

## OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

CLOTHED WITH COMPASSION

LUKE 10:25-37

MARCH 13-19, 2016



### MAIN POINT

Jesus defines our neighbor as anyone in need. This motivates us to be people who are clothed with compassion.

### THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. Have you ever had a great neighbor? What made him or her great to live near?
2. Describe a specific time someone went out of his or her way to help you, and what that act of compassion meant to you.

**Leader:** We are familiar with the phrase “a good Samaritan.” In fact, the biblical phrase has become so common in our society that on occasion we hear news reports that tell the story of a “good Samaritan” intervening to help someone in need. But the parable where this term originated teaches more than offering kindness to strangers—it expands our understanding of who our neighbor is and how Jesus defines compassion. The Bible defines our neighbor as anyone in need. That means everyone is our neighbor. As Christ followers, we are called to serve outside our comfort zone. This might mean serving our friends, our enemies, our city, our nation, or our world.

### DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 10:25-28.

3. Before Jesus told the parable of the good Samaritan, an expert in the law asked Jesus how one gains eternal life. At Jesus’ prompting, the man answered his own question by referring to the Great Commandment—love God and love your neighbor (v. 27). What does it look like in practical terms to love God with your heart, soul, strength, and mind?
4. On the other hand, what actions and attitudes make it evident that you love your neighbor as yourself, or complicate your efforts to do so?

**Leader:** During Jesus’ ministry in Galilee, He was faced with constant opposition from key religious leaders. In this passage, an expert in the law stood up and asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. But Jesus answered this man’s question with a question of His own: “What is written in the law?” The man replied by quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18. It is a perfect summary of the law’s moral demands. The commands

the expert quoted are found in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18—“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” On other occasions, Jesus quoted the same commandments and said they were the most important in all of the law (see Matthew 22:35-40 and Mark 12:28-31).

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 10:29-37.

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5. After answering the first question correctly, the man raised a second question: “And who is my neighbor?” (v. 29). What does this question tell us about the man’s heart? Why do you think the man wanted to “justify himself”?

6. Name some things that act as barriers keeping you from living the life of compassion Jesus calls you to. How are you getting in your own way?

**Leader:** No one other than Jesus has been successful at loving perfectly in every situation. Jesus was pointing out how far the man (and we) fall short of keeping the law. Eternal life comes from faith in Christ. Having answered the first question correctly, the man asks for clarification in regard to who his neighbor is. Obviously, some people are easy to love. Others are more challenging. It’s possible this man hoped that Jesus would justify his lack of love for certain types of neighbors. He also wanted to know what the minimum effort for pleasing God looks like, something we are all guilty of. To answer the man’s question, Jesus tells a parable.

7. What was the scope of the Samaritan’s sacrifice? What do his instructions to the innkeeper tell you about his compassion? How does Jesus’ parable motivate us to be compassionate?

8. What is the most challenging part of Jesus’ story to you? Why?

**Leader:** If we are honest, most of us probably think the Samaritans’ care for the stranger was excessive. After all, for whom have we gone to that extent of care? But the truth is, we do go to that extent of care for ourselves. Remember, Jesus said that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Loving one’s neighbor is an essential aspect of following Jesus. Our neighbors aren’t defined by societal standards, ethnicity, religion, or even if we like them or not. Jesus defines our neighbor as anyone in need. We love our neighbors by showing compassionate care for them.

## DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

9. If you have participated in some kind of mercy or compassion ministry to others, how did it help grow your love for God and others?

**10. What are some ways we can be involved in compassion ministry as a group? Come up with at least one specific way you can serve together in the coming weeks.**

**Leader:** The opportunities to put Jesus' teaching into action are limitless. Challenge them to come up with one way you will serve together soon. Here are a few ideas to talk through with your group:

- contribute to the needs of our church's refugee family
- volunteer at the Calgary Dream Centre, Okotoks Food Bank, Inn from the Cold, the Mustard Seed, or Southern Alberta Bible Camp
- donate to or volunteer with Samaritan's Purse
- commit to one of our a short-term mission trips

**11. The ultimate goal of compassion ministry is to show people the love of Christ. Can you think of someone who needs to feel the compassionate care of Jesus from you this week? As you continue to grow in your spiritual life, what needs to change for this to become an ongoing focus you have?**

**Leader:** Take a few moments to pray specifically for any individuals or needs that surfaced during your discussion time before your closing prayer.

### PRAYER

Give thanks to God for the instruction of His Word. Ask God to give each group member a heart that loves God and people above all things. Pray that God will guide group members to serve where He chooses to send them.

### MEMORIZE

<sup>36</sup> "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" <sup>37</sup> The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." Luke 10:36-37

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

LUKE 10:25-37.

10:25. Expert in the law refers to a scribe (11:45-46,52-53), many of whom were also Pharisees. The question asked was a standard one in Judaism and was intended to test Jesus. To inherit eternal life shows that many Jews thought their eternal destiny was based on their Jewish bloodline and their good deeds.

10:26-28. Jesus turned the tables on the scribe by asking him to answer his own question, then complimented the man on correctly citing Lv 19:18 and Dt 6:5. Jesus did not say that it is possible to earn eternal life by loving God and your neighbor. No human other than Jesus has been able to love perfectly in every situation. Since heart... soul, and mind are sometimes used interchangeably in Scripture, the terms here are not intended to speak of separate aspects of human existence. Rather, they describe the total person.

10:29. Having correctly answered the first question, this man asked for an important clarification. Certain kinds of neighbors are of course easy to love, while others, being argumentative or of different religious and moral persuasions, can be very hard to love. It seems that the man hoped Jesus would justify his bias against certain kinds of neighbors.

10:30-32. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho, a distance of 17 miles with a descent of more than 3,000 feet in elevation, was a dangerous route through desert country. It had many places where robbers could lie in wait. It is possible that the priest and the Levite... passed by on the other side of the road because they thought the wounded man was dead and they would become ritually unclean by touching him, but it is more likely that they were afraid of being attacked by the same robbers or simply did not want to be bothered with the inconvenience of helping the man.

10:33-35. The Jews considered the Samaritans to be physical half-breeds who had intermarried with foreigners and who were guilty of false worship. For such a sworn enemy of the Jews to show compassion on an injured Jew and pay the expenses of his recuperation, while two Jewish religious officials did not, would deeply humiliate a Jew.

10:36-37. Now Jesus got back to the question with which this story began: Who is my neighbor? (see note at v. 29). His point was that the Samaritan proved he was a good neighbor by his gracious actions toward the man who had been attacked by robbers. It was impossible for the scribe to avoid acknowledging that it was the Samaritan who showed mercy. Jesus' reply to go and do the same emphasized that Jews should love their Samaritan neighbors even as the good Samaritan in the story had acted in love toward a Jew.