

The Good Samaritan. Luke 10. 25-37. Bethesda Evening Praise. 25 May 2008.¹

This evening we will be looking at one of the best known of our Lord's parables – that known as the parable of the Good Samaritan – although I note that the Lord didn't actually call His story a 'parable' or its hero 'good'.

The story begins properly in Luke chapter 10 verse 25.

Behold, a lawyer stood up to put Him to the test, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He said to him, What is written in the Law? How do you read?

And he answered, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.

And He said to him, You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

Jesus replied, A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.

Now by chance a priest was going down that way, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.

Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?

He said, The one who showed him mercy. And Jesus said to him, Go, and you do likewise.

The central issue raised by the Lord in His parable is that of my attitude towards others – and this parable reveals four different ways in which I can view them.

Running our eyes quickly through the characters, it's not difficult to identify the four categories. They are: the robbers, the priest and the Levite, the innkeeper, and, of course, the Samaritan.

And the injured man is regarded differently by each of these characters and groups. To the robbers, he is a victim to be exploited; to the priest and the Levite, he is a nuisance to be shunned; to the innkeeper, he is a business proposition; but to the Samaritan, he is a neighbour needing help.

Putting it another way : the robbers create the problem; the priest and the Levite ignore it; the innkeeper treats it professionally; and the Samaritan solves it.

And each character or group in the story had a different motto and philosophy of life. The motto of the robbers was 'Yours is mine if I can get it'. That of the priest and Levite was 'Mine is my own if I can keep it'. That of the innkeeper was 'Mine is yours if you can pay for it'. And the motto of the Samaritan was 'Mine is yours if you need it'.

First, the Lord painted the scene. He began His response to the lawyer's question by referring to the road which went down from Jerusalem to Jericho – which it did quite literally by over 3,000 feet. A road like this was a desolate, uninspiring sort of place. And the Lord no doubt chose such a scene for his story intentionally. There was no audience – there were no spectators. Each of the characters was therefore free to act naturally – there was no point in pretending anything. The Lord is challenging us by His story as to how we respond to a 'neighbour's' need, when there is no-one around to look over our shoulder.²

But this particular road wasn't only lonely – it was downright dangerous. This road stretched for the best part of 20 miles, and by far the longest section of it was a rocky gorge passing through barren and bleak mountains. With its many rocks and caves, this wild region lent itself naturally as a resort for bandits, brigands and outlaws. The name of the gorge in Arabic means the 'Ascent of Blood'³ on account of the acts of violence regularly committed there.⁴

Having set the scene, the Lord rapidly introduced the first of our four categories.

Enter the robbers. They weren't 'thieves' – they didn't pilfer or steal. They were robbers, outlaws – they plundered and took by force. That is, they were of the Barabbas type: 'now Barabbas was a robber', John 18. 40, not the

Judas Iscariot type: 'he was a thief, and had the money bag; and he used to take what was put in it', John 12. 6. They represent the really nasty type of person who looks somebody else up and down, and asks 'what can I get out of him?' ... 'what use is he to me?' To men like these, other people are simply tools to be used and exploited for their own selfish purposes.

In this connection, we should note that they stripped their victim *before* they wounded him. It wasn't that their greed compelled them to acts of violence; it wasn't that they were reluctantly forced to disable the man to obtain his garments. Indeed, they took the precaution of removing his clothes before they injured the poor man – so that his garments, which were an all-important part of the spoil, wouldn't get ripped or torn or stained with blood. Then they 'wounded', they beat (literally, 'they laid blows on') the man, either to ensure that he wouldn't be able to follow them or for the sheer fun of it! Before leaving the robbers, the Lord wants me to stop and ask, 'Is there nothing of the robber character in me?' Am I never influenced by what I can get out of others? Or have I never felt a sadistic sense of satisfaction and pleasure when somebody I dislike has suffered? Do I never wish ill on others - for any reason?

Exit the robbers and **enter the priest** – or Mr 'How-Not-to-Solve-a-Problem'. Jesus said that 'by chance a priest was going down that way' – that is, it was by sheer coincidence that he happened to be passing that way. Such words must sound strange to those of us who believe in divine providence. But, by these words, Jesus emphasised at least two things. First, He stressed the loneliness of the road. The wounded man was isolated and could easily have lain there too long for help to arrive. Second, our Lord stressed the casualness of the meeting. He wanted to emphasise that there was nothing special or exceptional about the encounter. The Lord wants us to know that it's someone's response to the ordinary, everyday affairs and situations of life, which best reveals his character. We are to 'do good to all', we read, 'as we have... opportunity'.⁵

We should note that the Lord didn't challenge the orthodoxy or knowledge of the priest. We can assume therefore that He was happy for us to believe that the priest was fully versed in the Temple ritual. No doubt, the priest could have put anybody right on all matters of the ceremonial law. And yet he was blind to the practical implications of the very law which men sought at his mouth.⁶ His *own* law required him to assist his brother in lifting up a fallen beast – 'You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen down by the way and ignore them. You shall help him to lift them up again'.⁷ And this was no ox or ass that the priest spied by the wayside - it was his brother, it was 'his neighbour'.

But if the Lord didn't challenge the priest's orthodoxy, neither did he accuse him of doing positive harm to the unfortunate man on the roadside. The priest didn't go across to inflict further injury on the motionless form, or to steal any goods which the robbers had missed. His was a sin of omission – of what he failed to do. James captured the spirit of it in his well-known words, "to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin".⁸

And we pause for a moment to ask, 'Do we never, indifferent and uncaring, walk past those in trouble? Do we never deliberately look the other way and heartlessly ignore the plight of others?' Ah, but then we always manage to find good excuses for doing so.⁹ And before we 'finger'¹⁰ the priest, it will do us no harm to imagine some of the very plausible excuses which *he* could have offered.

He might have argued that he couldn't spare the time just then. I understand that Jericho was one of the main country residences of the Jerusalem priesthood. It was a very attractive location – spoken of throughout the Old Testament as 'the city of palms'.¹¹ There were occasions in the year when others would be shivering in the snow in Jerusalem while you basked in the sun in Jericho! In our Lord's day, about half of Israel's priests resided there. In all probability this one was on his way home after work in the temple.

There were about 100,000 priests at the time – and only one temple! The *whole* priesthood was on duty only at the festivals of the Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Since the days of David, the priesthood had been divided into 24 courses, each of which served for another two weeks in the year.¹² That is to say, a priest's working year consisted (in one sense only, of course – he also taught) of no more than five weeks.

I imagine that this priest had just finished his duty. His wife knew what time to expect him home and would, no doubt, have a nice meal ready for him. If he delayed to help the robbers' victim, his meal would be ruined, his wife distraught with anxiety, and his life not worth living – indeed, given the choice, on balance he would probably have rather faced the robbers!¹³

Then the priest could have pleaded that he wasn't suitably dressed. It would have been unthinkable to such a man that his splendid robes should get stained or soiled with the blood of the man or the dirt of the road.

Then he could have argued that the risk involved in helping was far too great. Clearly the man had not been knocked down by a bus! The unsavoury characters who had recently waylaid the other poor fellow might well still have been lurking around ... just ready to pounce. Indeed, for all he knew, they might even have left the man's body there to lure others to the spot. And the priest may well have felt that there was no sense in risking his life for that of a man concerning whom he knew nothing at all. To do so could well have meant that within five minutes or so there

would have been two men 'half-dead' by the side of the road, and one of them a very valuable clergyman from the Jerusalem Temple!

Again he could have argued quite plausibly that he wasn't the right man for the job. The poor man on the roadside evidently needed proper medical care and attention, and he, the priest, wasn't qualified/skilled to give this. Now if the man had only wanted a lecture on the tabernacle, the priest would have been your man! Or if he - the priest - had only been the 'medically qualified' author of the Gospel in which the story is recorded!

And the priest had one final excuse: he could see a Levite coming in the distance. This case was surely more in the Levite's line than his. After all, were not the Levites supposed to look after the more menial tasks? Were they not to minister to the needs of the priesthood?¹⁴ It would therefore, the priest could have argued, be far more fitting for the servant to stop and aid the man than for the master to do so. Yes, it was definitely more up his street.

Have we never excused ourselves from helping someone in need ... 'I would normally have been glad to help out, but it isn't convenient just now' ... 'It's a pity, but I just happen to have my tidy clothes on at the moment' ... 'The risks involved are too great' ... 'There are others better qualified than me to help' ... 'I can safely leave it for somebody else'?¹⁵

And so the priest gingerly picked his way around the man and passed on – and out of the story. I suspect you wouldn't have seen him for dust. Exit priest – enter **a Levite**¹⁶ – who could, of course, have offered much the same excuses as the priest.

There was, however, one obvious difference. Instead of seeing somebody coming along behind, he could see a familiar figure ahead. The figure was that of the priest, disappearing over the horizon as quickly as his legs could carry him. 'Well', the Levite could have said, 'I fully intended at first to help this poor man, but, frankly, I fail to see how this can really be a matter of duty or obligation. That worthy priest, at whose mouth men seek the law, has just passed by, and he obviously didn't look at it that way. Apart from which, for me now to stop and help would be to charge the priest with hardness of heart or lack of sympathy. Far be it from me to shame or embarrass one of the priesthood'. Let us be honest. Have we never shirked and ducked out of our duty towards a neighbour on the ground that others have been content to do nothing?

It is at this point that Jesus introduced his hero, **the Samaritan**.¹⁷ A contrast with the religious leaders could have been achieved, of course, by making the third man one of the common Jewish people. Yet there is something magnificent, something incredibly noble, about the way in which our Lord cast the star part of his story. Only a short time before, a village of Samaritans had refused to receive him.¹⁸ The 'Sons of Thunder' (James and John) had certainly rumbled loudly that day. They were all for calling down fire from heaven on the village! – just as Elijah had twice called down such fire on men who came from Samaria.¹⁹ But, in spite of the insult and slight which He had recently received from the Samaritans, Jesus chose a Samaritan to be his personification of goodness and generosity.

We can almost feel the shock and horror felt by the lawyer at this point.

One commentator claims that the words, 'as he journeyed' tell us that the Samaritan 'was a commercial traveller'.²⁰ Unlike the priest and the Levite, he wasn't going 'down', having just left the temple in Jerusalem. Indeed, the Samaritan was a heretic! His sacred site was Mount Gerizim in Samaria, not Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. In fact, the Jews and the Samaritans really had only three things in common. They had both worshipped in temples – albeit different temples, they both accepted the five books of Moses as inspired, and they both spent half their time cursing each other! Scholars tell us that relations between the Jews and the Samaritans were especially bad at the time. The situation not being helped I suppose because, according to the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, the Jews insisted on calling the Samaritans that 'foolish people that dwell in Shechem'.²¹ It is hardly surprising, therefore, that John's gospel tells us that the Jews had 'no dealings with Samaritans'.²²

This Samaritan therefore had no shortage of ready-made excuses for continuing on his way. He was exposed to at least the same risks as the priest and the Levite.²³ And, if he was a commercial traveller, he may well have been carrying samples of his wares with him, which would have made it all the more dangerous for him to have stopped. He would have been an obvious target. In addition, the wounded man had altogether no claim on him by way of national ties – he was the member of a hostile race. And the Samaritan would have known that, had their situations been reversed and he been lying on the road, the Jew would have happily passed by - and felt all the better for having done so. He would probably have chuckled to himself all the way to Jericho.²⁴

And the Samaritan also knew that he was most unlikely to receive any thanks for any kindness shown. The Jews were forbidden by their Rabbis to receive works of charity from someone of another race – least of all from a Samaritan. There was also every possibility of the Samaritan's actions being misinterpreted. After all, he was on foreign soil. And any Jew would have taken great delight in accusing the Samaritan to the Roman authorities. And the finger of suspicion would have pointed in his direction if he was found anywhere near the body.

But Jesus informs us that, without stopping to frame any excuses, this good man 'had compassion'. There is a fascinating incident recorded in 2 Chronicles 28 – where we find men *from Samaria* clothing some 200,000 naked Jews, *anointing* them with oil and carrying the weak and feeble on *donkeys* to '*Jericho*, the city of palms'.²⁵ But the men of Samaria only did this because of the stern warning sounded by one of the Lord's prophets – one Oded. But there was no prophet on this road! The actions of this Samaritan in Jesus' story were entirely spontaneous – he simply 'had compassion'.

The words 'you shall love ... your neighbour as yourself', v. 27, formed part of the Samaritan Scriptures also, and – without stopping to argue about, 'Who is my neighbour?' (as the lawyer!) – this Samaritan got on with the business of acting like one.²⁶ The same word is used when describing how the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan each 'saw' the wounded man.²⁷ But the Samaritan 'saw' the robbers' victim through very different eyes to those of the priest and the Levite.

And so the Samaritan set about performing what simple first-aid he could. He bound up the wounds of the injured man – possibly with some of his commercial wares or possibly with strips of cloth torn from his own garments.

He poured olive oil and wine on the man's wounds – the oil to soothe the pain and inflammation – the wine to cleanse the wounds – the alcoholic content of the wine acting as a disinfectant and antiseptic. Doctor Luke would have readily understood this. Here in the UK, we may wonder why the Samaritan was carrying oil. Clearly he carried the wine for refreshment. But why oil? But travellers in the Middle East usually carried gourds of oil at their waists to anoint themselves to stop their skin from blistering under the blazing sun.²⁸ The oil was therefore a most important item in the Samaritan's travel kit. Yet without a moment's hesitation both the oil and wine were bestowed on the injured man.

He then sat the wounded man 'on his own beast'. The Samaritan traveller may well have had two beasts – one on which to ride and the other on which to carry his wares. Clearly he chose to walk the distance from the scene of the robbery to the nearest inn.

And when they arrived at the inn – quite likely in or near Jericho²⁹ – the Samaritan didn't leave straight away – he saw personally to the needs of the injured man – he 'took care of him'.³⁰ But the following day he was compelled to leave, presumably on account of business commitments. And at that point he handed over the injured man to the care of the innkeeper. With commendable foresight, and knowing that the man had been stripped and therefore had no money, he made ample financial provision for his welfare – taking out³¹ two denarii from his girdle or purse to give to the innkeeper.

Nor is this sum as trivial as might first appear. In the days of Augustus – some 30 years before³² – the pay of an ordinary soldier in the Roman army was only 225 denarii for a year's service – with all the risks!³³ Two denarii therefore represented about three day's pay for an ordinary soldier. And we know from another of our Lord's parables that such a sum also amounted to two days' generous wages for an agricultural worker.³⁴ I understand it would have provided 24 days' basic board and lodge. On top of this, the Samaritan undertook, if it proved necessary, to supplement this amount on his return. And we have to remember that he had little or no prospect of ever being recompensed by the wounded man. But this he never stopped to consider.

Leaving for a moment our Lord's model of compassion and kindness, let us briefly consider **the innkeeper**. He wasn't violent or bad like the robbers. He wasn't neglectful and indifferent like the priest and the Levite. He was a businessman. No doubt he was scrupulously honest and his dealings above board. But he wasn't the hero of the parable. He was prepared to help but only if there was adequate payment for his services. As we noted, the Samaritan gave him two denarii and offered to make good any extra cost incurred in caring for the wounded man.³⁵ But at no point did the innkeeper offer to share the cost involved in looking after the man.

When it comes to helping others, do we never consider whether there will be anything in it for us at the end – even if only the praise and the approval of others – or the possibility of the favour being returned one day.³⁶

Finally, we should quickly consider **the lawyer**, whose question, had given rise to the parable. He had approached Jesus with a common subject discussed by the Rabbis – what to do to inherit eternal life.³⁷ But Jesus effectively cornered him. 'How do *you* read?', Jesus asked – employing a technical term, constantly used by the Jewish scribes and lawyers. They would consult one another about some point of the law, and would say, 'How do you read?' In effect, the Lord pointed out that the lawyer had no real need to ask his question at all – as a '*law*'yer his business was the law and he should therefore have known the answer!³⁸ All he needed to do was to practise what he preached. The lawyer, not wishing to look foolish, and in an attempt to evade the force of the commandment, replied that it was not as simple as all that.

As far as the requirement to love *God* was concerned, there was no doubt who God was. But there was every doubt, he insisted, as to the meaning of one's 'neighbour'. And he wasn't in a position to practise the law until its

meaning had been clarified. Many Jewish teachers of the day argued for a limitation – some claiming that ‘neighbour’ applied only to Israelites and to full proselytes (converts to Judaism) – and that it certainly did not extend to Samaritans or to gentiles.³⁹

In responding to the lawyer’s question, ‘who is my neighbour?’, the Lord pointed out that the very question had been wrongly framed – it was a defective question. For I note that the word translated ‘replied’ in verse 30 is not the usual word for ‘replying’ or for ‘answering’ – which occurs over 200 times in the Gospels – including in verses 27, 28 and 41 of our chapter. This word is never used elsewhere in the New Testament in that way – it means properly ‘to take up’, ‘to catch up’, and occurs, for example, in a literal sense, in Acts chapter 1 of our Lord’s ascension (also by Luke), ‘while they beheld, he *was taken up*; and a cloud received him out of their sight’.⁴⁰

In other words, Jesus didn’t ‘answer’ the question, or the man – he ‘took the lawyer up’ for ever asking it. Jesus explained to him that his concern shouldn’t have been how to ‘define’ a neighbour, but how to ‘become’ one. Indeed, His question was literally, ‘which of these three *became* neighbour’. The right question to ask therefore is not ‘Who is my neighbour?’ but ‘To whom can I become a neighbour?’⁴¹ The fundamental issue isn’t whether I am able to define a neighbour, but whether I am willing to behave like one to any needy people who cross my path.⁴²

The Lord ended his story with the exhortation to ‘go, and you do likewise’. The lawyer had, seemingly, choked on the obvious answer to our Lord’s question, ‘which ... became neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers’. And so, deliberately avoiding what was to him the detestable word ‘Samaritan’, the lawyer grudgingly answered, ‘the one who *did* mercy to him’, literally. To which Jesus responded, ‘Go and you *do* likewise’ – ‘do it constantly, let it be your lifelong course of action’.

Our Lord says in effect, ‘The priest walked past the man and the Levite *did likewise*. But this Samaritan *did* mercy to him – *you do likewise!*’

And there Luke ends his story. What became of the lawyer? We do not know. We’re not told the sequel – because the Holy Spirit’s purpose in recording this episode isn’t to entertain us or to satisfy our curiosity – but to leave us with the same challenging words of Jesus – ‘go, and do likewise’.

Make no mistake – each one of us is in the parable somewhere:

Do I make trouble for others, and enjoy doing it?
Do I conveniently not see the needs of others?
Do I help only if there is something in it for me?
Or do I help for helping sake?

What is my motto? ...

‘Yours is mine if I can get it’;
‘Mine is my own if I can keep it’;
‘Mine is yours if you can pay for it’; or
‘Mine is yours if you need it’?

Footnotes

¹ Fuller and tidier notes can be accessed at http://www.preciousseed.org/article_detail.cfm?articleID=2685 and http://www.preciousseed.org/article_detail.cfm?articleID=2710.

² Although I have used the word 'road', in fact the mountain road between Jerusalem and Jericho wasn't fully engineered until the war of A.D. 66–70 – Josephus tells us that the Tenth Roman Legion used this very road on their way to besiege Jerusalem in A.D. 69. See :

<http://www.newmediabible.org/1goodsam/travel/03luke1030/articles/article3descjerusjericho.htm#Level%20III>

³ It corresponds to the Hebrew translated 'Adummim' ('the ascent (or 'pass') of red'), Joshua 15. 7; 18. 17.

⁴ As note 1.

⁵ Gal. 6. 10. Interestingly, this parable is the only occasion of which I am aware when our Lord spoke against a priest or Levite.

⁶ Mal. 2. 7.

⁷ Deut. 22. 4; cf. Exod. 23. 5.

⁸ James 4. 17.

⁹ The power of evasion possessed by the human conscience is truly amazing.

¹⁰ Cf. Isa. 58. 9.

¹¹ Deut. 34. 4; Josh. 3. 13; 2 Chron. 28. 15. Jericho received only eight inches of rain a year and was quite African in its climate.

¹² 1 Chron. 24. 3-19; Luke 1. 8.

¹³ The priest could also have argued that for him to have helped might well have interfered with his own spiritual life. The prostrate form might have been that of a dead man, or, if not, he might soon die. Remember that Jesus described him as 'half dead'. This would have proved a calamity for the priest if he touched him. According to the books of Leviticus and Numbers, the priest would have been ceremonially defiled and unclean for seven days; Numb. 5. 2; 19. 11; Lev. 21. 1-4.

¹⁴ Numb. 3. 6, 9.

¹⁵ There may be some occasions when one of these 'excuses' constitutes a very legitimate reason for passing by. But in the majority of cases they remain pathetically lame excuses. And, in the sight of God, the best and most plausible of excuses fails to compensate for one work of mercy, one act of kindness, left undone. The prophecy of Obadiah (v. 11) makes it clear that not to help is to be as guilty in God's sight as the one who inflicts the injury. 'In the day that you stood on the other side (aloof and indifferent) ... even you were as one of them'. 'Other side', Obadiah 11 is the same as 'aloof' in 'my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off', Psa. 38.11.

¹⁶ Possibly, as suggested by the KJV ('he came and looked on him'), he felt that the injured man required closer attention than the priest had given him. He may well have stopped and made a thorough investigation and inspection. But alas, if so, his second thoughts were not of the same quality as his first. For, his curiosity satisfied, and inspection completed, he continued on his way.

¹⁷ And the contrast between this man and the priest and Levite is further emphasised by the position of the word 'Samaritan' at the beginning of the Greek sentence. Contrast the actions of the robbers and the Samaritan :

- Took the victim's money – spent his own money.
- Beat the victim – cared for the victim.
- Left the victim half dead and left, not to return – left the victim cared for with the promise to return.

¹⁸ Luke 9. 51-55.

¹⁹ 2 Kings 1. 2, 9-12.

²⁰ J. A. Findlay, *Jesus and His Parables*, page 63.

²¹ Ecclesiasticus 50. 27-28 speaks of them as 'no nation' and as 'the foolish people that dwell in Shechem'. The Testament of Levi also calls Shechem 'a city of fools'.

²² John 4. 9. Several New Testament passages make plain the extreme antipathy characterizing Jewish-Samaritan relations, corroborating John's statement; see also Luke 9. 51–56 and John 8. 48. The bitter racial conflict went back to a long, complex history of tension between inhabitants of Judea and Samaria, precipitated by key watershed events—notably, the construction of a rival Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim in the fourth century BC and its subsequent destruction by the Jews under John Hyrcanus in 129 BC, and the finalization of the Samaritan Pentateuch in the late second century BC. Most certainly the hostility between Jews and Samaritans had fully matured by the time of Jesus. Neither group would ever claim the other among its 'neighbours'.

²³ If the man was dead, the Samaritan also would have been defiled according to his law, Numb. 19. 11, 16.

²⁴ It was well for the injured man, therefore, that the Samaritan did not live by the rule, 'do to others as you think they would do to you'. How different was the 'golden rule' of Jesus, 'as you would that men should do to you, do also to them likewise', Luke 6. 31.

²⁵ Note the points of comparison and contrast :

	2 Chronicles 28	Luke 10
Nakedness	'Clothed them', v. 15	'Stripped of clothing', v. 30
Beating	'Smote with great blows [plēgē]', v. 5 LXX	'Laid blows [plēgē] on him', v. 30

Confiscation of possessions	'Took much spoil from them', vv. 8, 15	'Stripped him', v. 30
Place taken	Jericho, v. 15	An inn – in area of Jericho, vv. 30, 34, 35 (a)
Ministry	Anointing – i.e. with oil, v. 15	'Poured on oil', v. 34
Transport on donkey	'Ride on donkeys', v. 15	'Placed on his own beast', v. 34
Kinship	'Brethren' – i.e. kinsfolk – three times, vv. 8, 11, 15	'Neighbour' three times, vv. 27, 29, 36
Differing response of Israel's Leaders and religious personnel	Exhort soldiers to extend Mercy and benevolence, vv. 9-14	Passed by indifferent, vv. 31-32 (b)

(a) Since Jericho was a frontier city on the border of Samaria and Judea, an inn in that area was the most likely place where the Samaritan business man would be trusted to pay expenses.

(b) The two sets of leaders react in exactly the opposite manner – Luke 10 is the very reverse of 2 Chron. 28. Would that the priest and the Levite of Luke 10 had conducted themselves as the prophet and rulers of 2 Chron. 28!

²⁶ The Chronicler's 'Samaritans' are called upon to heed the challenge: 'Love your *brother*', 2 Chron. 28. 8, 11, 15. But, following closely the letter of Lev. 19.18, the Lord's 'Samaritan' obeys the injunction: 'Love your *neighbour*', Luke 10. 27, 29, 36.

²⁷ Luke 10. 31, 32, 33.

²⁸ This is why, for example, Jacob at Bethel had oil available to pour on the top of his stone pillow, Gen. 28. 18.

²⁹ The 'Ascent of Blood' pass was just five miles from Jericho – see the introduction.

³⁰ This is the word used by Paul - 'if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?', 1 Tim. 3. 5.

³¹ Literally, 'casting out'.

³² Augustus : 27 BC to 14 AD.

³³ Tacitus, Annals.1.17.

³⁴ Matt. 20. 2.

³⁵ Indeed the 'I' in 'I will repay (reimburse) you' is emphatic.

³⁶ See Luke 14. 12-14.

³⁷ I see no reason to believe that he was trying to trap Jesus – that he came with any sinister motive. It seems more likely to me that he sought to test this unauthorised Galilean teacher to see if He would give the right answer.

³⁸ The '*nomikos*' should have known the '*nomos*'. 'Answered *right* (correctly)', v. 28, is '*orthōs*', from which our word 'orthodox' is derived.

³⁹ Their definition excluded Samaritans, and all foreigners and resident aliens who failed to join the community of Israel within 12 months. There was even a tendency on the part of some Pharisees to exclude the ordinary Jewish people from their definition! A widely accepted view seems to have been, 'Love your neighbour, *the Israelite*'. The Pharisees, however, narrowed this down even more, namely, to "Love your neighbour, *the Pharisee*'. They reasoned, 'This rabble that does not know the law, are accursed', John 7. 49. And the Qumran community declared that anyone who did not belong to their little group was 'a son of darkness' and should be hated. And so the lawyer's question implies that a limit could be set on the duty – that there could be non-neighbours. This idea no doubt lay behind the words of Jesus, 'You have heard that it has been said, Love your neighbour, and hate your enemy', Matt. 5. 43.

⁴⁰ Acts 1. 9.

⁴¹ The Lord used 'neighbour' in an unusual way. In the Old Testament, it is used to describe the object of the action.

⁴² And 'to whom can I become a neighbour?' was the Lord's own question. He asked himself this all along. It is quite likely that the parable was spoken in the synagogue of Jericho – v. 38 gives the next stop as Bethany, and the lawyer 'stood up', v. 25, suggesting a sitting context. If so, The Lord was about to travel the very road which he chose as the scene for the parable. No later incident is recorded on this journey, but one is recorded on *the next and last time* the Lord Jesus travelled that way. It is recorded in Matthew 20. 29–21. 1. On that later occasion, leaving Jericho for Jerusalem and therefore travelling along the road of the story, we read of our Lord's encounter with blind Bartimaeus and his unnamed companion – who 'heard that Jesus "*passed by*"', v. 30 – and who called for '*mercy*', v.31. we read that 'Jesus stopped - stood', v.32 ('where the man was') – and that 'Jesus had *compassion*', v. 34. (We note that all 12 occurrences of the verb 'have compassion' in the Greek Bible are in the synoptic Gospels. Apart from the three occasions when it is found on the Lord's own lips (Matt. 18.27; Luke 10.33; Luke 15.20), it is only ever used concerning Jesus himself.) No – the Lord Jesus did not 'pass by' on other side as the multitude expected when they told the blind man to be quiet – and yet He had the greatest possible 'excuse' – He was striding to Jerusalem to save the world! Mark tells us that Jesus was pacing ahead of His disciples on the road – and that they were amazed and afraid as they followed – and that He told them of what awaited Him at Jerusalem, how He would be betrayed, condemned, scourged and killed. This was the reason he had come into the world. But though He is one the way to the cross, He stopped, had compassion and met the need. And to this extent at least, He was the Samaritan in His story!

