

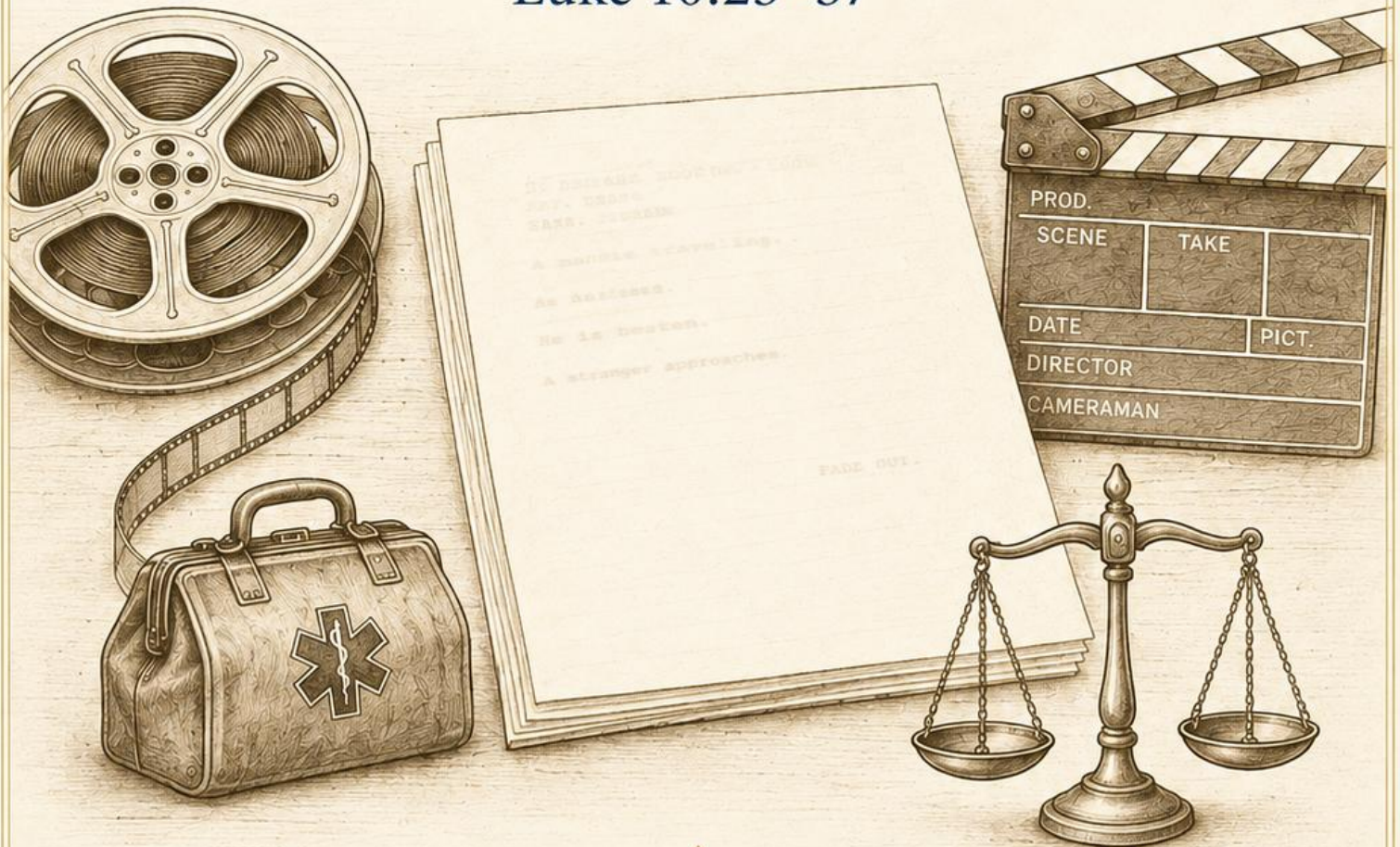


REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

The Movie Script

Which Character Is Jesus Calling You to Become?

Luke 10:25–37



Sermon & Pastor's Commentary

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

Pastor & Teacher

www.ReasonTogether.Church

REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

The Movie Script

Sermon Transcript

Luke 10:25–37 KJV

*Bring your questions. Open your Bible.
Let's Reason Together the Word of God.*

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

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Aloha, church family.

It is good to be together in the house of the Lord.

If this is your first time with us, we are honored that you are here.

We are not going to single you out or ask you to stand.

There is a guest card available, and all we ask for is your first name and email address if you would like to hear from us.

After the service, please join us in the Reason Together Cafe.

We have locally grown coffee waiting for you, served in a Reason Together Church mug, and the refills on the coffee and the conversations are both free.

Let us begin with prayer.

Father, thank You for bringing us together today.

Thank You for Your Word, which teaches us not only what to believe but how to live.

Open our eyes to the people we have failed to see.

Soften our hearts toward those we have judged from a distance.

Give us wisdom to recognize the difference between excusing wrong and showing mercy.

Teach us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Most of all, help us see Jesus clearly and respond to His voice obediently.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Before we open our Bibles, I want to take just a moment to address giving.

We do not pass a plate here, and no one should ever feel pressured to give.

Any donations or love gifts would be greatly appreciated, but they are never required to visit the church or to download any of our free online studies.

If you are visiting from another church, we encourage you to remain faithful in supporting your home church.

Your presence with us today is already a gift.

Now, today is going to be a little different.

Usually, someone approaches me with a Biblical question.

What did Jesus mean when He said, "Judge not"?

What is a lukewarm Christian?

Why did the woman with the issue of blood touch the hem of Jesus' garment?

Those questions send us directly into Scripture to examine a word, a passage or a teaching.

Today's question comes to us through a movie script.

The movie itself is fictional.

You are not going to find the name of this movie in the Bible.

You are not going to find a police officer, a 911 dispatcher or a paramedic in the parable we will read.

But the question beneath the movie is thoroughly Biblical.

When we encounter someone who is wounded and in need, what kind of person does Jesus want us to be?

Several years ago, before I was called into the ministry, I worked in the entertainment industry.

I was friends with a number of people whose faces appeared on movie screens and television sets.

One day, I was on a movie set with a famous friend who had been cast as the star of a new production.

During a break in filming, I had an opportunity to look over the script.

I made the observation that the story was fairly simple and predictable.

I also thought it contained far more profanity and violence than it needed.

My friend looked at me and issued a challenge.

He asked whether I thought I could write something better while remaining true to my Christian values.

Now, some challenges should probably be ignored.

This was not one of them.

By the end of that day's filming, I had written the outline for a suspense story.

It had the familiar elements of a police and courtroom drama.

There was a crime.

There was danger.

There was an investigation.

There was medical treatment.

There was a prosecution, a defense, a judge, a jury and a verdict.

The complete script eventually grew to well over one hundred pages.

But it was designed to do something more than entertain an audience.

It could be presented inside a church and then used to ask the audience two questions.

The first question is this:

Which character in the story do you most naturally identify with?

The second question is more important:

Which character represents the person Jesus wants you to become?

Listen carefully, because those two questions do not necessarily have the same answer.

The story begins in an ordinary home.

A mother tucks her two children into bed.

She says good night, leaves their room and joins her husband.

The lights go out.

The house grows quiet.

Sometime during the night, the parents hear an unfamiliar sound.

At first, it might be the kind of noise that makes you lie still and listen.

Maybe it was the house settling.

Maybe something fell.

Then they hear it again.

Someone else is inside the house.

The husband takes his gun.

His first concern is keeping the intruder away from his wife and children.

He places himself between the danger and his family.

The burglar sees him and yells something.

The husband fires.

The sound of gunshots tears through the house.

The children hear the shots and call 911.

The dispatcher answers.

The children are frightened.

The dispatcher must keep them talking, gather the address and send emergency personnel.

The first police officer arrives.

The officer does not yet know the complete story.

There is an armed homeowner.

There is a wounded man.

There are frightened children.

There is a wife trying to explain what happened.

The officer secures the scene and begins separating fact from confusion.

Then a paramedic arrives.

The paramedic sees the wounded man and begins providing first aid.

An ambulance crew arrives next.

They receive the available information, stabilize the patient and transport him to the hospital.

Hospital attendants meet the ambulance.

Technicians conduct tests and take X-rays.

Doctors review the findings.

A surgeon removes the bullet.

Nurses care for the wounded man during the days that follow.

While the medical team works, the police continue their investigation.

The responding officer submits a report.

A supervisor reviews the findings.

Questions are raised about whether the husband was legally justified in firing the gun.

The news media takes an interest in the case.

Public pressure begins to grow.

The reports are turned over to the district attorney.

The district attorney decides to prosecute.

A jury is selected.

The prosecution explains why the husband should be convicted.

The defense explains why he should not be convicted.

The judge makes certain that the rules of evidence, the law and due process are followed.

The jury listens.

The jury considers the evidence.

Finally, the verdict is read.

Not guilty.

That is the basic movie.

Now let us return to the first question.

Which person in that story do you most naturally identify with?

Some of you immediately chose the husband.

You understand the instinct to stand between danger and your family.

You can imagine hearing a noise in the night and knowing that your children are down the hall.

You see a father who acted to protect those he loved.

Some of you may identify with the mother.

Her concern is for her children, her husband and the safety of her home.

Some may identify with the children.

They are frightened and confused, but they do the one thing they know to do.

They call for help.

Some of you chose the 911 dispatcher.

You are the person who can remain calm while everyone else is frightened.

You gather information and help send the right people to the right place.

Some chose the police officer.

You want to know what actually happened.

You do not want rumor, emotion or pressure to decide the truth.

You want evidence.

You want every person to be treated fairly.

Others chose the doctors or nurses.

You see yourselves as healers.

You are trained to address an injury and provide continuing care.

Some chose the defense attorney.

You want to stand beside someone who has been accused and make certain that his side is heard.

Some chose the prosecutor.

You believe wrongdoing must be confronted and the law must be upheld.

Some chose the judge.

You value order, fairness and due process.

Some chose the jury.

You are willing to listen to both sides before reaching a conclusion.

Those are all understandable choices.

Many of those people are doing something important.

The story is not designed to make the husband look evil.

It is not designed to criticize the police.

It is not designed to dismiss the doctors, nurses, lawyers, judge or jury.

Protection matters.

Medicine matters.

Truth matters.

Justice matters.

But now we come to the second question.

Which person in this story most closely represents the person Jesus wants you to be?

Before we answer that question, we need to open our Bibles.

Please turn with me to Luke chapter 10.

We will begin reading at verse 25.

Luke chapter 10, beginning with verse 25.

The Bible says:

"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

"He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

"And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

"And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

"But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

"And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

"And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

"And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

"And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

"And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

"And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of His Word.

The conversation begins with a lawyer asking Jesus a question.

This is not necessarily a lawyer in the modern courtroom sense.

He is an expert in the law of Moses.

He knows the Scriptures.

He asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life.

Jesus responds by asking him what is written in the law and how he reads it.

The man gives a strong Biblical answer.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind.

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus tells him that he has answered correctly.

But verse 29 exposes the difficulty.

The Bible says that the man was "willing to justify himself."

He asks, "And who is my neighbour?"

That sounds like a reasonable question.

But there is another question hiding inside it.

How far does my responsibility extend?

Whom am I required to love?

Who qualifies?

Where may I draw the line?

He knows the command to love his neighbor.

He wants a manageable definition of neighbor.

If he can make the circle small enough, perhaps he can declare himself obedient.

We sometimes do the same thing.

We know that we should love people.

Then we begin defining which people we mean.

People who think like us.

People who vote like us.

People who worship like us.

People who behave the way we think they should behave.

People who will appreciate what we do.

People who will not make helping too complicated.

Jesus answers the lawyer by telling a story.

A certain man travels from Jerusalem down to Jericho.

The road was known for danger.

Thieves attack him.

They strip away his clothing.

They wound him.

They take what he has.

Then they leave him half dead beside the road.

Jesus tells us almost nothing else about the wounded man.

He does not tell us his occupation.

He does not tell us his reputation.

He does not tell us whether he had made wise decisions before beginning the journey.

He does not tell us whether someone warned him not to travel alone.

He gives us one fact that matters in that moment.

The man needs help.

Then a priest comes down the road.

The priest sees him.

That detail matters.

The priest cannot say that he did not notice.

He cannot say that the wounded man was hidden.

He sees him and passes by on the other side.

Then a Levite arrives.

The Bible says that he comes to the place and looks at the man.

He gets close enough to recognize the need.

Then he also passes by on the other side.

We are not told what either man was thinking.

Perhaps they were afraid.

Perhaps they suspected a trap.

Perhaps they were concerned about becoming ceremonially unclean.

Perhaps they were busy.

Perhaps they believed someone else would come along.

We can imagine explanations, but Jesus does not provide one.

The point is simple.

They saw and did not act.

Their religious positions did not bind the man's wounds.

Their knowledge did not lift him from the road.

Their good intentions, if they had any, did not bring him to safety.

Then Jesus introduces the third traveler.

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was."

To many of the people listening, the Samaritan would have been the least likely hero.

Jews and Samaritans carried a long history of religious, cultural and ethnic hostility.

Jesus deliberately places compassion in the heart of the person His audience might have been most prepared to distrust.

That should challenge us.

Our Reason Together Church family includes people of different races, cultures and backgrounds.

When I look across that diversity, I see a small glimpse of what heaven will look like.

The family of God is not built around one race, one background or one earthly social circle.

We are brought together through Jesus Christ.

The Samaritan crosses a boundary that prejudice would have told him to preserve.

He comes where the wounded man is.

Verse 33 gives us the turning point:

"And when he saw him, he had compassion on him."

The priest saw him.

The Levite saw him.

The Samaritan saw him.

The difference was not eyesight.

The difference was compassion.

Biblical compassion is more than feeling sorry for someone.

It moves toward the need.

The Samaritan went to him.

He bound up his wounds.

He poured in oil and wine.

He placed the man on his own animal.

That means the Samaritan likely continued the journey on foot.

He brought him to an inn.

He personally cared for him.

The next morning, he gave money to the innkeeper.

He arranged for continuing care.

He promised to return and repay any additional expense.

Notice the progression.

He saw.

He had compassion.

He came near.

He acted.

He continued caring.

He did not merely say, "I will pray for you," and keep walking.

Prayer matters.

We should pray.

But sometimes we use spiritual words to excuse physical inaction.

James chapter 2 asks what profit there is if a brother or sister lacks clothing and daily food, and someone says, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled," but does not provide what is needed.

First John chapter 3 tells us not to love in word or tongue only, "but in deed and in truth."

The Samaritan's compassion had hands.

It had feet.

It had time.

It had inconvenience.

It had expense.

It had follow-through.

Now let us return to our movie script.

The husband protected his family.

The dispatcher summoned help.

The police officer secured the scene and investigated.

The laboratory and medical teams gathered information and treated the injury.

The attorneys presented their cases.

The judge protected the legal process.

The jury considered the evidence.

Which person most closely reflects the immediate response of the Good Samaritan?

The answer is the paramedic.

The paramedic comes into a confusing scene.

There is a gun.

There is an injured intruder.

There is an armed homeowner.

There are frightened family members.

There are questions that have not yet been answered.

Was the shooting justified?

What did the burglar intend to do?

What exactly did the husband see or hear?

Who will ultimately be charged?

Those questions matter.

But they are not the paramedic's first assignment.

There is a wounded human being on the floor.

The paramedic does not need a jury's verdict before applying pressure to the wound.

He does not need the district attorney's opinion before checking vital signs.

He does not ask whether the injured man has lived a good life.

He does not have to approve of the burglary.

He sees the immediate need, comes near and acts.

That is the connection.

The paramedic does not resemble the Samaritan because emergency medicine existed in first-century Judea exactly as it does today.

The paramedic resembles the Samaritan because both respond to the wounded person before them.

Now we need to be careful.

Compassion does not eliminate justice.

Treating the burglar's wound does not declare the burglary acceptable.

Saving his life does not erase his responsibility.

The police may still investigate.

The courts may still determine guilt.

The man may still face consequences for entering someone else's home.

Mercy is not the denial of truth.

Compassion is not permission to continue doing wrong.

There is a time to investigate.

There is a time to weigh evidence.

There is a time to render a verdict.

But when a person is bleeding in front of you, there is also a time to stop the bleeding.

We often confuse helping someone with endorsing everything that person has done.

We fear that if we show kindness, someone will think we approve of the behavior.

Jesus never confused compassion with approval.

He could forgive a sinner and still say, "Go, and sin no more."

He could eat with publicans and sinners without becoming a participant in their sin.

He could touch the unclean without becoming unclean Himself.

His holiness did not make Him afraid to come near wounded people.

His holiness moved Him toward them.

The church must learn to do the same.

We must be able to say, "What happened was wrong," and still bind a wound.

We must be able to believe in accountability and still provide food.

We must be able to speak truth and still sit beside someone who is grieving.

We must be able to establish healthy boundaries and still refuse to hate.

We must be able to recognize consequences and still show mercy.

There is another important distinction.

The lesson is not that Jesus wants every Christian to become a professional paramedic.

Most of us do not have medical training.

We should not attempt procedures we are unqualified to perform.

The lesson is that every Christian should develop a heart that notices and responds.

The Samaritan was not assigned to the scene.

He was traveling somewhere.

He had his own schedule.

He had his own plans.

He was not paid to stop.

No supervisor was going to discipline him if he passed by.

He helped because compassion would not allow him to keep walking.

That kind of compassion will interrupt us.

It may disrupt the schedule we carefully planned.

It may require us to turn the car around.

It may require us to listen when we had intended to leave.

It may require us to share something we had planned to keep.

It may require us to help someone who cannot repay us.

It may require us to serve someone who will never know our name.

The Samaritan did not stop because the wounded man could advance his career.

He did not stop because someone was taking photographs.

He did not stop because the innkeeper would place his name on a donor wall.

He stopped because another human being needed him.

That is neighborly love.

The lawyer asked, "Who is my neighbour?"

Jesus changed the direction of the question.

At the end of the parable, Jesus asked:

"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?"

The lawyer wanted Jesus to identify the people inside the circle.

Jesus asked which man behaved like a neighbor.

The question is not merely, "Who is close enough that I must love him?"

The question is, "Will I become a neighbor to the person God has placed in front of me?"

The lawyer answers, "He that shewed mercy on him."

Perhaps he could not even bring himself to say, "the Samaritan."

But he understood the answer.

The neighbor was the one who showed mercy.

Then Jesus gave a command:

"Go, and do thou likewise."

Jesus did not say, "Go and admire the Samaritan."

He did not say, "Go and discuss whether the Samaritan made the most efficient choice."

He did not say, "Go and form a committee to develop a definition of compassion."

He said, "Go, and do thou likewise."

There is movement in that command.

There is action in that command.

There is personal responsibility in that command.

It is easy to admire mercy in a Bible story.

It is harder to practice mercy when the wounded person is inconvenient.

It is easy to praise the Good Samaritan when we know how the story ends.

It is harder to stop when we do not know the whole story.

It is easy to say that the church should help people.

It is harder to recognize that we are the church.

The next person who needs help may not arrive with a label explaining what happened.

We may encounter a family that needs food.

We may meet someone stranded beside the road.

We may notice an elderly neighbor who can no longer complete a simple task alone.

We may sit beside someone who is frightened in a hospital waiting room.

We may meet a person whose choices contributed to the crisis.

We may welcome someone into church who does not know how church works.

We may hear from a person who has already been judged by everyone else.

We may discover that someone does not need a lecture first.

That person may need us to listen.

That person may need a meal.

That person may need transportation.

That person may need a telephone call.

That person may need to be reminded that he or she has not been forgotten.

We cannot solve every problem.

Jesus did not command one Samaritan to patrol every dangerous road in the world.

But the Samaritan addressed the need God placed before him.

We must not allow the needs we cannot meet to become an excuse for ignoring the need we can meet.

Sometimes we say, "I do not have enough money to make a difference."

The Samaritan used what he had.

Sometimes we say, "I do not know exactly what to say."

Compassion does not always require a speech.

Sometimes it requires presence.

Sometimes we say, "Someone else is more qualified."

Then call the qualified person and remain until help arrives.

Sometimes we say, "I might get involved and discover that the situation is complicated."

Most wounded lives are complicated.

The complexity of the story does not make the wound disappear.

Sometimes we say, "That person brought this upon himself."

Even when consequences are deserved, cruelty is not required.

We can allow responsibility to remain while refusing to pass by on the other side.

Galatians chapter 6, verse 10 says:

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

The verse speaks of opportunity.

Opportunities to do good often arrive disguised as interruptions.

They do not always appear on our calendars.

They do not always occur when we feel prepared.

They appear beside the road.

They appear in the grocery store.

They appear at work.

They appear in our neighborhood.

They appear in the seat beside us at church.

We should also remember that good works do not save us.

The parable of the Good Samaritan is not teaching that we can earn eternal life by accumulating acts of kindness.

Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8 through 10 says:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

"Not of works, lest any man should boast.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

We are saved by grace through faith.

We do not become Christians because we help wounded people.

But when Christ changes us, mercy should begin to appear in the way we live.

We are not saved by good works.

We are saved unto good works.

The compassion we show is not the price of salvation.

It is one of the results of salvation.

And when we consider compassion, we must look beyond the Samaritan to Jesus Himself.

We were not merely inconvenienced beside the road.

We were dead in trespasses and sins.

Jesus did not pass by on the other side.

He came where we were.

He entered our world.

He took upon Himself the form of a servant.

He touched lepers.

He received sinners.

He restored the fallen.

He went to the cross.

He bore our sins in His own body.

He died in our place.

He rose again.

He offers salvation freely to everyone who will come to Him by faith.

We show mercy because we have received mercy.

We come near because Christ came near to us.

We bind wounds because He has healed the deepest wound in us.

We help people who cannot repay us because we could never repay Him.

Now let us return one final time to the movie set.

My friend challenged me to write a better script without abandoning my Christian values.

At first, it sounded like a challenge about entertainment.

Could a story hold an audience's attention without depending upon unnecessary profanity and violence?

But the script eventually became a challenge to the audience.

Which role do you choose?

The first time I presented this message was to a large group of seminary students.

I have since presented it in churches and Bible studies in different locations.

The setting changes.

The audience changes.

The selections on the paper change.

But the words of Jesus do not change.

"Go, and do thou likewise."

Perhaps you chose the husband.

Protect your family.

Perhaps you chose the police officer.

Seek the truth.

Perhaps you chose the physician or nurse.

Use your training to heal.

Perhaps you chose the attorney, judge or juror.

Honor justice and due process.

But whatever occupation or responsibility God has given you, carry the heart of the Samaritan into it.

Be the person who sees.

Be the person who has compassion.

Be the person who comes near.

Be the person who acts.

Be the person who follows through.

Do not become so busy studying the scene that you never help the person.

Do not become so concerned with determining blame that you ignore the wound.

Do not become so religious that you can quote the command while passing by on the other side.

Do not wait for applause.

Do not wait until helping is convenient.

Do not wait until you know every detail.

Ask what love requires of you in that moment.

The original movie script ended with a verdict.

This sermon ends with a decision.

The next scene has not yet been written.

Somewhere ahead of you is a person you have not yet met.

There will be a need you did not schedule.

There will be an interruption you did not request.

There will be questions you cannot immediately answer.

When that scene begins, which character will you become?

Will you cross to the other side?

Will you wait for someone else?

Or will you see, come near and do what you can?

Jesus has already given us the final line of the script:

"Go, and do thou likewise."

If you are here today and you have never trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, the first mercy you need to receive is His.

You cannot earn salvation through generosity, service or good deeds.

Jesus has already done what was required.

He died for your sins and rose again.

Salvation is the gift of God.

You receive that gift by placing your faith in Jesus Christ.

You can call upon Him today.

You can admit that you are a sinner.

You can believe that Jesus died and rose again.

You can ask Him to save you.

If you have questions, please speak with me after the service.

Bring your questions.

Open your Bible.

Let us reason together through the Word of God.

For those who already know Christ, perhaps the invitation is different.

Perhaps God has placed the face of a particular person in your mind.

Someone you have seen but avoided.

Someone whose circumstances you have analyzed without offering help.

Someone who needs you to come near.

Ask God what obedience looks like.

Then do not merely admire the answer.

Act upon it.

Let us pray.

Father, thank You for the mercy You have shown us through Jesus Christ.

Forgive us for the times we have seen suffering and crossed to the other side.

Forgive us for using busyness, fear, prejudice or unanswered questions as excuses for inaction.

Give us compassionate eyes.

Give us willing hands.

Give us wisdom to help without abandoning truth.

Give us courage to come near when others step away.

Help us recognize the opportunities You place before us.

May the mercy we have received become mercy we freely show.

For anyone who does not know Christ, draw that person to Your saving grace today.

We ask all of this in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Thank you for being with us today.

Please join us in the Reason Together Cafe for coffee and conversation.

May the Lord bless you, guide you and give you an opportunity this week to become a neighbor to someone in need.

And to each of our first-time guests, Aloha Nui Loa.

PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

The Movie Script

RTS-025 | Luke 10:25–37 KJV

A reader's companion to the sermon

Reason Together Church

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

www.ReasonTogether.Church

*Bring your questions. Open your Bible.
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About This Commentary

The Pastor's Commentary is a readable public companion to the sermon. It explains the principal Biblical reasoning, interpretive cautions and pastoral applications behind RTS-025. It does not replace the sermon transcript or the internal Study Vault. The sermon remains the spoken proclamation. The Vault preserves the complete research and decision record. This Commentary is where we slow down, consider the difficult questions and reason together about what the message means for ordinary Christian life.

The question beneath the story: When we meet a person who is wounded and in need, what kind of person does Jesus want us to be?

A Personal Word from Pastor Tom

This study is different from most Reason Together studies. Usually someone brings me a direct Biblical question. We open the Bible, trace the passage and determine what Scripture actually says. This time, the question came through a movie script I wrote many years ago after a friend challenged me on a movie set.

I had commented that the script being filmed was predictable and that it depended on more profanity and violence than the story needed. My friend, who was the star of the movie, asked whether I could do better and still remain true to my Christian values. That was a fair challenge. Before the filming day ended, I had the outline of a suspense story. The completed script eventually grew to more than one hundred pages.

The script was designed to entertain, but it was also designed to reveal something about the audience. I could tell the story, introduce the characters and then ask people which person they identified with most naturally. After they answered that question privately, I could ask a second and much more uncomfortable question: Which person represents the character Jesus wants you to become?

Those questions still matter because the person we understand most easily is not always the person who most clearly reflects the lesson Jesus is teaching us.

The Story in Brief

A burglar enters a family home during the night. The husband hears him, takes a gun and places himself between the intruder and his wife and children. The husband fires and wounds the intruder. The children call 911. A dispatcher responds. Police arrive and secure the scene. A paramedic approaches the wounded man and provides first aid. An ambulance takes him to the hospital. Technicians, physicians, a surgeon and nurses continue his care.

Meanwhile, the police investigate. Reports are reviewed. The district attorney prosecutes the husband. A defense attorney represents him. A judge presides and a jury considers the evidence. The verdict is not guilty.

Every person in that story has a role. The husband protects his family. The children summon help. The dispatcher gathers information. The officer secures the scene. The paramedic treats the wounded man. The hospital team preserves life. The lawyers present competing cases. The judge protects due process and the jury reaches a verdict.

The story does not require us to call one role good and all the others bad. Protection, emergency care, investigation and justice are not the same responsibility. The tension appears when we ask which character most closely resembles the person in Jesus' parable who saw a wounded man and became his neighbor.

Two Questions, Two Different Answers

Many listeners identify first with the husband. That reaction is understandable. A parent knows the instinct to stand between danger and a child. Others identify with the police officer, the doctor, the attorney, the judge or the jury. Their work involves courage, truth, skill and responsibility.

The first question reveals our experience and temperament. The second question places those instincts under the authority of Jesus. It does not necessarily erase our first answer. It asks whether there is another Christian responsibility we may overlook when we are concentrating on danger, guilt or punishment.

The Bible does not ask us to pretend that the burglar did nothing wrong. It asks whether his wrongdoing makes his wounds invisible. That is where the movie story opens the door to Luke 10.

Opening the Bible

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? — Luke 10:25 KJV

The word lawyer here describes a man trained in the law of Moses. He is not asking from ignorance. Luke tells us that he stood to test Jesus. Jesus answers his question with questions of His own: "What is written in the law? how readest thou?"

The lawyer gives the right answer. Love God with the whole person and love your neighbor as yourself. His words draw upon Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. Jesus tells him that he has answered correctly.

But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? — Luke 10:29 KJV

That short sentence exposes the real problem. The lawyer is willing to justify himself. He wants a definition that will let him know where his responsibility ends. If neighbor can be reduced to a manageable category, he may be able to prove that he has fulfilled the command.

We do something similar. We ask whether the person is innocent, grateful, responsible, safe, familiar or deserving. Some of those questions matter when we decide how to help. None of them gives us permission to stop seeing a human being.

Jesus Changes the Direction of the Question

The lawyer asks, “Who is my neighbour?” Jesus ends by asking which traveler “was neighbour unto” the wounded man. The difference is easy to miss and impossible to overstate.

The lawyer asks for the identity of the person who qualifies. Jesus asks about the identity of the person who acted. The center of attention moves from the wounded man’s category to the traveler’s character. Jesus does not allow neighbor-love to remain a boundary question. He makes it an obedience question.

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? — Luke 10:36 KJV

The proper question is not merely, “Is that person my neighbor?” It is, “Will I become a neighbor to that person?”

The Road and the Wounded Man

Jesus describes a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. Thieves strip him, wound him and leave him half dead. We do not know his name, occupation, history or worthiness. Jesus gives us only what the travelers need to know: a person is lying in front of them and may die without help.

A priest comes down the road, sees the man and passes by on the other side. A Levite comes to the place, looks and also passes by. The text does not tell us why. They may have feared danger. They may have worried about ritual consequences. They may have been busy. Those explanations can be discussed as possibilities, but they should never be preached as facts.

What Scripture does tell us is enough. Both men see. Neither man acts as a neighbor. Their failure warns us that physical sight and religious knowledge do not automatically become obedient love.

Why the Samaritan Matters

A Samaritan would not have been the expected hero in a story addressed to a Jewish listener. Jews and Samaritans carried generations of historical, religious and social hostility. John 4:9 states plainly that “the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.” The relationship does not map

perfectly onto one modern racial category, but the point is clear: Jesus chooses the presumed outsider as the model of mercy.

At Reason Together Church, our family includes people of different races, cultures and backgrounds. I have often said that this gives us a small glimpse of what heaven will look like. Diversity can become a pleasant slogan while distance remains in our hearts. The Samaritan forces us beyond enjoying diversity in the room. He asks whether we will cross the road for a person we have been trained to distrust.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. — Luke 10:33 KJV

The Samaritan sees the same condition the priest and Levite saw. The difference begins with compassion, but it does not end with emotion. His compassion moves his feet.

What Mercy Does

Luke describes mercy through a sequence of actions. The Samaritan comes where the man is. He sees him. He has compassion. He goes to him. He binds his wounds, pours in oil and wine, places him on his own animal, brings him to an inn and takes care of him. The next day he pays the host and promises to cover additional expense when he returns.

The details show that Biblical compassion is more than feeling sorry. It becomes presence, care, inconvenience, expense and follow-through. The Samaritan uses what he has and then brings the wounded man into a place where care can continue.

He sees the need instead of looking away.

He allows compassion to interrupt his plans.

He moves toward the wounded person.

He gives practical help suited to the immediate need.

He accepts personal inconvenience and expense.

He arranges continuing care rather than congratulating himself for a brief response.

Not every Christian can provide every kind of help. The Samaritan does not perform surgery, conduct an investigation or hold a trial. He does what the moment requires and then connects the injured man with another caregiver. That is an important model for churches. Faithful compassion does not have to do everything, but it should do something wise and real.

Why the Paramedic Is the Closest Parallel

In the movie story, the paramedic sees the wounded intruder and begins treatment before the investigation and trial are complete. He does not ask whether the man deserves first aid. He does not decide whether the husband should be convicted. He does not need to approve the burglary in order to stop the bleeding.

That makes the paramedic the closest parallel at the initial scene. Like the Samaritan, he comes near and responds to immediate wounds. The ambulance crew and hospital team then carry the parallel forward by transporting and continuing care.

Important qualification: The paramedic is the closest initial-scene parallel, not an exact modern Good Samaritan. He acts as a trained professional, while the Samaritan offers voluntary personal aid. The Samaritan also pays for care and promises to return. The comparison explains one decisive moment, not every detail of the parable.

There is another important difference. The wounded man in Jesus' parable is a victim of thieves. The wounded man in the movie is the intruder. That difference is intentional. It makes the moral test harder. The question is no longer whether we will help an obviously innocent victim. It is whether urgent compassion must wait for a verdict.

Compassion Is Not Approval

One of the most common misunderstandings in discussions of mercy is the idea that helping a wrongdoer approves the wrongdoing. That does not follow. A physician can treat an impaired driver without approving drunk driving. A jail chaplain can share the gospel with a prisoner without denying the crime. A church can feed a hungry person while maintaining necessary boundaries.

The paramedic's treatment does not declare the burglar innocent. It declares that a wounded human being is still a human being. The later investigation and legal process ask different questions. What happened? Was the husband justified? What evidence can be established? What verdict is lawful?

Mercy answers, "What care is needed now?" Justice answers, "What is true and what responsibility follows?" When both are rightly ordered, they need not be enemies.

Compassion Does Not Cancel Justice

The husband's protection of his family is not condemned simply because the intruder later receives care. The fictional not-guilty verdict preserves that distinction. The family can be protected, the scene can be secured, the wounded intruder can be treated and the facts can be judged. Each response serves a different responsibility.

Christian mercy is not sentimental confusion. It does not call evil good. It does not require trust where trust has been broken. It does not restore access where access would endanger another person. It does not remove consequences, restitution or lawful boundaries.

At the same time, justice must not become an excuse for cruelty or indifference. We should be cautious whenever we use a person's guilt to explain why suffering no longer matters. The cross reminds us that God did not wait for us to become deserving before He moved toward us.

Wise Mercy and Personal Safety

“Go, and do thou likewise” does not mean that every believer must rush physically into every dangerous situation. The priest and Levite passed by a wounded man. The parable does not ask us to ignore an active threat, abandon children who depend upon us or attempt medical care beyond our competence.

Sometimes neighbor-love means calling 911, staying at a safe distance, giving clear information and waiting for trained responders. Sometimes it means providing food, transportation or financial assistance through a trustworthy ministry. Sometimes it means saying no to a request while offering a healthier form of help.

Boundaries do not automatically prove a lack of compassion. The question is whether our boundaries protect what is good or merely protect us from inconvenience. Wise mercy keeps both truth and love in view.

The Question of Eternal Life

The parable begins with a question about inheriting eternal life. That makes one guardrail essential. Jesus is not teaching that a person purchases salvation by performing one sufficiently generous act. The lawyer is trying to justify himself, and the parable exposes how far perfect neighbor-love reaches.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. — Ephesians 2:8–9 KJV

Salvation is the gift of God, received through faith. The next verse then tells us that those saved by grace are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Grace does not leave us unchanged. Good works are not the root of salvation, but they are expected fruit.

James asks what benefit there is in telling a cold and hungry person to depart in peace while withholding what the body needs. First John asks how the love of God dwells in a person who sees a brother in need and closes compassion. These passages do not replace grace with works. They show what grace produces when it reaches the heart.

The Character Jesus Is Forming

The purpose of this study is not to produce one correct answer on a character quiz. It is to let Jesus examine the kind of people we are becoming. We may never find an injured stranger on the Jericho road. We will certainly meet people whose needs interrupt our plans.

Some will be innocent victims. Some will have made foolish decisions. Some may have harmed others. Some will be easy to love. Some will awaken old suspicions and fears. In every case, the Christian response begins by refusing to let a category erase a person.

The Samaritan does not ask us to abandon discernment. He asks us to place discernment in the service of love. The goal is not reckless help. The goal is faithful neighborliness.

Five Movements of Neighbor-Love

1. See. Pay attention to the person and the actual need. Do not let prejudice, hurry or discomfort make suffering invisible.
2. Care. Permit compassion to become more than a passing feeling. Ask God to soften the places where your heart has learned to close.
3. Come near wisely. Close the distance in a way that is safe, appropriate and respectful. Sometimes that means personal presence. Sometimes it means summoning trained help.
4. Act. Offer practical assistance suited to the need and within your ability. Love that never leaves words has not yet followed the Samaritan very far.
5. Follow through. Ask whether the person has been connected to continuing care. Do not confuse one emotional moment with sustained faithfulness.

Questions for Personal or Group Reflection

6. Which character in the movie story did you identify with first, and why?
7. How is that answer different from the character Jesus may be forming you to become?
8. What changes when Jesus asks who “was neighbour unto” the wounded man?
9. Why do you think Jesus chose a Samaritan as the example of mercy?
10. When have you been tempted to decide whether someone deserved help before you considered the immediate need?
11. What is the difference between compassion, approval, trust and acquittal?
12. Where do you need a wise boundary, and where might a boundary merely be protecting you from inconvenience?
13. What practical act of neighbor-love is God placing before you now?

Interpretive Cautions

Do not turn possible motives for the priest and Levite into facts. Luke tells us what they did, not why they did it.

Do not treat the paramedic as an exact replacement for the Samaritan. The comparison is closest at the first-aid moment and is intentionally limited.

Do not forget that the wounded man in the parable is the victim, while the wounded man in the movie is the intruder.

Do not use compassion to excuse sin, erase victims, remove wise boundaries or interfere with lawful accountability.

Do not use justice to justify indifference, humiliation or refusal of appropriate care.

Do not read “Go, and do thou likewise” as salvation by works. Ephesians 2:8–10 preserves the order of grace and obedience.

Do not force ancient Jewish and Samaritan hostility into one simplistic modern category.

Preserve the historical distance while receiving the moral challenge.

Pastoral Note

There are moments when a sermon asks us to choose a side. This study asks us to recognize that several responsibilities may stand together. A father may protect his family. A police officer may secure a dangerous scene. A paramedic may treat the wounded. A court may pursue truth and justice. A Christian may support all of those responsibilities without contradiction.

The revealing question is whether we can see the image of God in a person before every question about that person has been resolved. Jesus does not ask us to become naïve. He asks us to become neighbors.

If this study brings to mind a person you have avoided, begin with prayer. You may not be called to restore access or remove a boundary. You may be called to release hatred, offer appropriate help, seek wise counsel or stop celebrating another person's pain. Ask the Lord what merciful obedience looks like in the actual situation.

Selected Sources

All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

Luke 10:25–37. The lawyer's question and the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Deuteronomy 6:5. Wholehearted love for God.

Leviticus 19:18. Love for one's neighbor as oneself.

John 4:9. New Testament witness to Jewish and Samaritan separation.

Luke 9:51–56 and Luke 17:11–19. Additional Lukan encounters involving Samaritans.

James 2:15–16. The inadequacy of kind words without practical help.

1 John 3:17–18. Love expressed in deed and truth.

Galatians 6:10. Doing good as opportunity is given.

Ephesians 2:8–10. Salvation by grace and the good works that follow.

The movie-set account and fictional screenplay summary are based upon the firsthand recollection and original teaching work of Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley.

A Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for seeing us when we were helpless and for coming near to us through Jesus Christ. Forgive us for the people we have seen but passed by. Give us compassion that becomes wise action. Teach us to protect the innocent, tell the truth, honor justice and still refuse to become indifferent to suffering. Keep us from trusting in our good works, and let the grace that saved us produce good works that honor You. Show us whom You are calling us to serve, and give us courage to go and do likewise. In Jesus' name, amen.

Until We Reason Together Again

The movie ends with a verdict, but Jesus ends His parable with a command. The final question is not simply whether we understood the story. It is whether we will obey the One who told it.

And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. — Luke 10:37 KJV

**Bring your questions. Open your Bible.
Let's Reason Together the Word of God.**

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