

Week 12

Bible Passage

Luke 10:25–42 (Lent 1)



Sneak Peek

Jesus taught a lawyer what it truly means to be a neighbor, and he taught Martha the importance of being in his presence.

Stop, Look, and Listen

Desired Outcomes

1. To share the Parable of the Good Samaritan and the story of Jesus' visit with Martha and Mary.
2. To consider the motives of the various characters in the text.
3. To wrestle with what it means to be a neighbor and to be in the presence of Jesus.

Session Key Verse

[Jesus asked,] "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" [The lawyer] said, "The one who showed him mercy."—Luke 10:36–37a

Optional Materials

- Internet access
- Means to show the VeggieTales video "Are You My Neighbor?"
- For free digital resources to enhance this lesson, go to <https://www.warnerpress.org/life-mosaic-resources>.

1 Get Acquainted

Welcome one another to your gathering and offer introductions if anyone is new to the group.

Today is the first Sunday in Lent. Some people observe the period of Lent by giving something up—meat, sweets, soda, or something else. This act of sacrifice is done to help them connect with the much more significant sacrifice Christ made when he went to the cross on our behalf. Others *add* things to their lives during Lent, such as service or intentional encouragement, in order to cultivate a different mindset during this holy season of preparation.

- Have you ever abstained from something or participated in something “extra” during Lent? If so, what did you do?
- Do you intend to observe a Lenten practice this year? If so, what will it be?
- If you are participating in a Lenten practice, why have you chosen to do so? Why did you select this particular observance?

Today’s study will begin to follow Jesus on his journey to the cross.



2 Discover



Read and discuss [Luke 10:25–42](#). The commentary sections can be used to generate dialogue, or for study prior to your meeting.

Luke 10:25–28

Commentary

In this story, there is no need to assign the lawyer an adversarial role. In fact, the text suggests otherwise. He called Jesus “Teacher,” respectfully. Jesus engaged him as an equal, responding to the lawyer’s first question

with a question and then agreeing with the answer. This is an important observation, because many interpretations read this well-known episode, recorded only in Luke, presuming a contentious relationship between Jesus and the lawyer. But Jesus did not dismiss the Law or its teachers. When there were controversies over the Law, Jesus argued within the rubrics of legal debate, not against it.¹

Questions

- **What question “kicked off” this discussion? Why would Jesus answer such a question?**
- **A good portion of the Old Testament is devoted to the Law. In your opinion, how does the lawyer’s answer stand up as a summary of the whole? Why?**

Luke 10:29–37

Commentary

The lawyer followed up with a second question. If loving God and loving neighbor as oneself is a matter of eternal life, then defining *neighbor* is important in this context. Jesus’ response was to tell a story, illustrating that our neighbor is the one we least expect to be a neighbor. The neighbor is the “other,” the one most despised or feared or not like us. Jesus shifted the question from the one the lawyer asked—Who is my neighbor?—to ask what a righteous neighbor does.

How a listener enters this story affects how one experiences its meaning. If we take the role of observer, then we most likely see the drama at the expense of supposed legalistic priests and Levites who, like the lawyer, despised the Samaritan. We might identify with the priest and Levite and consider our own tendencies to allow categories of race or class or religion to define “otherness” rather than humanness. We might identify with the Samaritan through showing compassion to the “other.” We might also enter the story in the place of the half-dead person lying by the road. In this role,

1. Adapted from “Commentary on Luke 10:25–37,” accessed August 9, 2016, https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=635.

we are the recipients of life-saving compassion by an “other” rather than choosing whether or not to be a neighbor without regard to otherness. When we receive life-saving mercy, “otherness” ceases and we experience instead our common humanity.²

Questions

- What was the purpose of the follow-up question from the lawyer? Why do you think Jesus answered with a story?
- What might be significant about the route of travel mentioned in the story?
- Why would the priest pass by? What cultural pieces might have influenced his decision? What about the Levite?
- Who were the Samaritans? Why would Jesus highlight them as the heroes of the story?
- How was the Samaritan able to care for the man on-site?
- What can we presume about the Samaritan from his actions? Why would the innkeeper do what the Samaritan asked of him?
- When the lawyer received the final answer to his question, do you think it was the answer he was expecting? Why or why not?

Luke 10:38–42

Commentary

Those who read this story may cheer for Mary in her inversion of traditional roles or empathize with Martha’s resentment of her sister for leaving her to do all the work. The problem with Martha was not her serving, but rather that she was worried and distracted. The word translated “distracted” in verse 40, *periespato*, has the connotation of being pulled or dragged in different directions.

Martha’s distraction and worry left no room for the most important aspect of hospitality—gracious attention to the guest. She was prevented from being truly present with Jesus. There is no greater hospitality than listening to your guest. How much more so when the guest is Jesus!

2. Ibid.

Jesus' words to Martha may be seen as an invitation rather than a rebuke. The one thing needed was for Martha to receive the gracious presence of Jesus, to listen to his words, to know that she was valued not for what she did or how well she did it, but for who she was as a child of God.³

Questions

- What are the differences noted between Mary and Martha?
- Which sister do you identify with? Why?
- Why was Martha angry? Why did Jesus esteem Mary's choice more than Martha's in this moment?

3 Experience



Option 1

As a group, act out the story of the Good Samaritan. Consider these questions as you prepare for your character:

- Injured man—**What are the acknowledged dangers of his chosen route? What can we guess about this man?**
- Priest and Levite—**Why might they not stop?** Articulate what each might be thinking. **What are the risks in stopping? Does he walk away proudly because he is maintaining his purity? Does he walk away as if he is afraid of the same fate? Does he walk away as if he is ashamed of his choice?**
- Samaritan—**How does he approach the injured man? Does he hesitate? Does he check the scene for danger? Does he speak to the injured man?**
- Innkeeper—**How does he greet the Samaritan? Why would he take responsibility for the injured man for an extended time?**



3. Adapted from "Commentary on Luke 10:38–42," accessed August 9, 2016, http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1723.

Option 2

Compare and contrast Mary and Martha. **Why was Martha so busy? What can we assume about Martha's place in the household? What do you notice about Mary? Where would we expect Mary to be, considering what we know about the culture of the time? What were Jesus' expectations of this household? What were Jesus' priorities?**

4 Apply



Our “neighbor” matters because the Bible says—and Jesus affirmed here—that in order to inherit eternal life we must love God *and* love our neighbors as we do ourselves.

Respond to the following questions, then pair up with a partner to discuss what you have written:

What does it mean to love someone as you love yourself? What sorts of things would you do if you loved your neighbor as you love yourself? What do you do if you aren't so sure you love yourself in the first place?

Who are the “easy” neighbors to love? Who are our neighbors in this church? in this community? in our country? in the world?

This story defines a neighbor as one who shows mercy. **What does “showing mercy” look like in everyday encounters? Is this the *only* description of being a neighbor or just an example? If just an example, what are some other ways to be a “neighbor” that are consistent with what Jesus illustrated in this parable?**



Where is it hard to be the sort of neighbor God wants us to be? What can we do about that?

5 Conclude



In life, friendship and romantic love are based on our preference for the company of one person over another. But the kind of love Jesus taught does not concern itself with preference. This love (*agape* in Greek) is concerned with the well-being of others—whomever those others might be. If you want to know who your neighbor is, you need look no further than the face of the first person you encounter.

If possible, watch together “The Story of Flibber-o-Loo,” from the VeggieTales movie *Are You My Neighbor?* It’s a clever re-telling of the story of the Good Samaritan. **As you watch, what do you notice about the video compared to the parable in today’s passage?**

Regardless of whether you watch the video, spend time together in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to show you where you can invest your gifts in being a good neighbor to others. Write down one thing you can do this week to better show love to someone in your sphere of influence even as you personally enjoy the love you receive from being with Jesus. **Will it be easy or difficult? practical or extravagant? What difference do you hope it will make for the other person? What difference do you hope it will make for you?**

Daily Bible Readings Week 12	<i>Sunday</i> Luke 10:25–42 <i>Stop, Look, and Listen</i>	<i>Monday</i> Luke 11:1–13 <i>Prayer and Persistence</i>	<i>Tuesday</i> Luke 11:27–36 <i>Pharisees and Lawyers</i>
	<i>Wednesday</i> Luke 12:1–21 <i>Parable of the Rich Fool</i>	<i>Thursday</i> Luke 12:22–34 <i>Do Not Worry</i>	<i>Friday</i> Luke 12:35–48 <i>Be Alert</i>
			<i>Saturday</i> Luke 12:49–59 <i>Jesus the Cause of Division</i>