

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Icebreaker: Name and discuss some things that infants and little children do that make you smile.

If you could reclaim one attitude or quality you had when you were a little child – but no longer have – what would you choose?

Story Background and Context: Luke 10:21 – Jesus prays: *“I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, because this was your good pleasure.”*

Open your Bibles to the verses that come just before this prayer and ponder:
What has God **concealed** (“hidden”) from the wise and intelligent people of the world?

What has God **revealed** to “infants” (or little children)?

Why would God “hide” these things from the “wise and intelligent”?

How does God reveal them to little children?

Research: Open your Google account or concordance and find some other positive things Jesus says about little children: _____

Ponder: What is Jesus really encouraging? Does Jesus want his followers to be unwise and unintelligent or is there something else he values?

The Parable: Now read the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

Compare Luke 10:25 to Luke 10:21 – Is this “expert in the law” more like the “wise and intelligent” people of the world or more like a little child?

He answers Jesus’ question correctly (Luke 10:28). He knows the most important requirements of the Law of Moses were to: 1) love God, and 2) love your neighbor (verse 27). Compare Matthew 22:38.

Notice: This is really pretty simple. Even a little child can see what it means to love someone.

Reflect: What answers would your friends and neighbors give to this question: “What must a person do to have a really good life?” (Verse 25).

What answer would *you* give if you were asked the same question when you were NOT in a church meeting, but just having a casual discussion with a friend, fellow student or co-worker?

The problem: Notice verse 29. Although the lawyer knows the right answer, he has a problem.

What is really at the heart of the lawyer’s problem with this simple commandment to love God and love your neighbors?

Dig into the personalities in the Parable:

The **traveler and the robbers** -- Brainstorm together about reasons WHY the robbers might have beat up this poor traveler. Who/what kind of people does the traveler represent? How are we supposed to feel about the robbers?

The **Priest and Levite** – Who/what kind of people do they represent? Brainstorm about reasons and excuses they might have had for “passing by” the victim without stopping or offering help? Do we offer similar excuses?

How are we supposed to feel about the Priest and Levite?

Do the Priest and Levite come any closer to fulfilling the great commandment to love God and your neighbor than the robbers do?

Why is Jesus picking on these religious people? What is the warning to those of us who are a New Testament priesthood (1 Peter 2:5) and aspiring Bible scholars (2 Timothy 2:15)?

The Samaritan – Who were the Samaritans? How did the Jewish people generally treat the Samaritans? Who are the “Samaritans” in your world?

Luke 10:33-35 -- *“When he saw the man, he had compassion. He went over to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii (a denarii was a typical wage for one day’s work) gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him. When I come back I’ll reimburse you for whatever extra you spend.’”*

Why does Jesus make this Samaritan the hero of the story?

In this week’s sermon we speculated that the Good Samaritan might be a stand in for Jesus. Does that make sense to you? Why or why not?

If so, why might Jesus picture himself as a “Samaritan” when he is talking about the commandment to love your neighbors?

Application: Each of us must seriously ask: Where do I fit into this story? In my daily life journey do I behave more like the robbers, the Priest and Levite, or the Samaritan?

What does Jesus want you to do with this lesson? Who are the people in your life who are like the bleeding and abused victim on the side of the road? What should you do to BE A NEIGHBOR to those people in a way expresses love for God and love for fellow man?

What is the Golden Rule? How is the Golden Rule similar to God’s command to “love your neighbor as you love yourself”? How does the Golden Rule help us know how and when to help others who are in need?