

## Sermon

- Last week we looked at stewardship by considering the heart behind the miracles, the motivation behind the ministry or the framework upon which Jesus built His life and teachings.
- We looked at the story of Jesus healing multitudes and feeding 4000 + people. In this story we noticed that Jesus built his teachings and miracles on the foundation of compassion, which enabled Him to build a framework of being open, attentive and responsive to the needs of people, situation and opportunity around Him.
- He also was grateful for what He received, even though 7 fish and a few loaves was, old, stale and inadequate. And He used what He had to many the need around Him.
- Therefore, our call to be wise stewards of everything that God has placed within our care must flow out of our heart of compassion, and be open, attentive and responsive to the needs around us. Because not only are we to fully rely on Jesus, but we are to be like Him.
- This week we are building upon this teaching of open, attentive, compassionate and responsive stewardship by looking at another familiar story from the Gospels – quite possibly the most well-known of Jesus’ parables.

### The Parable of the Good Samaritan

*“<sup>25</sup> Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>26</sup> He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” <sup>27</sup> 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.” <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”*

*<sup>29</sup> But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?” <sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to*

an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' <sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" <sup>37</sup> He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."" (Luke 10:25-37)

- Luke is the only Gospel writer to include this parable, although there are similar questions/conversations recorded in other Gospels around the idea of 'how do I inherit eternal life'.
- This parable amplifies the second great commandment – love one another (v. 27).
- In this parable we recognize that love is not a sentimental feeling. Rather it is sacrificial action.
- It means interrupting my schedule, expending my money, risking my reputation, even for a stranger, so that they might experience abundant life.
- But it is not enough to just *know* the right thing to do; one must then *do* it. As Jesus teaches:

*"Everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!"* (Matthew 7:24-27)

James also says:

*"Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves."* (James 1:22)

- This parable invites the hearer to engage in a generous action as an expression of love.
- To love the neighbour as oneself does not mean to love the other as much as you love yourself – sometimes we think we have failed in loving our neighbour because we don't love them as much as we love our self.
- But it does mean to love the neighbour **in the way** you would love yourself.

- The call is to behave toward the other with the same consideration and concern that we naturally and properly under most circumstances show about our own welfare as Eph 5:29 states:

*“For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church”. (Ephesians 5:29)*

- There is key point to be taken here – just as our bodies need food, water, shelter, love, acceptance, kindness, opportunities to work and to rest, opportunities for education, growth and development, so does everyone else.
- Everyone deserves the same care and attention regardless of age, race, gender, religion etc.
- We are called to show the same care and concern for the welfare of others, as we do for our own welfare.
- In relation to stewardship – this is a big picture vision: that we who have the means and ability are called to make sure that others, who may not have the means and ability, are taken care of.
- Many hospitals have been built because of this parable.
- Many ministries have been developed, many acts of kindness have been inspired and implemented because of it.
- And if understood and practiced, will remove racial prejudice, national hatred and war, the class/cast system.
- **This is the fuel that drives our stewardship – when we are open, attentive, compassionate and responsive we give generously of our resources so that others can have, achieve and receive abundant life.**
- In this parable the priest and the Levite, for whatever reason were not open/approachable, they weren’t attentive to the hurt, pain or needs of a man lying by the road side, if they saw him, they certainly weren’t compassionate, and their response was to keep on walking, probably picked up the pace a little!

- But, the Samaritan, was open to the challenging situation, he was attentive to the man's pain, he showed compassion and he responded with generosity to help and to alleviate the man's suffering and pain.
- With the Samaritan, we were given a model of compassionate behaviour to imitate.
- With the priest and the Levite, we were warned against religious duty which doesn't necessarily make us loving.
- From the man in the ditch, we learn the lesson of our need to be willing to receive help.
- When have you been like the Samaritan – when have you through your compassion been a wise and generous steward of your time and resources and thus enabled someone else to experience abundant life...
- Take a moment to appreciate your ministry – it's okay to honour, celebrate and affirm the work of God in and through you. In a world where there is so much hatred, fear, depression, suffering, take a moment to celebrate the good!
- When have you been like the priest or Levite for whatever reason, too busy, ignorant, prejudice... this is an invitation for self-reflection, perhaps repentance and an opportunity for growth?
- When have you been like the man on the side of the road, feeling as though life has beat you up – maybe sickness, financial hardship, overwhelming demands, mental health concerns... people may know, but not really see, hear or understand. The reality is there may never be a Samaritan who comes your way for a very long time.
- Jesus knows, sees, hears and has walked across the divide to stoop down and meet with you, pick you up, attend to your wounds the oil of His Spirit and the wine of His blood, and has paid the price in full for your healing and restoration.
- He holds a broken and hurting world in the same way.
- Church, wise and generous stewardship flows freely and unreservedly through the one who has received the ministry of Jesus.
- The one who truly knows the gift of God in Christ, who has believed and received the wine of His blood, and the oil of His Spirit, is the one who gives freely, generously and unreservedly to others.
- The one who has experienced the open, attentive, compassionate, generous and responsive God is the one who is able to express this to others.

- The one who doesn't just hear the message of Christ, but obeys it, is the wise and generous steward.
- And giving becomes a joy, a delight, a privilege. Not an obligation or guilt trip or shame filled experience.
- Our stewardship flows out of our love for God and for our neighbour.
- Not a sentimental feeling of love. Rather the sacrificial action.
- It means we are willing to interrupt our schedule, expend our money, risk our reputation, even for a stranger, so that they might know abundant life.
- over a few weeks in September/October I will be on leave and I have invited several people to come and share with us about the ministry they are expressing in various aspects of the church.
- Not only is this an opportunity for us to hear and celebrate the good news story, but it will be an opportunity for us to support the ongoing ministry and mission of the wider church.
- An opportunity for us to exercise our compassion in being open, attentive and responsive as we generously give so that others might know abundant life.
- Church, let the heart and mind of Christ live in you again today, to heal, renew, restore, inspire and empower you to be like the Good Samaritan – and be a wise and generous steward of everything that God has given into your care.

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