



## Luke 10:25-37

# The Good Samaritan and Eternal Life

One day a Jewish lawyer approached Jesus. He was a remarkable man of fine character. Although the evangelist did not give his name, this man was an expert in the Law of Moses. He spent his life studying the law, interpreting it and teaching it in the synagogues. It was part of his solemn duty to decide questions regarding the law.

The Gospel writer Luke introduces this lawyer as a serious inquirer, and sincere seeker of truth. He put Jesus to the "test" with his sharp inquiring mind. He asked a question to "test" Jesus (Luke 10:25). The word "test" is in the intensive form meaning to test thoroughly. He was seeking as a teacher to reveal the mind of the Master Teacher. He was seeking not only the answer to his question, but as to how Jesus processed his conclusion. How did the Master Teacher think? This lawyer was a highly intelligent man of great ability. Let's give him the benefit of the doubt and search with him the mind of Christ. Luke takes us to the heart of the passage with this lawyer's question to Jesus.

## LOVE THE LORD (10:25-29)

### *A Jewish lawyer asked the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"*

Since he is a student of the Jewish law, the lawyer asked what is the relationship between law and life. Give me a law that will guarantee me abundant life. "What shall I *do*" to inherit this kind of life? I want life; give me a dynamic, full, vivacious abundant life. What shall I *do*? What shall I do to receive my shared allotment in the inheritance of God? What can I do to obtain God's kind of life?

"Eternal life" is not speaking necessarily of duration, but of salvation, and entering the kingdom of God. It is the kind of life God has, and it begins now in the new birth and lasts through out eternity (John 5:26). Christ in a believer is life. Christ is our life (Col. 3:4; Gal. 2:20; John 11:25-26; 14:6). This life ever moves toward its divine source and issues in eternal life. It is not subject to change or decay. Indeed, it is resurrection life and looks forward to the blessed hope that is ours when Christ returns. The word is applied to no one other than God, and describes nothing less and nothing other than the life of God Himself. We enter that life with Him when we believe on Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. This kind of life can only begin with a spiritual birth because we are dead in our trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-3). Christ makes possible an intimate love relationship with the LORD God. Eternal life begins with someone —Christ (John 6:40).

The word "eternal" relates to God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It speaks of the never-ending timeless past, present and future. We as believers enjoy this kind of life because of what God has done for us in the

believers enjoy this kind of life because of what God has done for us in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

This Jewish scholar came to Jesus asking Him about life, eternal life. Is there a law that will give this kind of life? What can I do to obtain it?

It is important to observe that Jesus didn't answer the man's question. He let the man answer his own question. Jesus asked the lawyer what the law teaches. Jesus answered with another question: "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" (v. 26). How do you read it? You are an expert in the Law; may I hear your exposition of it?

The lawyer responded, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOUR SELF" (v. 27). The New American Standard Bible formats quotes from the Old Testament in all capital letters. Here the lawyer is quoting from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 which he wore on the fringe of his garments in tiny leather boxes. His *phylactery* contained the answer to his own question to Jesus.

You must love the Lord your God with *all* your heart, and with *all* your soul, and with *all* your strength, and with *all* your mind. You must not only love your neighbor, but you must love him *as yourself*.

Jesus told him, "You have answered correctly" (v. 28). Indeed, Jesus answered with a quote from Leviticus 18:5; "DO THIS, AND YOU WILL LIVE." Good answer; now go and do it. The reasoning is: "If you would attain to eternal life by keeping the law, then keep the law. Do it and live. Keep on doing it and live."

### ***Only one problem***

However, there is only one problem. Have you done it? Do you know anyone who has loved the Lord God with *all* your heart, with *all* your soul, with *all* your strength, with *all* your mind, and your neighbor as yourself? Have you done it every day, every hour of your life with no slip up? With a holy God 99.99% is failure. Yes, you read it correctly. Seventy is not passing with God. It is an "F" on your spiritual report card! "For whoever keeps the whole law, and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all" (James 2:10). Ouch! How many times do you have to break the law to be lost? How many times do you have to fail in the sight of a holy God to be come guilty? "If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 John 1:10). We are only deceiving ourselves and no one else.

There is only one person who has ever lived up to the righteous demands of God's law. He is the Son of God, Jesus Christ. He "committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). He never experienced sin, and never failed to keep the holy demands of the law. The Father declared on three different occasions, "This is My Son in whom I am well pleased."

The Bible is clear that to be saved by keeping the law requires that one keep the whole law perfectly, all the time. The law must be kept, all of it, without any omissions, or failures, or exceptions, all the time. In order to be justified by the law, one must be perfect.

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If this lawyer was dishonest, he just fell into his own mental and spiritual trap! His system of law keeping made eternal life impossible. "The soul that sins will surely die." Romans 3:20 declares, "By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin." Sinful man can not live up to the holy demands of the law. The purpose of the Law was not to give eternal life.

### *The purpose of the Law*

The purpose of the law was to reveal sin, not to give eternal life. It pointed its long finger and declared, "You are guilty!" "The Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe" (Galatians 3:22). The purpose of the law was to convict us of sin and point us to the Savior who can save us from our sin and guilt. The law was never meant to save anyone. It was powerless. It was being used for the wrong purpose.

The lawyer knew he didn't have eternal life so he tried to put Jesus on the defensive. He was in trouble spiritually. He was guilty of breaking the law. Now, unexpectedly the lawyer feels obligated to justify himself. This is often what happens when we come under the conviction of our sinfulness by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the lawyer asked Jesus a second question, "wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' " (v. 29). In the Jewish lawyer's mind, his neighbor could never be a Gentile. He would have to be from the Jewish race, an Israelite, and a Pharisee. Jesus answered the lawyer by telling a story.

### **LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR (10:30-37)**

#### *Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan (vv. 30-37).*

Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on *them*; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you. Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' *hands*?' And he said, 'The one who showed mercy toward him.'" Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

#### *How to be neighborly*

In the story the Samaritan offered mercy and love in tangible and costly ways.

- He saw the wounded man on the side of the road. He didn't close his eyes and walk away. He allowed something to happen in his heart. He hadn't become callused, abrasive and hard from the cruel encounters of the evils in life.
- He did not run from his feelings. He felt compassion and identified with the man at that moment out of a heart of love. He acknowledged and deeply experienced his feelings of compassion.

- He was willing to risk his own safety. He came toward the man, taking his own life in his hands because he had no knowledge that the robbers had left the area. Moreover, when he came forward he realized this half dead man was a Jew and his sworn enemy! There was no love lost between the Jews and the Samaritans. However, he went beyond his pent up racial and religious prejudices.
- He acted on what he knew the right thing to do. He bandaged up the wounds, pouring his own precious wine and oil on him.
- The Good Samaritan put the man on his own beast and walked, looking for a place of refuge. He was willing to give up personal comfort and convenience to help an enemy in need.
- He brought him to an inn, therefore restricting his own plans and personal journey.
- He took personal care of the injured man and stayed the night in the inn, nursing the enemy back to life, and making sure he was going to live.
- He gave the innkeeper two-day s wages and asked him to watch over the man, and if it cost more he would personally repay him. As a caregiver, he was willing to cover the expenses of the needy.
- He planned to return to follow-up on the injured man.

Jesus asked the lawyer which one proved to be neighborly in the story? "The one who showed mercy." Mercy is the outward manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it. This word is used of God, who is rich in mercy toward the sinner (Ephesians 2:4), and who has provided salvation for all men (Titus 3:5).

It is obvious the Samaritan had a personal relationship with God, and because of that relationship, he was able to reach out to his needy enemy with the mercy of God. The lawyer was lacking in this one thing. He had never experienced God's marvelous grace. All he could think of was legalism and merit. He was too busy justifying himself in the eyes of men and God.

Once a person has come to an intimate love relationship with Jesus Christ he is able to reach out to a depraved, lost dying world.

### ***Who is the Good Samaritan in this story?***

It is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! The Good Samaritan is Jesus our Kinsman Redeemer. He is our *Go el*. "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

The man who was beaten and left for dead is a picture of the ugliness of sin and depravity.

Our *Goel* had to be a near kinsman. He must be a blood relative. Jesus is our near kinsman through the incarnation. Jesus you are my kinsman redeemer. You have the right to redeem me. He became one of us by becoming flesh and dwelling among us. He is our nearest of kin.

He has the power and the means to redeem. He owns the whole universe and therefore He has the purchase price. He is the spotless Son of God, born of a virgin. He is sinless and pure in the sight of God and man.

Moreover, He is willing to redeem us. "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15ff). "No one has taken it

Moreover, He is willing to redeem us. "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15ff). "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father" (v. 18). He prayed to the Father, "Not my will, Thy will be done." He went to the cross and died in our place. He was willing to die our death.

As our *Go èl* He was willing to marry the widow. It is a permanent everlasting commitment to the Bride. We are the Bride of Christ. He will not divorce, abandon, or leave us. He will never forsake us. He will stay at our side and nurse us back to life! He is concerned for what is best for us.

Isaiah 53:3-6 reminds us that just as this despised and rejected Samaritan became the "savior" of the robber, so the despised and rejected Jesus became the Savior of all who trust in Him. "He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him" (Isaiah 53:3-6).

The Lord God saves us by grace alone through faith alone in the sacrificial death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ alone. Jesus is the only righteous man on this earth. He alone fulfilled the law perfectly. He took our sins upon Himself, bearing the curse of death which the law pronounced on us. By trusting in His death and resurrection on our behalf, our sins are forgiven and we receive the free gift of eternal life.

"For while we were helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. . . But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6, 8). That is what our Kinsman did for us. Our Good Samaritan went to the cross and died in our place to give us eternal life.

### *Saved by grace*

This eternal life is not the result of our good works, not even being a good neighbor, but the result of God's grace manifested through Jesus Christ. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

What is Jesus saying to this Jewish lawyer and anyone else who thinks he can earn eternal life? The Jewish religious system was completely bankrupt. Law keeping was not the way to eternal life because no one is able to live up to the demands of the law. In order to be saved by law keeping, he must fulfill every requirement of the law all of the time, and with his whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. Not half heartedly. Not as a hobby. Not as a religious fad. Not even as the most sincere religious, moral person the world has ever known. The law can only condemn; it cannot save. The law is powerless to save you. The lawyer was guilty just as you and I are guilty of breaking the law. You can not earn or merit eternal life no matter how good you think you are, or how religious you may be. It is an "inheritance." It is a gift. It is not something you earn or do.

The Lord responded by reminding him of his question that eternal life is not given to men and women based on some religious activity. Eternal life is the fruit of establishing a loving relationship with the one and only living God. It is something you "inherit" because you are a member of His family. Once that relationship is established by faith and not by works, the Lord fills our lives with Himself and His love and enables us to not only love Him fully, but to love our neighbors as ourselves.

### *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*

*Nothing!* Stop thinking you can *do* something to merit it. You get your inheritance through a relationship with God. You receive it because you are His child, born into His family spiritually by the new birth. Ephesians 2:8-9. It is by faith that it may all be by GRACE! It is God's free gift. It is not by obedience, by merits or works. It is all by grace through faith.

Start believing that God came in the person of His Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins. If you place your faith in Jesus as the only Savior, He will save you by His grace, and immediately give you the gift of eternal life. The moment you declare your spiritual bankruptcy and believe on Christ you inherit eternal life.

Romans 10:9-10 gives the only requirement for man to be saved. Read it carefully and ponder these words of the apostle Paul. He writes,

If you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Put your name in the place of the word "world" and read the verse again. Replace the word "whoever" with your own name and read it a third time. Moreover, "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (v. 18). "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (v. 36).

You can receive God's free gift of eternal life right now by confessing to Him your need and believing on Him as your personal Savior. You may find it helpful to pray this prayer if it comes from your heart. "Lord God I realize that I am unworthy of ever earning or meriting the salvation You freely give. I confess that I am a sinner and I deserve eternal separation from Your holy presence. However, I realize that You love me and Jesus died on the cross for my sins. I ask you to be my Savior and give me eternal life. Thank you for this free gift." The apostle Paul told the Roman jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31a).

### ***Who is our neighbor?***

This passage also speaks to those of us who know Christ as our personal Savior. Our neighbor is the very next hurting person we meet, whether friend or enemy. God has enabled us to reach out with His love and mercy to a lost and hurting world.

What are we to do to our neighbor in trouble? It becomes a joy to bind the wounds of a hurting and bleeding humanity. The Lord Jesus reaches out and touches His world through our loving hands. We become His eyes, His hands, His feet and His heart as we minister His grace in His name.

Don't try to be a Samaritan unless you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Moreover, if you have a personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and Savior your "inheritance" is secure and your heart is already filled with love, mercy and power. Now you can be a good "Samaritan." Someone has said, "Grace is the mother of compassion." It begins with a changed life from the inside out. When we place our faith in God, then He comes and dwells in us, and His love begins to flow through us to others. That is the only way you can love your neighbor. Christ floods our hearts with His life. It is an exchanged life. He lives His life through us to reach a lost world.

His life through us to reach a lost world.

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