

*Sunday, June 14, 2020*

## **Bible Study — Luke 10:25-37** **The Character of Christ [pt. 5]: KINDNESS**

In Galatians 5:22, Paul tells us that an aspect of the Fruit of the Spirit (the Character of Christ) is ‘kindness’. In Greek, this word is *‘chrestotes’*. *Chrestotes* is firstly an attribute of God often praised by the Israelites as God’s benevolence, mercy, and loving-kindness. Paul uses this word to describe not only the Fruit of the Spirit, but also the virtue of the apostles (*2 Corinthians 6:6*), and of all Christians (*Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:12*). This word means not only ‘to be kind’, but also ‘to be helpful’ and ‘to be of service’. We are called to this way of living, because this Way is the very way of our Lord and God.

The parable of the Good Samaritan (*Luke 10:25-37*) gives us a picture of three ways of living, though truly only the third way actually leads to life and aptly demonstrates the type of kindness described by *chrestotes*. **READ Luke 10:25-37.**

**The first way can be summed up as ‘What’s Yours is Mine’.** This attitude toward life is portrayed in the actions of the robbers. Obviously, the way of the thief and robber is not the way of Jesus. **The second way, portrayed by the actions of the priest and Levite, is ‘What’s Mine is Mine’.** The actions and attitudes of the Levite and the priest say, “What’s mine is mine — and I’ll keep it.”

Jesus hit this particular way of living hard when he told the story of the rich man and Lazarus (*Luke 16:19-31*). The rich man wasn’t particularly cruel to Lazarus as he begged at his gate. He didn’t whip him or beat him or even drive him away. He simply shrugged his shoulders and said, “He needs help, but he won’t get it from me. What’s mine is mine, and I’ll keep it.” It’s the same story played out again and again in other parables and encounters of Jesus (*Matthew 19:16-30; Luke 12:13-21; see also 1 Timothy 6:6-7*). Neither lead to life because neither exhibit that Christ-like character of kindness (*chrestotes*).

I wonder if we ever hold on too tightly to the gifts God has given us. He gives us so many things and then asks us to give some of it back to Him in the only way we truly can — by helping someone else who needs it.

In telling his story, Jesus is trying to tell us that we all, everyone of us, walk the same ‘Jericho Road’. On another occasion Jesus sat down and taught about the principles of the kingdom and the true life that is blessed. We can find these principles distilled in the Beatitudes. Matthew gives us nine of them (*Matthew*

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5:1-12). Luke gives us four, followed by four woes representing the opposite of the blessed life (*Luke 6:20-26*).

The Greek word for “blessed” found in each of these passages can mean simply “happy”. Happy is the one who does these things. The English word for ‘Happy’ gives itself away. “Hap” comes from the root word for occasion or circumstance, and therefore, ‘happiness’ is determined by our circumstances.

Jesus taught in Aramaic, which is a cousin to Hebrew. The Hebrew word from the Old Testament and the Aramaic cognate that Jesus uses is ‘*ashar*’. *Ashar* means more than simply “happy.” It conveys the meaning that one is blessed and happy, and that they should be congratulated, because they have found the right pathway in the face of false pathways.

In Jesus’ story, it means finding the right way to live in the face of so many false alternatives. So Jesus is telling us that while we walk the ‘Jericho Road’, that we will be on the right pathway when we derive the meaning of our life and the pattern of our living from the character of Christ and from His will. In the Beatitudes, Jesus is not telling us that he wishes poverty on anyone. No, those who follow Christ should always be about the work of solving the many causes of poverty and alleviating the pain and loss associated with it.

When Jesus speaks of the poor as opposed to the rich, He is saying that those who have chosen to follow him...even so far as to be cast out, reviled, and slandered... even so far as to weep due to hardships...even so far as to be hungry, and thirsty, and poor, that they are blessed, happy, and should be congratulated. Not happy and blessed in the sense that their circumstances set them to singing, but blessed in the sense that in following Jesus, even into poverty, that they have found the right path. The path that Jesus also walks.

**Oh, this third way of living is a beautiful one, and is truly a way of life.** It is displayed by the actions and the attitude of the Samaritan in Jesus’ story. He sees the way-laid traveler in a pile of misery and he says, **“What’s mine is yours!”** “Anything you need. My animal to carry you, my wine and oil, my time and care, my compassion and sympathy and even my money to meet your expenses in town — all of these are mine, but I give them to you because you need them.”

This way of living is at the very heart of the gospel. When God sent Jesus down into this wicked world, his actions said, “This is my beloved Son, and I give Him to you because you need Him. You are like sheep gone astray; you have sinned

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and have nothing with which to make atonement. So, I give Him to you that you may not have to suffer the penalty of your own sins. I give Him to you that your sins would be forgiven; that we would walk together again. I give Him to you that you may ask anything in His name and receive it. **What's mine is yours, because you need it.**"

And Jesus ends His story by saying, "You go, and do likewise" (v. 37).

**May our Lord be with you. May you experience His *chrestotes*. And may you go, and do likewise.**

### **Character of Christ [pt. 5]: Kindness Questions for Further Reflection**

#### **Luke 10:25-37**

As Jesus begins to tell the story, who is testing whom? Why do you think Jesus answers the lawyer with a story instead of a direct answer?

In Jesus' parable, why do you think the priest and Levite refuse to stop and help the victim of robbery? How might the actions of the priest and the Levite be justified (see *Leviticus 21:1-3; Numbers 19:11-22*)?

Given the division and hostility between Jews and Samaritans (see *John 4*), what unusual plot twist does Jesus use in His story (v. 33)? Why did the Samaritan stop and help the man even though the Jews despised his people as racial and spiritual half-breeds? What point is Jesus making with His story?

Of all of the people in this story and the characters in this parable, with whom do you identify the most? Is there an attitude or behavior that God wants you to exhibit that is difficult to accept?

How does this parable answer the following: How should I spend my life? In whom should I invest my energy? What kind of risks should I take? Like the Samaritan in Jesus' parable, what risky thing may God be calling you to do? What would be the costs doing it?

What makes a 'Good Samaritan' really *good*? Have there been any 'Good Samaritans' in your life? After reading this parable, whom would you say is your 'neighbor'? Is there someone in your life to whom you will be a 'Good Samaritan' this week?