The Parable of the Good Samaritan
Luke 10:25-37

This week, we'll examine one of Jesus' most well-known and frequently misunderstood parables. As you prepare for our study, take time to **read Luke 10:25–37 slowly**. Notice each detail and allow the dialogue to guide your reflection.

The passage has three distinct sections: (1) the initial dialogue and questions between Jesus and the Torah expert, (2) the parable itself, and (3) the closing dialogue.

By preparing this way, you'll be better able to see beneath the surface and discover the more profound message Jesus is teaching.

Part 1: Initial Dialogue (vv. 25-29)

1. The Initial Question:

- What question does the Torah expert ask Jesus in verse 25?
- If someone asked you the same question today, how would you understand what they are asking?
- How might you respond to them?

2. Jesus' Teaching Method

- How does Jesus respond (v. 26)?
- Why does Jesus answer with a question instead of giving a direct answer? What is the teaching method at work here?

3. The Experts Answer

- Which two Old Testament verses is he quoting in v. 27?
- Where else in the Gospels do we find these two commandments? What does Jesus say about these commandments?

4. Jesus Afirms Him (v. 28)

- Jesus agrees with his answer. How might this response differ from our modern theological understanding of the initial question?
- Notice that at this point, the conversation could have ended. Why do you think the expert feels the need to keep going?

5. The Desire to Justify

- What does the word *justify* mean?
- What is happening internally in the expert that makes him want to "justify himself"?

6. The Clarifying Question

- In v. 29, what exactly does he want Jesus to define?
- Based on Leviticus 19:18, what is the clarifying opinion he is looking for?

Part 2: The Parable (vv. 30-35)

7. A Parable is a *Midrash*

- *Midrash* comes from the Hebrew word *drash,* meaning to seek or interpret.
- What question is the parable answering?
- The parable serves as a tool to seek the deeper meaning of this fundamental question. Should we continue to call this the Parable of the Good Samaritan or something else?
- Why does the title we give the parable matter?

8. Details, Details

- Parables, like their ancient counterparts, fables, are fictional stories that convey a profound truth.
- Jesus selects every detail to capture the listener's attention and guide them to the point he wants to convey.
- Make note of as many details you notice in vv. 30-35, even if you don't fully understand their first-century meaning.
- Why might Jesus include these particular elements?

Part 3: Parable Ends

9. Return to Dialogue

- Notice where the parable ends and Jesus returns to dialogue.
- What is the final question Jesus asks? Note how this connects to v. 29.

10. The Expert's Forced Admission (v. 37)

- Who does the Torah Expert say was the neighbor?
- Notice the terminology he uses. Why does the Expert avoid saying "Samaritan"?
- Why is this a difficult answer for him to give?

11. The Final Command

- Who does Jesus want us to "love" (or more literally, "show love to")?
- How does this redefine the expert's (and our) assumptions?
- How is this parable and the command by Jesus so challenging?

Part 4: Going Deeper – The Backstory

12. *Midrash* Structure

- The general structure of a Midrash is to explore a commandment or verse from the Torah (first five books), while augmenting the search with a verse or a story from either the Prophets or the Writings.
- Torah Verse in View: **Leviticus 19:18** – "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself."
- Integrated Story: **2 Chronicles 28:9-15** – Israelites from the Northern Kingdom attacking their southern brothers, and the prophet Oded speaking truth to power about their sin.

13. Oded's Message

- What is Oded so upset about (v. 9)?
- Read v. 10. What does Oded point out about the Israelites' sin?
- How does v. 11 connect with Leviticus 19:18?

14. Details also included by Jesus

- Read v. 15. Notice the details of how they treat the prisoners.
- Where do the events of 2 Chron. 28:9-15 take place?

- Where do they drop off their "fellow Israelites"?

15. Weaving the Message of Oded to First-Century Judeans

- How would Jesus' first-century audience interpret Oded's message?

Part 5: Modern Application

- What does this teach us about holding grudges, revenge, and self-righteousness?
- How does this connect to Jesus' other teachings about loving your enemies and forgiving others who have hurt you?
- Who is the "enemy" in our world today? Who do we struggle to "show love to"?
- Why is it so difficult to love our neighbor – especially those similar to us but different?
- Who are the people you disagree with politically, socially, or religiously?
- How does this parable challenge us to treat others – especially when we recognize we are prone to descend into hatred?
- Do you trust (have faith) in Jesus' command to pray for our enemies or those we don't like as the path to peace?