



## Luke 9:51-10:37 - Love your Neighbourhood Study

### Personal Preparation 1 - No Love Lost

A theme running throughout Luke's gospel is a 'turning over' of the assumptions that the Jewish religious establishment had towards those on the outside - those who were thought to be far away from God. These were the "sinners" like the tax collectors and prostitutes. The unclean lepers and the poor were not thought of very highly either. Add to this list also... the Samaritans. Let's learn about this special class of people within Israel and what the Jews thought of them.

#### Read Luke 9:51-56

1. What sort of reception do the Samaritans give the messengers sent from Jesus? 9v52-53
2. What is the response from Jesus' disciples – James and John? v54
3. Does this response seem 'proportional' to the response that the Samaritans gave them? What does this suggest?
4. **Read 2 Kings 1:1-17** about what happens to a King of Samaria at the time of the Israelite prophet Elijah. How might the events of 2 Kings, shaped the thinking of the disciples?
5. What is Jesus' reaction to his disciples' request?

Here is some background that will help you understand the disciple's response to the Samaritans. Samaria, the northern part of the nation of Israel was captured by the Assyrians in around 722BC. The King of Assyria deported large numbers of the Jews but also brought in all sorts of people from the Assyrian empire. As a result of this intermingling of peoples, a 'hybrid' religion developed, part Jewish, part whatever the newcomers brought with them. In time, a couple of features set the Samaritans apart from the Jews 1) they based their faith only the first 5 books of the Scriptures; and 2) they rejected the Jerusalem temple and built their own temple on Mount Gerizim. Over the centuries, a great deal of hostility arose between them and the Jews.

**For Today:** It's worth noting that while the disciples were very eager to judge, Jesus wanted to show mercy. Do you think of God as wanting to show mercy? For all those who are followers of Jesus, this same mercy has been given to us.

thoughts. questions. insights.

## Personal Preparation 2 - Loveless Israel

In the last Personal Preparation questions, we learnt about Samaritans and the way Jews viewed them. For Jews, Samaritans were despicable people – those who abandoned God and his proper laws. But has Israel done any better themselves?

### Read Luke 10:25-37

1. Who comes up to Jesus and asks a question? What is he qualified in?
2. What is his question and what is the correct answer that Jesus directs him to?

The expert in the law answers his own question. And he quotes the words of Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. The Deuteronomy phrase was known as the 'Shema' and it was a very important phrase for devout Jews who recited it regularly. These instructions were part of the law given to Israel. The Leviticus passage was given to Israel as they were on their way to the promised land. The Deuteronomy passage was given to Israel when for a 2<sup>nd</sup> time the nation was about to attempt to enter the promised land.

3. When you read again the words that the expert in the law quotes, do they seem like instructions that are easy to obey?

4. Think back to as much as you know about the history of Israel – how do you think they went at obeying Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18?

It's worth noting that in Deuteronomy 30, God acknowledges even before it all happens, that Israel will fail in its role to love God and love each other wholeheartedly. They will turn their hearts away from God, and it will be up to God himself to transform them so that they can love him as they should. **Read Deuteronomy 30:1-6.**

**For Today:** From the standpoint of Deuteronomy – the future looks both bleak and hopeful for Israel. How does God restore hope for Israel and provide them with a transformed heart? What promises are we given as followers of Jesus that God transforms us?

thoughts. questions. insights.

## Growth Group Discussion Questions - Love Your Neighbourhood

Throughout this year at church we've had the theme, 'Love Your Neighbourhood'. It's a theme in which we've been encouraged to grow authentic relationships with those in our neighbourhood. We've had events where we can take steps to grow those relationships, like 'Serve Your Street' in April and 'Take a Cake' in June. This Sunday we have our 'Love Your Neighbourhood' Service which is there for you to take the next step and invite your neighbours to church. On the Sunday we'll look at Luke 10:25-37. It's a story of Jesus in which he tells us about someone who loves his neighbour wholeheartedly, and this someone....is a Samaritan.

### Read Luke 10:25-37

1. What were the issues raised, questions posed, and new insights you had as you prepared this week?
  
2. Given what we've discovered in Personal Preparation, should the man's answer (v27) to his own question about how to inherit eternal life– be a hopeful or despairing thing for Israel?
  
3. What is the expert in the law's next question and why do you think he asks it?
  
4. Turn to someone else in the group and retell the story. The other person can check to see how accurately they get it. Particularly aim to get the 3 different main characters in the story correct.
  
5. In the story – who is the religious establishment and who is the outsider and what is the surprising thing that happens in the story?
  
6. How would you describe the sort of care and love the Samaritan gives to the bloodied and beaten Jewish man?
  
7. How is this story a challenge to the law expert's question in v29?
  
8. As you think about the history of Israel (see Personal Preparation for this week) has the nation of Israel consistently shown love and service like this Samaritan man? What light does this put Israel in?
  
9. How did Jesus himself taken on the example of the Samaritan's love and service?

As Christians, we can take up the example of the Good Samaritan, only because Jesus first took up that example fully and completely for us. Jesus gave his whole life for us – to bring cleansing and forgiveness.

It is through Jesus and the Spirit that he sends that we have a transformed heart – able to love God and love each other. Another Old Testament passage says “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws” (Ezekiel 36:26-27). This is what God does for all those who are followers of Jesus.

10. As you look to your neighbourhood, your workplace, or your own family – are there ways that you have put a dividing line in place and decided that your love will only go so far?

11. How are you challenged by Jesus’ story of the Samaritan, and Jesus himself?

## pray.

- Give thanks that Jesus is the greatest example of love and service.
- That we would not let any dividing walls stand in the way of loving others.
- Give thanks that through the work of Jesus and His Spirit - he transforms us.

## remember.

- Love Your Neighbourhood service, this Sunday.  
Invite your neighbours!

