

KINGDOM.

LESSON 19

1	PRAYER
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Group leader. Pray for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Commit your group and this lesson about preaching God's kingdom to the Lord.

2	SHARING (20 minutes) [QUIET TIMES] PSALM 16, 18, 19 and 22
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Take turns and share (or read from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times with God out of the assigned Bible passages (Psalm 16, 18, 19 and 22).

Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

3	MEMORISATION (5 minutes) [KEY VERSES IN ROMANS] (6) ROMANS 4:5
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Review two by two.

(6) Romans 4:5. However to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited (imputed, ascribed, reckoned) as righteousness.

4	TEACHING (85 minutes) [THE PARABLES OF JESUS] THE GOOD SAMARITAN
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**The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:29-37 is a parable about
OUTGOING LOVE IN GOD'S KINGDOM.**

"A parable" is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. It is a true-to-life story or illustration designed to teach a spiritual truth. Jesus used the commonplace and the events of everyday to illumine the mysteries of the kingdom of God and to confront people with the reality of their situation and their need for renewal. We will study this parable by using the six guidelines for studying parables (See manual 9, supplement 1).

Read Luke 10: 25-37.

1. Understand the natural story of the parable.

Introduce. The parable is told in figurative language and the spiritual meaning of the parable is based on that. Therefore we will first study the words and the cultural and historical facts of the background of the story.

Discuss. What are the true-to-life elements of the story?

Notes.

The road between Jerusalem and Jericho. Jerusalem lies on the top of mountains, while Jericho lies in a deep valley at a distance of about 27 kilometres from Jerusalem and about 1 200 meters below Jerusalem. The road between these two cities was rough and very lonely. Moreover robbers and criminals hid in the caves in that mountainous region. It was known as a dangerous road.

The man travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho. This man was a Jew; otherwise Jesus would have said so. Robbers attacked him, stripped him of his possessions, beat him half-dead and left him lying on the road.

The priest and the Levite. Many priestly families lived in Jericho and therefore often travelled the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. This priest was walking downward, thus probably going home after he had finished his priestly duties in Jerusalem. He saw the man lying on the road, but passed by. He did not want to get involved. Jesus does not tell us why. He could have made several excuses, like, "He is not one of us (a priest)!" or "I may get contaminated by contact with such a ceremonial unclean man!" Nevertheless, he had no excuse for not getting involved, because the Old Testament law clearly commands people to show mercy to strangers and even to enemies (Leviticus 19:34; Exodus 23:4-5; 2 Kings 6:8-23)!

The Levite, whose duty was to help the priests in their functions at the temple, also passed by without showing any mercy. Also he had no excuse for neglecting his real duty, which was to show mercy to this helpless man.

The Samaritan. The Samaritans and Jews were enemies and hated one another (John 4:9; 8:48; Luke 9:51-56). One would not expect a Samaritan to show mercy to a Jew. But that is exactly what happened! When the Samaritan saw the Jew lying on the road, he took pity on him. He washed the man's wounds with wine, which functioned as an antiseptic

(1 Timothy 5:23), and then he poured oil on them as a kind of salve that soothed the pain (Isaiah 1:6). He put the man on his donkey and probably walked by the side of the donkey, giving support to the tragic figure on the way to the inn. At the inn, he did not regard his duty as finished, but personally took care of the man throughout the night. Also during the next day, he did not regard his duty as finished, but paid the innkeeper money that would take care of the man for a couple of days. He even promised to reimburse all extra expenses made!

2. Examine the immediate context and determine the elements of the parable.

Introduce. The context of “the story” of the parable may consist of “the setting” and “the explanation or application” of the parable. The setting of the parable may state the *occasion* for telling the parable, or describe *the circumstances* at the time of telling the parable. The setting is usually found *before* the story of the parable and the explanation or application is usually found *after* the story of the parable.

Discover and discuss. What is the setting, the story and the explanation or application of this parable?

Notes.

(1) The setting of the parable is contained in Luke 10:25-29.

The question about how to inherit eternal life. An expert in the Old Testament law attempted to embarrass Jesus. He tried to show everybody that Jesus could not give good answers to difficult questions! His question is the most serious question any person could ask, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” The expert in the law himself believed that the correct answer was: “In order to inherit eternal life, one must keep the whole law.”

Instead of answering him, Jesus asked a counter-question, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” Thus, Jesus turned the tables on him and forced him to give an answer to his own question. In doing this, Jesus also showed everybody that he was not teaching a new doctrine, but that he strictly adhered to the principles of God’s holy law (the revelation in the Bible)!

The answer in the Bible (law) is to exercise perfect love towards God and the neighbour. The learned man’s answer was a correct restatement of Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. These passages imply that the very essence of all true religion is outgoing love towards both God and the neighbour! Love towards God must be wholehearted and with all one’s faculties. And love towards one’s neighbour must not be less in extent than or inferior in quality to the love for oneself (Mark 12:30-31)! Jesus then said to him, “Do this and you will live!” Jesus meant, “If you obey this law perfectly, that is, if you love God and the neighbour *perfectly*, you will inherit eternal life.”

The trouble is not with the divine principle that perfect obedience results in everlasting life (Leviticus 18:5; Galatians 3:12), or that perfect love results in inheriting eternal life. The real problem is that, besides Jesus, there is not a single person in history who can obey perfectly or love perfectly! The problem with this expert in the law was that he still thought that he could *merit* eternal life by his very *imperfect* obedience of the law! He did not realise at all that he was “unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin” (Romans 7:14)! He did not believe that “there is no one righteous, not even one” (Romans 3:10)! If only he would have acknowledged his sins and utterly sinful nature and cried out, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner” (Luke 18:13)! Then Jesus could have invited him to believe in the gospel (Matthew 11:28). The problem with this learned man was that he highly over-estimated himself and wanted to justify himself before the eyes of all the onlookers.

The question about who is my neighbour. There was a wide variety of opinion among the Jews about the question, “Who is my neighbour?” There were people who perverted God’s command into meaning, “You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemies.” Jesus refuted this interpretation in Matthew 5:43-48.

A widely accepted view seems to have been, “Love your neighbour, the Israelite”, that is, “love only people of your own nation and culture”.

And the Pharisees narrowed this down even more to, “Love your neighbour, the Pharisee”, that is, “love only the members of your own group or party”¹. They looked down on all other people and pronounced a curse on the ordinary people, who in their opinion did not keep the law (John 7:49). The Jewish community at Qumran declared that anyone who did not belong to their little group at Qumran was “a son of darkness” and should be hated.

Thus, by his question, “Who is my neighbour?” this expert in the law tried to quieten his own conscience and also to embarrass Jesus in front of all the people.

In answer to this question, Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan.

(2) The story of the parable is contained in Luke 10:30-35.

(3) The explanation or application of the parable is contained in Luke 10:36-37.

3. Identify the relevant and irrelevant details of the parable.

Introduce. Jesus did not intend every detail in the story of the parable to have some spiritual significance. The relevant details are those details in the story of the parable that reinforce the central point or main theme or lesson of the parable. Therefore, we should not ascribe independent spiritual significance to every detail of the story of the parable.

¹ Or own church denomination

Discover and discuss. Which of the details in the story of this parable are really essential or relevant?

Notes.

(1) Treating a parable as an allegory (allegorising).

The following four Christians wrote very good things, but they treated this parable as an “allegory”, giving specific meanings to the various details, which cannot be deduced from the context or the story. Consequently, we must reject their interpretations of this parable:

A church father, called Irenaeus (130-200) interpreted the parable as representing the relationship between man and God. “Man” had fallen among thieves, but “God” had compassion on him and bound up his wounds. The “two royal coins” represent the image of God the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit in believers, so that they may make everything that had been entrusted to them fruitful.

The church father, called Augustine (354-430) interpreted the parable in more details as representing the relationship between man and God. “The man” who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho represents Adam, who symbolises the human race. “Jerusalem” is the heavenly city from which he has fallen. “Jericho” signifies our human mortality. “The robbers” represent the devil and his angels, who deprive man of his immortality. “The wounds” which they inflict represent the sins, which are to be forgiven. The man is left “half-dead”, which implies that while his spirit or soul is alive, the part of man corrupted by sin is dead. “The priest and the Levite” stand for the Old Testament, whose people could not reach salvation. “The Samaritan” (the word means “keeper” or “guardian”) symbolises Jesus Christ. His “binding up” of the man’s wounds means that he removes sin. “The oil” is the consolation of good hope, while “the wine” is the exhortation to action of a fervent spirit. “The donkey” on which the man is carried to the inn represents the human nature of Jesus Christ in which he came to us. “To be seated on the donkey” means to believe in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. “The inn” represents the Church, where travellers rest on their pilgrimage as they return to their homeland, the heavenly Jerusalem. Man is still in the process of being brought to the inn, because he is still in the process of being healed. “The initial application of wine and oil”, which was poured out along the road, represents baptism, and intends to strengthen the victim. “The next day”, when the Samaritan gave the innkeeper two silver coins stands for the time after Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. “The two silver coins” may be understood as either the two commands to love God and the neighbour or as the promise of life in the present and in the future. The “promise of the Samaritan to return” relates to the promise of Jesus in Matthew 19:29 to return with a reward. “The innkeeper is believed to be the apostle Paul.

The great church reformer, called Martin Luther (1483-1546) interpreted this parable as follows: “The man” represents Adam, who fell into sin and implanted sin in all of us. “The Samaritan” represents Jesus Christ, who saves us, carries us into “the inn”, which represents the Church, and is now healing us.

However, in another place, Luther applies this parable correctly when he says, “When one sees his neighbour in need and in dire danger, he should not pass by like the priest and the Levite did and let him lie there to perish. Under the pretence of keeping the Sabbath pure, one can become a murderer of his brother.”

Richard C. Trench (1807-1886) interpreted this parable as follows: “The inn” is a figure of the Church, the place of the healing of souls. “The two silver coins” stand for all the gifts and graces, which Jesus Christ left with his Church, so that it may keep house for him until he returns. They stand for example for the two sacraments, the Word and the sacraments, the two Testaments in the Bible, and the powers of healing and forgiveness of sins.

(2) The following details are really essential or relevant.

Jesus Christ himself applies the parable as representing what kind of Saviour he himself is and what kind of people he wants us to be. He does not give to any of the details in this parable any particular meaning. Therefore we should not treat this parable as an allegory and give every detail a specific meaning (as the above mentioned four people did). The parable does not tell God’s salvation history, that is, the relationship of God with man throughout the centuries. Rather, it teaches us God’s will with regard to the needy people, which he places on our way. Jesus used the story to show the expert in the law and us, who is really “the neighbour” to the man in need. And the expert in the law answered correctly when he said that the neighbour was “the one who had mercy.”

A Christian should not look around and ask himself, “Who is my neighbour? (Who is a neighbour to me?)” This question puts the Christian in the centre. He should put the man in need in the centre and ask himself: “To whom am I a neighbour?” Every person, whom God puts on your way, can be the person to whom you should be a neighbour. “To which needy person in need am I being a neighbour?”

4. Identify the main message of the parable.

Introduce. The main message (the central theme) of the parable is found either in the explanation or application or from the story itself. From the way Jesus Christ himself explained or applied the parables, we know how we should interpret parables. *A parable normally has only one main lesson, one central point to make.* Therefore, we should not try to find a spiritual truth in every detail of the story, but instead look for the one main lesson.

Discuss. What is the main message of this parable?

Notes.

The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:29-37 teaches about “outgoing love in God’s kingdom.”

The main message of this parable is the following. “I am a neighbour when I show outgoing love, that is, when I show mercy and take care of a needy person whom God in a sovereign way places on my path.” The main point is Jesus’ answer to the question, “Who is my neighbour?” In his answer, Jesus turns the question around: He does not ask, “Who is my neighbour?” but “To whom am I a neighbour?” or “When am I a neighbour to someone?” When you show mercy to a person whom God places in your way, then you are a neighbour to that person!

Jesus is not anti-clerical. His intention was not to speak against the offices of priest and Levite, but to show that the lack of love and mercy touches everyone, even if he is a priest or Levite. And he teaches that everyone, even if he is a despised Samaritan, must show outgoing love or mercy to every other needy person whom God places in his path! Jesus protests against the notion that a neighbour is limited to people in your own country or culture or to the members of your party or friends in your circle (Leviticus 19:34; Matthew 5:43-47).

Outgoing love as for example showing mercy to needy people is one of the fundamental characteristics of God’s kingdom! Because of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, every believer has received eternal life as a free gift. God therefore expects that believers show their gratefulness to him by living a life characterised by love for God and their neighbour. The genuine people of God’s kingdom live to the glory of God. Although they cannot love God and the neighbour *perfectly* as long as they live on this present earth, yet in principle they *will begin to live* their daily lives in accordance with the law of love (and mercy). The law of love has never been abrogated (abolished) (Romans 13:8-10; 1 Corinthians 9:21; 13:13; Galatians 6:2; James 2:8).

5. Compare the parable with parallel and contrasting passages in the Bible.

Introduce. Some parables are similar to one another and can be compared. However, the truth in all the parables has parallel or contrasting truth taught in other passages of the Bible. Try to find the most important cross-references that help us to interpret the parable. Always check the interpretation of a parable with the direct clear teaching of the Bible.

Read Galatians 2:16; 3:6-9,12-14;

Discover and discuss. Does Jesus answer the original question of the expert, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Notes.

Galatians 3:12. “The man who does these things (that is, the commandments of the law), will live by them.” This means that *if* a person could love God *perfectly*, he could inherit everlasting life.

Galatians 2:16. However, “By observing the law no one will be justified.” No one in the history of the world, except the Lord Jesus Christ, loves God and people *perfectly*! No one except Jesus Christ was a perfect neighbour! Such perfection of love for God and the neighbour is completely impossible for sinful people on this earth (Romans 3:10-12,23)!

Galatians 3:13. “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.” Although not a single person in the history of this world could fulfil the demands of God’s law, Jesus Christ did. He was perfectly obedient and upheld God’s law perfectly (Hebrews 5:8-9). By his life of perfect obedience and by his sacrifice of atonement on the cross as a substitution, Jesus Christ has done *for us and in our place* what we ourselves could never have done (Romans 8:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

Galatians 3:6-9. Therefore, everyone who *believes* in Jesus Christ *is regarded and treated* by God as completely righteous (John 3:16,36; Romans 5:1).

That is why we Christians always sincerely confess that it is forever impossible for any person by his own action to fulfil the demands of God’s law. By God’s grace and the work of the Holy Spirit in us, we place our trust in Jesus Christ and in the perfect righteousness he accomplished (acquired, gained) for us in our place by his death and resurrection. And we express our gratitude towards him for saving us by loving him and our neighbour.

6. A summary of the main teachings or lessons of the parables about outgoing love in God’s kingdom.

Discuss. What are the main teachings or lessons of the parables about outgoing love in God’s kingdom?

Notes.

(1) The parable of the return of an evil spirit (Matthew 12:43-45).

It teaches about “outgoing love in God’s kingdom.”

The main message of this parable is the following. “God’s kingdom is characterised by a positive outgoing religion instead of a negative in-grown religion (with negative criticism as in Matthew 12:24 and idolizing outward signs as “the sign of Jonah” in Matthew 12:39). In stead of the legalistic passivity/passiveness of the Pharisees (Matthew 12:2) the outgoing love of Jesus Christ brings healing, deliverance and salvation (Matthew 12:9-14).

The outgoing love (the persistent devotion to doing what is right instead of the continual doing nothing out of fear of doing what is wrong), is one of the outstanding characteristics of God’s kingdom! The genuine people of God’s kingdom are like an occupied house, bustling with positive activities instead of an empty and sterile house (Matthew

12:44). They are people who have been saved by grace through faith and express their gratefulness to God in active love and holiness, not in passive legalistic zeal trying to be harmless!

(2) The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37).

It teaches about “outgoing love in God’s kingdom.”

The main message of this parable is the following. “I am a neighbour when I show outgoing love, that is to say, when I show mercy and take care of a needy person whom God places on my path.” The question should not be, “Who is my neighbour?” The question should be, “To whom am I a neighbour?”

Outgoing love as for example showing mercy to needy people is one of the fundamental characteristics of God’s kingdom! Because of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, the people of God’s kingdom have received eternal life as a free gift. Therefore, they express their gratefulness to God by living a life of love towards God and the neighbour. The genuine people of God’s kingdom live to the glory of God. Although they cannot love God and the neighbour *perfectly* as long as they live on this present earth, yet they direct their whole life to love God and their neighbour. The law of love will never be recalled (Romans 13:8-10).

(3) The parable of the two debtors (Luke 7:40-50).

It teaches about “outgoing love in God’s kingdom”.

The main message of this parable is the following. “The outpouring of love results from the sense of having been forgiven. And the consciousness of having been forgiven is the result of faith in the gospel. The person, who is forgiven much, shows much love and the person who is forgiven little, shows little love.”

The outpouring of love towards Jesus Christ is one of the main characteristics of God’s kingdom! Compare John 8:42 and 1 John 5:1. The genuine people of God’s kingdom express their gratefulness to God in an outpouring of love towards Jesus Christ, because all their sins (regardless how many they were) have been forgiven!

Jesus contrasts the Pharisee’s lack of a sense of forgiveness with the woman’s sense of forgiveness. The Pharisee felt that he was righteous and did not need any forgiveness at all. He did not believe that he was sinful and consequently he felt no need for forgiveness. Because he had been forgiven nothing, he loved nothing. Because he had not received any forgiveness from Jesus Christ, he also did not love Jesus Christ. In contrast, the woman was deeply conscious of her sinful nature and at the same time of her complete forgiveness. Because she had been forgiven much, she loved much. Because she had received forgiveness for her many sins from Jesus Christ, she also loved Jesus Christ much.

In this parable a contrast is made between someone to whom nothing was forgiven with someone to whom much was forgiven! All people who have turned to Christ are completely forgiven! But the more Christians grow spiritually and realise just how sinful their human nature is and what Jesus Christ really has done for them in their place, the more their love for Jesus Christ will grow!

(4) What God is like.

All people, especially the lost, must know what God or Jesus Christ is like. One great lesson of these parables is that they show the outgoing love of God in Jesus Christ towards people who need healing and deliverance. He sets people free from evil spirits, heals their sicknesses, forgives their sins, and his heart constantly goes out towards people in need. Matthew wrote about Jesus, “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36).”

(5) What Christians should be like.

Christians must know what they should be like. Another great lesson of these parables is that they teach us what God wants us to be and to do. “Outgoing (visible) love” is an expression of our gratefulness towards God for the salvation we received by his grace. Instead of passive harmlessness, we should show active love to others. Instead of cold indifference towards Jesus Christ, we should pour out our love towards him. Instead of keeping the law in a negative way out of self-righteousness, we should show wholehearted love to God and mercy towards people. As Christians we are saved, so we are able to do this because we are thankful for our salvation (forgiveness, healing, restoration, etc.) we received when we believed.

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	[REACTIONS] PRAYER IN RESPONSE TO GOD’S WORD
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Take turns in the group *to pray short* to God in response to what you have learned today.
Or divide the group into two’s or three’s and pray to God in response to what you have learned today.

6	PREPARATION (2 minutes)	[ASSIGNMENT] FOR NEXT LESSON
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² Hebrew: torah, Arabic: sharia.

(*Group leader.* Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples, build the church and preach the kingdom.
2. Preach, teach or study “the parable of the good Samaritan” together with another person or group of people.
3. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter of **Psalm 23, 24, 25 and 27** each day.
Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
4. Memorisation. **(7) Romans 5:1-2a.** Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. Bible study. Prepare the next Bible study at home. **Romans 5:12-21.**
Make use of the five steps method of Bible study. Make notes.
6. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
7. Update your notebook on preaching God’s kingdom. Include your notes on quiet time, your memorisation notes, your teaching notes and this preparation.