

Small Group Meeting on The Good Samaritan

Review (20 mins)

Reflect together on your experiences over the last week. What has God been teaching you? Where have you been growing in your walk with Him? Had you set yourself a challenge in your discipleship? How is that going? Share those experiences with your small group.

Read (10 mins)

Recap on the sermon from last Sunday. Try to give a summary to those who were not able to be present.

Luke 10 v 25 to 37

Read the Bible passage for this week, slowly and prayerfully. It might help to use your imagination to picture the scene. Below, you will find helpful background information in our 'Setting the Scene' section.

This story is so familiar that we can think we know what it's about. It may be helpful to read it again and, as you do, note the details that Jesus puts into the story and see if there's anything you missed when you read it first time.

Then ask yourself what would people listening to this story get as Jesus' main point. What was his CORE MESSAGE?

Also look out for *shockers* and *blockers*.

Shockers – a phrase, word, image or something from the text that resonates, stands out or connects with you.

Blockers – something from the text that raises questions for you.

Setting the scene:

- The Samaritans (based on their main city of Samaria) were the remnant of the old northern Kingdom of Israel. They had been carted off to Assyria in BC 722 and the kingdom never really reformed. The return from exile was the southern kingdom of Judah whose main city was Jerusalem. In Jesus' time the Samaritans were regarded as very poor relations. They were hated and derided by the Jews. Many Jews would not travel through Samaria preferring to go up the Jordan valley to access the Galilee.
- So a 'good' Samaritan was a contradiction in terms to an orthodox Jew. To him there was no such thing. Jesus' teaching would have shocked many that such a person could possibly exist.
- The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was notorious. So Jesus' hearers would have immediately understood the context. And what was a Samaritan doing there anyway? The road is deep in southern kingdom territory and even today is not considered 'safe' for tourists.
- Look at the start of the passage. Jesus has been challenged by 'an expert in the law'. He wanted to know about eternal life. Jesus gave him the two great commandments. He presumably accepted the first ('Love the lord your God') but was troubled by the second. So this story is to illustrate what it truly means to be a neighbour. Bearing in mind what this teacher of the law would probably have thought of Samaritans, this story would have been very difficult for him to take.

Reflect (20 mins)

After you have all had time to read the text, pause and be still to listen to God through the Scriptures.

Begin your reflection time by each naming your *shockers* and *blockers*. Listen carefully to each other, share your thoughts and reflect on this passage together.

You might also like to explore these questions:

Q1. The two who passed by were Jewish establishment figures. What was Jesus saying about the current state of organised Jewish religion. Are there dangers in being an establishment religion?

Q2. What does this passage say about the true actions of a 'neighbour' Bear in mind that this man was caring for a man who probably regarded him as second class.

Respond (20 mins)

As you draw near to the end of your session, consider how you might respond to your reading and reflection by "walking the talk". What are you going to be doing this week that will help you seal the faith you have? It may be a challenge or activity that you are currently engaged with over many weeks. Be prepared to share how you are growing in that.

Some new challenge ideas

1 The nature of True Love

Jesus' answer to the teacher was couched in terms of love. To be a disciple of Jesus is to love God. And Jesus gives us no wriggle room here. It is with ALL your heart, ALL your soul, ALL your strength and with ALL your mind. At this point many of want to give up because we realise our failings. I recently heard that the way forward for Christians is to fall 'more deeply in love with Jesus'. We should set that as our aim – we will fall short but let's put things in place that help us. Any deepening of a relationship is about nurturing love.

2 Who is my neighbour?

For us, at a simple level, it's the family over our garden fence. But Jesus is aiming a lot higher. The teacher responded to the story by saying 'the one who has mercy'. We all have networks of friends and family. Are we showing 'mercy' to them or do we spend too much time gossiping or being critical? It may help to make a list of people known to you and write down something you could do to show them the mercy of a neighbour.

3 Practical Neighbourliness

What the Samaritan did was 'good' because he did exactly what the beaten up man needed. He assessed the situation and did all the right things. He couldn't have done any more – he even paid his hotel bill! Does our merciful neighbourliness get squeezed because we're too busy to follow through with what our friend or relative needs? Maybe this is the challenge of 21st century living – to make sure that the ministry of church does as much as is possible in caring for his people.

4 The Unlovable

The real challenge of this passage is that the Samaritan cared for a man who he knew detested him. He loved the 'unlovable'. The people who should have cared walked past. What does that mean in terms of how the church works in the community?

Group Prayer

As a group, pray for one another this week as you explore a deeper life with God through prayer. Pray that your times of prayer and your attempt to walk in the light of God's ways will increase and become more habitual throughout each day.