

A study of Jesus' Parables

THE BLIND SIDE

The 2009 movie *The Blind Side* tells the story of NFL lineman, Michael Oher, and his adoption by Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy. In the movie, Leigh Anne saw Michael going around after a volleyball game picking up leftover food. Later, she saw him walking by the road in the cold rain, shivering, and without proper clothing. Leigh Anne discovered Michael was planning to spend the night huddled outside the closed school gym. She took him home to her family where he slept on the couch. Eventually, Michael was accepted as a family member and adopted.

This story was made into a movie because of Michael's football career. He was drafted to the NFL in the first round by the Baltimore Ravens. However, the Tuohy's didn't take Michael in because they thought he would be a great footballer or that one day a movie would get made and they would be played by Sandra Bullock and Tim McGraw. Their only motivation was to help a young man in trouble. Despite the risks involved, despite the challenges, despite the cost, they helped.

Today's parable is about a man who was literally blindsided. He got the stuffing knocked out of him. However, despite the risks involved, despite the challenges, despite the cost, he received help from an unlikely source.

LUKE 10:29-37

²⁹ But the expert, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him up, and went off, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, but when he saw the injured man he passed by on the other side. ³² So too a Levite, when he came up to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan who was traveling came to where the injured man was, and when he saw him, he felt compassion for him. ³⁴ He went up to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring olive oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought 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, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever else you spend, I will repay you when I come back this way.' ³⁶ Which of these three do you think became a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" ³⁷ The expert in religious law said, "The one who showed mercy to him." So Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

SCOUTING REPORT

SETTING A 1-on-1 meeting w/ an expert in the Law

NEED Expose Law expert to God's view of a "neighbor"

STORY Mugged traveler is ignored by priest and Levite, but helped by Samaritan

TRUTH Godly love will notice, initiate, care, and sacrifice w/o favoritism.

DISCUSSION

We're about half-way through the study, what is one thing God has taught you? What did you do about it?

1. What reason is given for the expert asking Jesus the meaning of "neighbor?" (29)

2. Who were the first two people to pass by and what was their reaction to the victim? (31-32)

3. Jesus commanded the expert to "Go and do the same." What example does Jesus want him to follow?

4. What possible excuses might each person have had for not helping the victim?

Priest-

Levite-

Samaritan-

5. Who do you "see" right now that is hurting? How have you treated them so far? What might it look like for you to "Go and do the same?"

According to the expert, loving his neighbor was something he could do. Jesus set the bar of righteousness way higher, into the realm of impossibility. If you have questions about receiving God's righteousness, talk to your coach today.

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

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STUDY NOTES

WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?

Pretty much every morning of my early childhood after breakfast I would watch two shows, Sesame Street and Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. Many of you will only know the legacy of Fred Rogers through *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood* or the 2019 Tom Hanks film "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood."

Every day thousands of children, including me, grew up with one of the kindest, most beloved men to walk the planet asking us to be his neighbor. In the neighborhood, Mr. Rogers introduced us to all sorts of people who taught lessons, told stories, and encouraged us. Then we'd all take the trolley to the land of Make Believe.

What did it mean to be a "neighbor" to Mr. Rogers? He was a middle-aged man living in Pittsburgh, asking us to join a fictitious neighborhood that resided in a TV studio. I never really thought he was asking me to be his *literal* neighbor. When Mr. Rogers asked the question, what I think he meant is that a neighbor is a friend. I don't know about you, but there's many times in my life when I would have given a lot to have a neighbor like that.

During Jesus' ministry, many religious leaders came asking a question trying to trip him up. One such expert in religious law asked Jesus the key to inheriting eternal life. Jesus pulled a rabbi-joke and asked a question of his question, "What is written in the law? How do you understand it?" The man answered his own question, cleverly combining two Old Testament passages, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27)

That was a good answer, but Jesus wasn't tripped up yet. **Wanting to justify himself**, the lawyer **said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"** Not to disagree with the lovable Mr. Rogers, but Jesus didn't exactly talk about friendship. He didn't talk about community. Instead, he told a surprising story.

A KIND STRANGER ILLUSTRATES LOVING OTHERS

Jesus told the story, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him up, and went off, leaving him half dead." Jericho was 3,300 feet lower in elevation than Jerusalem. "Going down" referred to altitude, not compass. Thieves were common on this route. It may be that this story hit close to home for some of Jesus' listeners.

Fortunately for this victim, this road was well-traveled. The first passerby—**by chance a priest was going down that road, but when he saw the injured man he passed by on the other side.**

Priests were highly respected for obeying the Law. He was likely heading home from his 2-weeks of service at the Temple. The fact that the man was "half-dead" made his condition hard to discern. If he was all-the-way-dead, then the Law required the priest to stay about 6-feet away or else become unclean. Likewise, if the man were still alive and the priest touched bodily fluid, he would be unclean. Both circumstances made getting involved troublesome. That's before we consider that he was tired, wanted to get home, wanted to avoid the robbers who may still be lurking, and didn't want to spend time and money on a potentially hazardous endeavor.

Next, **too a Levite, when he came up to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.** With all the same excuses as the priest, the Levite who worked at the Temple, decided not to get involved.

Finally, the third passerby, **a Samaritan who was traveling came to where the injured man was, and when he saw him, he felt compassion for him.** He tended his wounds, **put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.** He even spent his own money to pay for room and board offering more money for additional costs.

LOVING OTHERS PAYS A PRICE

Of course, we know the story of the Good Samaritan. It's now a term used in our culture of someone who does something nice for a stranger. However, we fail to consider the context of the situation. First, the Jews hated the Samaritans due to their history and the Samaritans hated them right back. Second, being near Jerusalem, if other Jews found a half-dead naked Jewish man draped across the back of a Samaritan's animal, he might be in *big* trouble. Despite actual cost and potential costs, the Samaritan felt *compassion*—not just *feeling* sorry, but *doing* something about it.

So, who was the neighbor? Notice the contempt in the words of the **expert, "The one who showed mercy to him."** Not the "Samaritan," but "the one who showed mercy." Your neighbor might be your friend. But when it comes to loving your neighbor, it's fair to ask, "Who do you *hate*?" It's easy to show mercy and love to those who love you back. It's much harder to love those who hate you, those who make fun of you, those who steal from you, those who take your girlfriend, boyfriend, starting lineup position, etc. Yet Jesus says of mercy, **"Go and do the same."**