

United

Week 3 – October 25, 2020

Scripture: Luke 10:25-37, Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Leviticus 19:18

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: There are hundreds of phrases we use that are based on scripture, but probably the most popular is when someone is called a “Good Samaritan”. Share a Good Samaritan story (could be your own experience or one that you heard about).

Read Luke 10:25-37, Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18 together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read. You have likely heard this story before, but as you read it together, be open for the Holy Spirit to reveal new things to you.

Discuss the following context:

In this culture, it was normal for people to debate and ask one another questions. This is how the rabbinic teaching world worked and Jesus was part of this kind of teaching and dialogue. The expert in the law was testing Jesus, and Jesus almost always answered questions with another question or a story.

Share your thoughts about the following questions

1. In Luke 10:26-28 the expert in the law responds to Jesus by referencing laws from Deuteronomy and Leviticus, familiar passages in Jewish culture. The man could have left it with Jesus' answer, but why do you think he continues in verse 29 to ask “who is my neighbor?”
2. In Luke 10:30-35 Jesus responds to the question with a story involving a priest, a Levite and a Samaritan. The priest and Levite were religious leaders whose religious law deemed them “unclean” if they went near or touched a dead body. The Samaritan was viewed as the most hated enemy in Jewish culture, and the Jewish people felt justified for feeling this way.
 - a. Consider our modern religious/Christian culture and discuss who Jesus might name if telling this story today. Is there any person or people group we might feel justified in hating or viewing as the enemy?
 - b. The Samaritan sees the person in need and shows compassion and empathy. Empathy can be described as “choosing to understand that a person with different opinions and feelings than you is coming from a place in life that make their feelings and opinions valid to them even if you don't understand or share them”. Recent studies report levels of empathy decreased by up to 48% in school age and college age students over the past 30 years. Does this statistic surprise you? What might be contributing to this and do you have any ideas about how to address this issue?
3. Finally, in Luke 10:36-37 Jesus asks the man “who did the right thing?” which was a bit of a trick question because technically the priest and Levite tried to follow the law. But in the end, it is clear that the one who showed mercy did the right thing. The word mercy has its roots in a word that means “womb” where life, protection and growth can happen.
 - a. Discuss how you see the church creating a place of mercy for strangers. How might you see the church fall short of mercy in favor of religious laws?
 - b. Discuss the same for your personal life. How are you demonstrating mercy and where do you find yourself falling fall short of extending mercy?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God for his unending mercy towards each of you. Ask God to give you hearts that are open to extend empathy, compassion and mercy, not only to those you love, but to strangers and to your “enemies”.