

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev Chris Trinham

Stories Jesus Told

No 12

My Neighbour?

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:17-37

The story usually entitled 'the Good Samaritan' is well known to us all and need not be retold. Understanding the parable comes with looking at its historical Jewish setting and applying the lessons we learn to our own situation. To some degree our understanding will be enhanced if we examine the questions that were asked, and give our answers. This study complements and expands Study N^o 11.

Observe the context.

And a lawyer stood up and put him to the test ... v25

Some versions more correctly read, 'And behold, a certain lawyer ...' Or even better, 'And then, one, a lawyer ...' telling us to note that while Jesus was sharing the disciples' joy in the success of their assignment, that a trained lawyer (Ref. v25) interjected in the conversation between Jesus and his disciples, one of the *sofw'n kai; sunetw'n*, one 'wise, skilled or expert', and also, 'intelligent, with insight and comprehension who can put things together'² that Jesus had referred to in v21.

He was obviously attracted by the happiness of the occasion. The word joy occurs three times (vv17,20&21) especially:

"Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven" v20.

He doubtless heard this happy instruction of Jesus to his disciples.

The lawyer understood Jesus' reference to Psalm 69:28 and Daniel 12:1.³ His question:

What must I do to inherit eternal life? explores that theme. As you read it, emphasize the 'I do'. He was testing Jesus and his own knowledge.

The Lawyer, says Edersheim, was probably not a temple or synagogue scribe, but one who made a profession of Jewish canon law. He says that he probably belonged to a small party

amongst the Rabbinites who attached greater value to good works than to study, and knowing the ways of his group we are not to be surprised that he sought to put Jesus to the test (Summarized)². He also points out that here there is no rancour or evil motive on his part, unlike the Pharisees who were out to trap him². To 'put Him to the test' v25. 'Test' is from an intense form of a word, only found in three other places, each of these to do with putting God to test with evil intent (Matt. 4:7, Lu. 4:12 & 1 Cor. 10:9). The basic word has a wide range of meanings, but is used mostly of examining something to discern its character.

Jesus did not upbraid him, as He did Satan when he tempted Him to sin. Therefore we may assume that this was a genuine and urgent enquiry.

In some ways God longs for His people to prove Him. Through Malachi he said:

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," Malachi 3:10.

Prove here also means to 'test, try, probe or examine.' We must learn through experience how to trust God, what He wants, what He expects of us and when and how He responds. Living by faith is not working a system; it is living in a relationship. He expects such a debate. E.g: Exodus 3:1-4:17. The difference is the spirit and purpose in which the proving is done. Proving God to be faithful results in our growing in the grace of the Lord.

Four revealing questions.

"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
v25

Inherit means 'to receive an allotment of.' and going on from that the concept of birthright, then still further in the NT to the all the rewards and blessings that flow to the believer due to his relationship with God in Christ.

Probably we would have answered him, 'Be born again and become a child of God.' Jesus however answered him according to his understanding, for he was yet far from the Kingdom.

Note: "What shall I do?" Like his group he was into the idea of doing works. "What works will qualify me with God so as to get me in on all this?"

"What is written in the law?"

How does it read to you?" v26

Edersheim says that Jesus' answer was in a form commonly used by Rabbis of the day. And the lawyer replied in the same form, quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, as Jesus knew he would. See also Matthew 19:16-19 & 22:35-40.

The reply of Jesus was at once commending and condemning v28, because the answer was correct, but the doing of it was and is, impossible. If we are to be saved by our good works we must do them to perfection. Who can do that? (See study No. 11.)

We are not saved by doing but by God's grace and by our faith in His promise and provision. The evidence of that salvation is found in what we do because He is at work in us.

Bible quotations are from the NASB, unless otherwise indicated. 1. Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words. 2. The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Edersheim, v4.c15.p432-435. 3. See also Philippians 4:3 & Hebrews 12:23.

"And who is my neighbour?"
v29

This question vexed the Jews at that time. Without delving into the issue too far their response was 1. of mercy for a religious brother in need, 2. disdain for an apostate Jew and 3. possible hostility toward a Gentile.

Love of God is elementary, but love of neighbour is the acid test. (Study 11.) To justify himself against what he knew was personally damning, he asked this question, thus shifting the goal posts.

"Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" v36

Have you noticed that Jesus reversed the roles. We think of people being our neighbours and our obligation to them. If so we may be rendering service they do not want. Instead we need to note the words of Jesus and think of ourselves being a neighbour to them by answering a need that is causing them to suffer. An example of this is to be observed in Jesus who was a neighbour to the lawyer. He answered his need, but did not provide a service that was not being called for. Think it through. Act on it.

As *real* Christians, redeemed by the blood of Jesus and born of the Spirit, we do not need to work to inherit eternal life. However the risen Christ in us will want to do today the kinds of things He did then. To day He will use our denarii, our ass, our care and compassion. Our neighbourliness *may be* for the person who is next to us right now. How do we know? The Holy Spirit will lead us. Our part is to respond when He calls.

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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