

Text: The Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10

Sermon Sunday 27 April, 2014

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Helping Others

Jesus tells stories with a twist – they are intended to surprise or shock, to get underneath the blank stare, dead eyes, dulled ears and soft hands of the religious. In this story, the shocking thing is that it is the despised Samaritan who is the one who does something good, humane and moral, not the ones who would normally be expected to...the religious Priest and Levite. The question is, which one are we?

In this story, the Samaritan seems to have **THREE** important things that make the difference:

1. **Value System.** He appears to have a value system which he has decided upon in advance which says: I will help the stranger and the one in need when I see them.
My parents didn't inculcate this value in me. It wasn't that you didn't help, you just didn't go out of your way to do it. We knew our neighbours but never really interacted with them. We didn't often have people around for meals, it wasn't a value. So I have had to learn it latterly. What value system do you have, and what are you modelling for your children in terms of being neighbourly, helping others, hospitality?
2. **Strategy.** He was prepared: he had a first aid kit on his donkey! Do you have a First Aid Kit in your car in case you come across an accident? Following on from his value of helping, he had determined a means of doing it. Most of us, I regret to say, are not that intentional and we are not good neighbours by default. In other words, we haven't determined to be good neighbours. So it is easy to drive by and let someone else pick up the pieces because we aren't prepared.
3. **Boundary.** The Samaritan took him to an inn and took care of him – provided his needs and then left. Maybe it is extrapolating too far to say he set a boundary of care because he also gave the innkeeper his visa card... BUT – his helping came with insight and knowledge. He didn't rescue, he did care deliberately. We have numerous examples in scripture of the balances of helping and rescuing, of speaking truth and being loving. [Galatians 6](#) always impresses me with its seeming contrasting advice.

Verse 2: “Bear one another's burdens”. In the Greek, burdens are boulders / excessive weights; ones that need others to help with. But...

Verse 5: “Carry your own load”. Take pride in yourself. Don't expect others to do what you need to do for yourself, or don't do for others what they need to do for themselves.

Verse 7: People reap what they sow. But...

Verse 9: Let us not be weary in doing good – do good to all people.

We are responsible **TO** others, not **FOR** others.

I was never taught any wisdom about being a 'good' Christian. This creates a toxic spiritual environment. I felt overwhelmed by need, and gave up really trying to engage with it or what I could possibly do.

So what do you believe about helping/serving?

What are you teaching your children about helping?

We are not God. Yay! We can't fix everyone. We shouldn't rescue others from their own load and consequences of their choices. Love must grow up and become knowledgeable and insightful.

I can't be a neighbour to everyone but I must find the places where I can serve.

So, in conclusion, we have **FOUR** things to bear in mind:

- The command: Love your neighbour as yourself
- A Value System
- A Strategy
- Balance and Boundary

This provokes the question:

Am I really Christian without seriously putting my life and soul into loving my neighbour?

Let us love together, learning the values, building strategies with intention, integrity and insight, helping each other with teamwork.

My line in the sand is to help children in Burkina Faso by fundraising to build classrooms for their education.

It is one point in an ocean of need, but I feel the constraint to at least contribute here. Maybe you could join me in this venture and with thinking about the mission policy and actions of this church going forward.