The parable of the *Good Samaritan* is probably one of the most well-known and contemporized parables from the Bible. Keep in mind that it is a “parable” and not an actual event, but the circumstances and challenges for us are real! Filled with drama and suspense, yet embedded with a message of grace and mercy. This parable invites us to a missional challenge to practice what we preach into loving God and loving our neighbors.

At times we can certainly identify ourselves with any of the characters involved…the fallen robbery victim along the roadside, who was left helpless, abandoned, neglected by the passerby. At times we may identify ourselves as the robbers who seek our own gains at the expense of other’s misfortune, while taking advantage of others who happened to be at the wrong place and at the wrong time. At times we may identify ourselves as the high priest or the Levite who noticed others in distress, but simply did nothing about it. Instead of helping the victim, they chose to pass him by on the other side, and be on their way to go about their business as usual. I don’t have time for this. Let someone else deal with this man’s problem. I don’t want blood on my hand…quite literally.

What began as a test question about one’s salvation, as offered by a young lawyer, Jesus turned his question around and made it into a teaching moment for the rest of us. **“*What must I do to inherit eternal life?”,*** asked the young lawyer to the rabbi.

The theological response to the young lawyer’s question, is that there is NOTHING that “WE” can DO to inherit eternal life. We are saved not by what we DO, but by what we believe. We believe and accept this eternal life as a gift from God, freely given to us as an extension of God’s grace through our faith in Jesus Christ.

Ultimately this parable challenges us to reflect on our relationships with God and with others, including our neighbors, as Jesus referred to us the *Great Commandment* of *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind[[1]](#footnote-1); and love your neighbor as yourself.[[2]](#footnote-2)”*

As I mentioned earlier, both the lawyer and Jesus knew the Scripture well. They probably had **Leviticus 19:34** in mind where it says that*“the alien [foreigner] who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien [foreigner] as yourself, for you were aliens [foreigners] in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”*

As I was studying this text, I came across this commentary poem written specifically with this parable in mind. It is called *A Collection of Attitudes[[3]](#footnote-3).* And it goes something like this…

*To the expert of the law,*

*the wounded man was a subject to discuss.*

*To the robbers,*

*the wounded man was someone to use and exploit.*

*To the religious men,*

*the wounded man was a problem to be avoided.*

*To the innkeeper,*

*the wounded man was a customer to serve for a fee.*

*To the Samaritan,*

*the wounded man was a human being*

*worth being cared for and loved.*

*To Jesus,*

*all of them and all of us were worth dying for.*

**Confronting the needs of others brings out the best and the worst in all of us.** I’m sure we have all come across individuals who demonstrated needs, not only financially but emotionally, spiritually, or physically. The question is, how do we respond when we see such person in need? Did we simply ignore them, brush them aside, or walk on the other side of the road and pretend that it’s someone else’s problem?

The road between Jericho and Jerusalem was about 20 miles long, that’s about from here to the northern tip of Manhattan. It’s a very winding and hilly road through the wilderness. Because of its rugged terrain, it was perfect roadside robbers to hide out and to make their getaway after their attacks.

As the parable goes, a man was robbed, stripped, beaten and left half-naked, and half-dead by the roadside. He was desperately looking for help…anybody! Anybody who might happen to pass by next. Then came along the priest and the Levite, who both stopped and took a look at the man on the ground and decided to walk across to the other side of the road and pass him by. Perhaps they were more concerned about being made spiritually unclean for coming near this man with the bloody wounds on his body. They didn’t want any of this whatsoever.

Then came the Samaritan. The Samaritan, who was never identified by name, took this huge leap of faith by stepping across the boundary in order to help someone in needs. We also don’t know whether the victim was a Jew or not. Their identities were not the most important factor in our story! What is important, however, is that when the Samaritan saw the man by the roadside, he was “*moved with pity”*. I like the King James Version better that he had *“compassion”* towards the man.

Furthermore, not only did the Samaritan crossed the social boundary, he reached down to bandage his wound. He poured oil to cleanse and wine to lessen the pain over his wound. He saddled him on his own animal and put him up at a nearby inn to stay. The Samaritan didn’t have to do any of this. It would’ve been perfectly socially, culturally, and ethically acceptable if he had continued walking by and ignored the half-dead man by the roadside. He went above and beyond of what was expected of him. And we shall “Go and Do Likewise” as well.

The Samaritan even left 2 denarii’s worth of money to the innkeeper, until he came back from his trip, finishing what he had to do originally. The value of the two denarii was equivalent to about 2 days of wages for a field laborer at that time. It wasn’t a huge amount, but still, it’s still substantial, but the point is, he didn’t have to do all of this. He just happened to be at the right place and at the right time.

If you notice, Jesus never called the Samaritan “good”, we did. We later on labelled the Samaritan as “good” for what he did. I think that’s significant also. Jesus simply inferred that he was simply “doing the right thing”, as a “no-brainer”. Anybody would’ve responded the same way, but not everybody did. The young lawyer might’ve asked the right question about eternal life, but with the wrong motive. **We must never feel that we need to duplicate the Samaritan’s effort, so that we may “earn our way”, or score enough charity points, in order to inherit eternal life. This is NOT how it works.**  God does not work that way!!! **Our salvation is not based upon a “merit” or a “reward” system!** Anyone could’ve and should’ve done what the Samaritan did, without any hesitation whatsoever.

In the same way, our modern-day journey of life can also be a treacherous one. It is filled with dangerous predators, lurking around the curve and waiting for their next victim. But this **journey is never meant to be travelled alone.** We need companions and fellow friends to journey together in order to overcome any “bums” along the road and challenges in life.

Ultimately not only do we need to look out for ourselves, but we must also need to lookout for those who might have fallen victims of due to our society’s neglect and abuses…. especially those who are the most vulnerable and marginalized - the seniors, the women and children, the sick, the poor, those who stand out to be “different” from the rest, and YES, last but not least, all the immigrants and foreigners living among us. These ARE our neighbors to whom we need to reach out to and extend our “compassion” towards. These ARE the victims who have fallen along the roadside, who have been mistreated, abandoned, abused, and neglected by society.

**We ALL have been victimized by the social norms of apathy and self-centeredness that have stripped us and robbed us of our full understanding of our relationship with God and with one another.** We have been beaten and wounded by the evils and contaminated influences of this world, while neglected to show God’s love to the neighbors around us.

The parable of the “Good Samaritan” is more than just a moral teaching about helping someone in needs. It’s about how we relate to one another through Christ’s demonstrated humility and love, instead of seeing the world through our human lens of prejudice, bias, and hatred. It’s about expanding our horizon of the Kingdom of God that is already here and is yet to come. **It’s about unveiling our social blindfold, breaking down our stereotype facade and hostilities of divides among those who may be different from us.** It’s about taking a stand when we see acts of injustice and cruelty happening right before our eyes and we chose to do nothing about it, and claim that it’s none of our problem! It’s about stretching our imagination of what the world would become one day, if we simply go the extra miles beyond what is expected of us in utopia. **But is this “ALL” that we can do? Have we given our ALL, when Christ asked us to “love the Lord our God with ALL of our hearts, with ALL of our souls, and with ALL of our strengths and with ALL of our minds, and LOVE our neighbors as ourselves? Is this “ALL”?**

**This journey of faith is more than just a road trip from Jerusalem to Jericho, it’s a lifelong spiritual commitment towards peace and reconciliation in seeking God’s kingdom coming to full reality.** You and I have been invited to embark on this journey together, with the Holy Spirit leading the way. There is more that we could’ve done. So let us go and do likewise. Know that God will NEVER abandon us along the roadside of this journey and God would not walk around us no matter what. Thanks be to God.

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *Deuteronomy 6:5* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Leviticus 19:18* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Life Application Bible p.1823* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)