something so dramatic as saving a life like the Good Samaritan in this parable.

It may not be anything “heroic” or something that will get your name in the newspaper.

It might be something as simple as helping an elderly person who has fallen or helping someone who is broken down along side the road........or helping a handicapped person get something off the shelf at the grocery store.

Just pray that prayer and let God take care of the rest.

Let us love our neighbor as ourselves!