

Story 4: The Good Samaritan

This Bible study focuses on a passage in the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament.
Stories that Make You Think:

Luke 10:25-37

Objective:

To understand that God's intention for us is to love him with all that we have and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. To understand that our neighbor is not necessarily the person we like, but the person who is in need.

Introductory Question:

Jesus was a famous teacher. Many people asked him questions. Suppose you met a famous teacher like Jesus and could ask him one question. What would the question be?

Introduction:

Jesus used the story we are discussing today to help answer a question. He wanted the person answering the question to think about his own motives and priorities in relating to other people.

Reading the Passage:

Have the group read each section before you discuss it. Read the passage silently at first. Then have someone read it aloud. Define any words unfamiliar to group members before proceeding with the discussion questions.

Questions:

Luke 10:25-29 - Two Questions

v 25

1. A teacher of the law comes to Jesus and asks him a question. In Jesus' time, this man would be student of the laws of God as recorded in the Old Testament in the Bible. What is the legal expert's purpose in asking the question?
2. What is the question?
3. Examine the question closely. What kind of world view does the question assume?
4. What do you think eternal life means?
5. What did the lawyer assume about how a person receives eternal life?

6. Is this question important to you?

v 26

7. Where does Jesus assume the answer to this question can be found?

8. What are the scriptures (or the law, depending on your translation)?

v 27

9. What is the answer to the question as found in the scriptures?

v 28

10. What is Jesus' opinion of this answer?

11. According to this verse, what is most important to Jesus - what a person knows, what a person does, how a person relates to other people?

v 29

12. The teacher asks Jesus a second question, "Who is my neighbor?" What is his motive for asking the question?

13. Why do you think he feels the need to justify himself?

14. How is this question going to help him justify himself?

15. What thoughts are going on in his mind?

16. What do you think he expects Jesus' answer to be?

Luke 10:25-37 - The Story

Background:

The story takes place on the road between the city of Jerusalem in the mountains and the city of Jericho, about 20 miles away in the Jordan river valley. The terrain between the cities was rough, desolate, with few inhabitants and frequented by robbers. The robbers at times used tricks like having one of their number appear injured by the side of the road. When someone stopped to help, the others could attack him easily while he wasn't paying attention. Different types of people are mentioned in the story. The person who is robbed would be understood to be a Jew. The priest and the Levite are Jewish religious leaders who have a good knowledge of God's laws. The final person in the story is a Samaritan, a person from the province of Samaria. The relationship between the Jews and Samaritans was very similar to the relationship between Jews and Arabs today, or to any relationship

marked by strong racial or cultural prejudice. The Jews considered Samaritans as social outcasts, untouchables, racially inferior, practicing a false religion. They avoided any association with Samaritans, traveling long distances out of their way to avoid passing through a Samaritan area. Any close physical contact, drinking water from a common bucket, eating a meal with a Samaritan, would make a Jew ceremonially unclean - unable to participate in temple worship for a period of time. The Samaritans responded quite naturally with strong dislike or hatred for Jews. Understanding this cultural prejudice makes the end of Jesus's story all the more surprising to us.

v 30-35

1. How does Jesus answer the lawyer's second question?
2. What is the big surprise in the story?
3. Why might we have expected the priest or the Levite to help?
4. What reasons do you think they might have had for walking by on the other side?
5. What reasons might the Samaritan have had for going on by like the others?
6. Why did he stop to help?
7. What is Jesus' point in having the Samaritan exemplify brotherly love toward one's neighbor?
8. Which one of these men would you like to emulate?
9. In the past, which one have you acted like?

v 36-37

10. Jesus asked the lawyer, "Which of the three acted like to the victim of the robbers?" The answer was obvious, the Samaritan. How does this story answer the lawyer's original question, "Who is my neighbor?"
11. In the conversation between the lawyer and Jesus, who is testing whom?
12. What final test does Jesus leave for the lawyer?
13. Do you think he passed the test?

Thought Questions:

1. What kind of person needs to hear the story that Jesus told to the lawyer?
2. What are people like who love God with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind?
3. How do they relate to other people?
4. How would you apply this story to your own life?
5. How does Jesus want us to live?

Question for Those Familiar with the Bible:

Consider the original question, "What must I do to receive eternal life?" The Bible gives several answers to this question. Here, Jesus says, "Love the Lord your God ..., and love your neighbor...". In **Luke 18:18-23**, Jesus says, "Obey God's commandments..., sell all you have and give the money to the poor, ... then come and follow me." In **Acts 16:31**, Paul says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." In **John 3:16**, John writes "Everyone who believes in him (Jesus) has eternal life." Are these different answers or the same answer? If the same, how do you reconcile them?

Closing:

Ask for any questions that the group might have. Close with a simple prayer, asking for God's help to go out and live like the Samaritan did.