



‘But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’  
2 Peter 3:18

## **July 11**

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Gospel reading: Luke 10:25-37

**Pray** for growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus and **read** the passage together...

### **Looking around**

#### ***Immediate context***

In the passage just before our present one, Jesus sent out 72 missionaries to do mission and they returned to report their success, which excites Jesus. His rejoicing extends to the way his Father graciously reveals the gospel to ‘little children’ such as the disciples (10:20-24).

In the passage that follows, Jesus returns to his unstoppable trajectory towards Jerusalem as he stops off at Martha and Mary’s house “on the way” (10:38-42).

#### ***Its place in the structure of the book***

This passage occurs within the long section devoted to Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. The major turning point in his mission occurred back in 9:51 and is marked with the statement: “Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.”

As he continues his journey, we are to see that the Christian’s life is also to be a journey, one marked by extreme love, as Jesus teaches in this passage.

#### ***Its contribution to the message and purpose of the book***

The Gospel of Luke, and its partner volume, the book of Acts, was written for a Gentile to show that the Gentiles’ inclusion in the people of God was part of God’s plan, and flows from all that Jesus did. The inclusion of a Samaritan as the hero of this parable contributes to this overall purpose. While this would have been extremely confronting for a Jew, it would have been comforting for a Gentile, to see that they can act in obedience to God’s will.

This presentation of Jesus as the Saviour of the world (and not only the Jews) stands in stark contrast to the opposition from the Samaritan village that occurred just at the start of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem (9:51-56). Luke will report later in the book of Acts that the gospel was subsequently proclaimed and believed in Samaria (Ac 8:4-25).

***Is the passage or part of it quoted elsewhere in the Bible or does it quote other parts of the Bible?***

The expert in the law quotes directly from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 as he answers Jesus' question on what is written in the law.

***How the passage contributes to our understanding of God, Jesus, humanity, God's salvation, life together as Christians, discipleship.***

Following Jesus involves love that transcends all man-made boundaries. By establishing the hated Samaritan as the hero, Jesus' illustration would offend Jewish listeners, striking at the heart of their patriotism, which was religiously justified (refer to historical details below). How offended the lawyer is can be seen in his final response. He cannot even bear to refer to the Samaritan, but instead avoids using his name by saying "the one who had mercy on him" (10:37). In the end, Jesus turns the lawyer's question on its head. Instead of defining who is/isn't his neighbour, Jesus asks him who the good neighbour was. This is the way that we are to love as well. We are not to try to minimize our responsibility to care, but we are to try to be the good neighbour – to look for people to love, whoever they are.

We often try to justify ourselves, as the lawyer tried to do before Jesus. He was hoping Jesus would tell him what he wanted to hear – that who and how he had been loving was 'enough'. He was seeking to "justify himself" and receive a narrow interpretation of whom he had to love. Instead Jesus highlighted all his insufficiencies in that story – a story of extreme love, where the injured man's enemy sacrificed his time, energy and money to help him. God loves at a level that we find hard to imagine. He is out of our league, but when we begin in small ways to practise this love, and submit to the leading of God's Spirit while doing so, he builds in us the strength to love in His league.

Of course, Jesus here is merely reflecting the heart of God's character and salvation: A divine, costly and lavish love for his enemies that is cross-shaped. The apostle Paul would write: 'But God shows his love for us in that *while we were still sinners, Christ died for us...*For if *while we were enemies we were reconciled to God* by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life' (Rom 5:8, 10; emphasis added).

It must be remembered that Jesus is dialoguing with a Jewish Bible scholar who is seeking to show him up. Jesus is not advocating a way into the Kingdom through keeping the law so much as engaging this man on his terms, while, ironically, showing him up.

Ultimately it is only through experiencing Jesus' radical, cross-shaped love for ourselves and the renewal of the Holy Spirit that we that we can have any chance at 'going and doing likewise'. 'We love because he first loved us' (1 John 4:19).

## Looking Behind

### ***Relevant historical, political, social, geographical information helpful for understanding the passage.***

**10:25-26** The lawyer's question about inheriting eternal life was a common Jewish theological question at the time. Asking such a question of a great teacher ("rabbi") was common, as was responding with a counter question. Luke tells us that the lawyer had set out to test Jesus (10:25), probably meaning that he intended to show him up or trip him up with his own expert knowledge in the law. Undoubtedly Jesus knew this.

**10:27** The answer the legal expert offers was sometimes given by Jewish leaders and by Jesus (see Mark 12:29–31). This may suggest that he had not taken this teaching to heart, but was simply re-stating what he had heard others say.

**10:29** Jewish teachers usually used "neighbour" to mean "fellow Israelite." Leviticus 19:18 clearly means "fellow Israelite" in the immediate context, but the less immediate context applies the principle also to any non-Israelite in the land (Lev 19:34). It is also clear from Matthew 5:43 that Jewish tradition had developed a narrow definition of whom God's people should love. Jesus intensified the love command to include love for enemy.

**10:31** Priests were supposed especially to avoid defilement from a corpse (Lev 21:1ff.). Pharisees thought one would contract it if even one's shadow touched the corpse. Like the man who had been robbed, the priest was "going down" (10:31), hence he was heading from Jerusalem and did not have to worry about being unable to perform duties in the temple. But rules were rules; although the rule of mercy would take precedence if the man were clearly alive, the man looked as if he might be dead (v. 30), and the priest did not wish to take the chance. The task was better left to a Levite or ordinary Israelite.

**10:32** Rules for Levites were not as strict as for priests, but the Levite also wished to avoid defilement.

**10:33** The literature of both the Jews and Samaritans reveals an attitude of mutual hostility. It's likely that the Samaritans descended from those left in the land after the Northern Kingdom of Israel was exiled (2 Chronicles 30), inter-mingled with people from outside the Jewish nation who had settled there. This, along with the competing temple that they built on Mount Gerizim, explains much of this animosity (cf. John 4:19-24).

**10:34–35** Oil was used medicinally and for washing wounds; wine was apparently also used to disinfect wounds.

## Looking within

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## ***Movements or structure in the passage***

Vv.25-29 An expert in the law questions Jesus

Vv.30-35 Jesus tells the parable

V.36 Jesus questions the expert in the law

## ***Important or repeated words, ideas, themes***

Love, and what that looks like, is clearly an important theme here as emphasised by the repetition of 'love' in the early verses of this passage.

## ***Important contrasting words (but, although, whereas, whilst) explanatory words (therefore, so that, for, because, since, in order that), timing words (next immediately, after, when)***

"On one occasion" (10:25): Luke appears to highlight the randomness of this interaction as part of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. However, it does highlight that following Jesus is a journey of love and self-sacrifice.

"But" (10:29): This contrasting word is important. It highlights the teacher of the law's lack of satisfaction with Jesus' answer to his original question. A contrasting 'but' is also used to introduce the Samaritan in the story and his contrasting response to his 'neighbour' (10:33).

## **Looking clearly**

Using all of the above, work out the passage's main idea and supporting ideas:

*Main idea*

*Supporting ideas*

Try to summarise these in a clear, succinct statement:

Try to represent what the passage **says** and **means** with a drawing. No art show entries necessary! Invite *willing* people to explain their drawings, unpacking what is being said and the meaning.

## **Looking at Jesus**

Doing this helps grow disciples of Jesus...

*How has this study enlarged or enriched your understanding of Jesus and his claims, call and promises?*

*How do you respond to Him?*

## **Looking in the mirror**

Doing this helps grow disciples of Jesus...

*What personal and corporate (your home group or church) beliefs you hold does this study confirm to be true?*

*What personal and corporate beliefs has this study challenged and corrected?*

*What personal and corporate values, attitudes and priorities has this study reinforced or challenged?*

*What personal and corporate behaviour and traditions has this study endorsed or challenged?*

## **Looking forward**

Doing this helps grow disciples of Jesus...

*What encouragements, comforts and changes will you or your group take with you today?*

*Resolve to help one another move forward in repentance and faith.*

## **Prayer and praise**