

Home Group study week beginning 10th February 2020

Love in Action

Read: Luke 10 vv25-37

The story of the Good Samaritan is one of the best-known in the Bible. A danger with really familiar passages of scripture is that we can gloss over them and not really take in their significance. But for all that it's well-known, this passage is still really powerful: and reveals a lot about God's heart — and about men and women's hearts.

One thing to note in this passage is that the Samaritans were despised by the Jewish people. Indeed the passage about Jesus and the Samaritan woman related in John 4 is all the more remarkable in that not only was Jesus prepared to talk to the Samaritan woman, but that he was even in Samaria at all. Although Samaria was on Jesus' journey from Judea to Galilee, the convention was to make a detour to avoid going into Samaria. The other thing, as Matt Band reminded us on Sunday, the Samaritans were still of Jewish descent and would become unclean by touching a dead body. As the man had been left 'half-dead' (Luke 10 v30) the Samaritan wouldn't have been sure whether he was dead or alive. Plus, as Matt also reminded us, it was in a very dangerous area, a narrow pass on the 'Way of Blood'.

Bearing all these things in mind, work together as a group to retell this story in a 21st Century British context.

Understanding

Verse 25 tells us clearly why this 'expert in the law' was asking about inheriting eternal life. How does Jesus answer him? Why do you think Jesus answered him the way he did in v26?

Why do you think the 'expert in the law' then asks: 'And who is my neighbour' (v29)? What do you think he thought of Jesus' answer?

Interestingly Jesus is talking to this 'expert in the law' about the law. He gets the expert to respond to him in terms of the law (v26). The 'expert', it seems, wants a nice, clear definition of 'neighbour' so he knows who he needs to love (and, therefore, who he *doesn't* need to love) to fulfil the law about loving your neighbour. What does the story Jesus tells him reveal to us about how God wants us to keep his law? What conventions does the Samaritan break to keep the law?

Forgetting for a moment that the Samaritan is a fictional character, what motivates him to act in the way he does towards someone who is effectively his enemy? If you were in his position, how much would you be thinking about the requirements of the law?

Application

Have a look at Micah 6 vv6-8. This spells out some of the ways in which the law tells us to worship God. But what does the very familiar Verse 8 tell us about God's attitude to the way we keep the law? How do we apply that verse in our lives?

The key word in the definition of the 'law' in Luke 10 v25 (which is a quotation of Old Testament law from Deuteronomy 6 v5 and Leviticus 19 v18) is 'love'. 1 Corinthians 13 has a great deal to say about love. Verses 1-3 reflect Micah 6 v8 in spelling out that our great Godly attributes are worthless if there is no love behind them. Verses 4-7 tell us the attributes of love. All of these attributes are evident in the Samaritan's actions; how evident are they in our own lives? Bearing in mind Jesus' interpretation of 'Love you neighbour as yourself', how do we ensure we qualify for eternal life?