

Good Neighbor

Learning

Introducing the Parable (some example content you can engage with to prep and/or as a group)

- **Read - Luke 10:25-37**
- **Context:** We have jumped over to the Gospel of Luke, but we are in a similar place in the story. Jesus has left Galilee and is heading up towards Jerusalem. The mystery of Jesus' goal is now being revealed, he is going to Jerusalem to die (Luke 9:22, 44). Jesus has been rejected by the Samaritans and he confronts James and John's vindictive judgement of them (Luke 10:55). Jesus deters some would be followers (Luke 9:57-62) and then sends those who still remain out as "lambs in the midst of wolves" (Luke 10:3). All of this rings of themes like lastness, lostness, leastness, and death!
- **Interesting Word:** "Half-dead" translates as "looked dead." And the word for "pity/compassion" (v. 33) is *splanchnon* in the Gk, and refers to a deep aching in the entrails or stomach.
- **Culture:** *Priests* were from the direct line of Levi and *Levites* were from the tribe of Levi, not directly priests they help oversee and carry out many of the priestly duties. What must be understood is that Scripture itself forbade these two from touching the dead body (cf. Lev. 21:1-4, 11). Also interesting, realize the Levite is subordinate to the priest, so if the priest passed by the man the Levite would feel more pressure to follow suit. A Jewish no priest or levite is expected next to fulfill the role of helper, but no, a Samaritan. Thus, it is likely the nameless beaten man is the non-priestly Jew in the story.
- **Themes:** The obvious overfamiliar theme is to extend kindness to those in need as a mode 'good samaritan.' But is there perhaps another layer deeper? Engage the quote and questions to explore together.
- **Quote for expanding the discussion:**
 - "To me, the central figure in the parable is not the Samaritan. He is simply one of the three characters in the story who have the opportunity to display neighborliness as Jesus defines it. The defining character - the one to whom the other three respond by being non-neighbor or neighbor - is the man who fell among thieves. The actual Christ-figure in the story, therefore, is yet another loser, yet another down-and-outer who, by just lying there in his lostness and proximity to death, is in fact the closest thing to Jesus in the parable." Robert Capon
 - Further, in this reading, it becomes clear that the priest and levite represent the sacrificial system of Israel and how they are so concerned with maintaining business as usual that it does not see Jesus. In contrast, the outsider is able to respond to Jesus' brokenness and in doing so fulfill the Law and Prophets.

Dialogue Questions (some example questions for this content above)

- **Read a 2nd time - Luke 10:25-37**
- What are the stereotypical lessons you have learned from this parable? Try focusing on each of the 5 characters one by one? What other themes emerge? (You may need to help people by unpacking some of the culture from above) Compare, connect, and contrast any ideas shared.
- What do you learn from Jesus' exchanges with the lawyer?
- Try reading the quote above, pause for reflection. What does your group think about this idea?

Implication Questions (some example questions/challenges that engage real life now)

- Are there pitfalls in always striving to "be the Good Samaritan?" Why or why not?
- If we see Jesus as the nameless man left for dead... What do we learn about him? What does this suggest for us as his followers?
- If we learn to see ourselves in the role of the man left for dead and the Samaritan, how would that impact our relationships with others?