

"This is what the LORD Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy (hesed) and compassion to one another.'"

Zechariah 7:9

"let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness (hesed), justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD."

Jeremiah 9:24

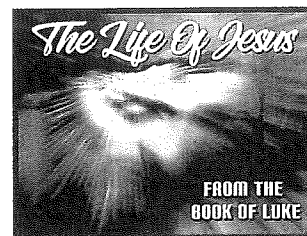
"The dialogue between Jesus and the lawyer is illuminating. It "illustrates the difference between the ethics of law and the ethics of love. To the lawyer, eternal life is a prize to be won by the meticulous observance of religious rules; to Jesus, love to God and neighbor is in itself the life of the heavenly kingdom, already begun on earth. The lawyer wants moral duties limited and defined with a rabbinical thoroughness; Jesus declines to set any limits to the obligations of love. Religion to the one is a set of restrictive regulations, to the other a boundless series of opportunities".

Trites, A. A., William J. Larkin. (2006). Cornerstone biblical commentary, Vol 12: The Gospel of Luke and Acts (p. 172). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

"This is a radical truth. In Christ we are given a right standing before God (justification), and we are propelled in love for God and others by the new power of his Spirit in us (sanctification). This affects the way we see those around us. It's not because they've become something different, but because we have."

Jonathan Parnell

Jesus turns the question, who is my neighbor, into the question who will you be a neighbor to?



Part 9

Luke 10:25-37

Who is My Neighbor?

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

²⁷ He answered: " '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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

³⁶ "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Before judging the lawyers motives, put yourself in his shoes...

"A man with excellent religious credentials stood among the crowd. He studied God's law continually and interpreted it so the people would know how to obey it. He tried his best to obey the law himself. He helped administer justice within the Jewish system. People respected his expertise and his life. He had a question for Jesus. He thought it would reveal the weakness and falseness in Jesus' teaching and lead people away from him back to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, the qualified religious leaders. God had given Israel an inheritance, namely the land of Israel. They had forfeited this inheritance through disobedience. Now they looked for a new inheritance, one that would last forever. The rabbis debated exactly what this inheritance was. The lawyer gave Jesus opportunity to provide a new definition."

Butler, T. C. (2000). Luke (Vol. 3, p. 171). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

What is the fundamental problem with the lawyers initial question?

"What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

How might you respond to a defensive question in order not to fall into the "yes or no" answer trap?

"What kind of questions might you ask in response?"

"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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18

"Where he saith, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, he excepts all Gentiles, for they are not our neighbors, but those only that are of our own nation and religion." They would not put an Israelite to death for killing a Gentile, for he was not his neighbor: they indeed say that they ought not to kill a Gentile whom they were not at war with; but, if they saw a Gentile in danger of death, they thought themselves under no obligation to help to save his life."

Henry, M. (1994). Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume (p. 1858). Peabody: Hendrickson.

"What the Samaritan did helps us better understand what it means to "show mercy" (Luke 10:37), and it also illustrates the ministry of Jesus Christ. The Samaritan identified with the needs of the stranger and had compassion on him. There was no logical reason why he should rearrange his plans and spend his money just to help an "enemy" in need, but mercy does not need reasons."

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 1, p. 212). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

What does it mean to "do" hesed?

חֶסֶד

hesed / checed

cheçed, kheh'-sed; kindness; by implication (towards God) piety; rarely (by opposition) reproof, or (subjectively) beauty:—favour, good deed(-ness), (loving-) kindness, merciful, mercy, pity, reproach.

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy (hesed) and to walk humbly with your God."

Micah 6:8.