

• *A parable unique to Luke's gospel*

1. An important question

• *But insincere*

• *Inheriting eternal life – not the same as justification*

• *Inheriting eternal life – a much bigger matter*

2. An important method of answering

• *For himself*

3. A wonderful answer

• *No direct answer in the Mosaic law*

• *The law points in the direction of love*

4. The practice of love will lead to life

• *Justification by faith assumed*

Twenty-one of Luke's twenty-seven parables are found in Luke's 'travel narrative'^{□1}. Sixteen of them are unique to Luke, including the famous 'Good Samaritan' and the 'Prodigal Son'.

1. We have first **an important question**. An expert in the Jewish law asks a question. He is not very sincere. He simply wants to find out whether Jesus is capable of handling tricky questions. It is a question about 'inheriting eternal life'^{□1}. Yet it is an important question and Jesus answers it for the benefit of His disciples.

It is important to realise that 'inheriting eternal life' is not the same as 'justification by faith'. When a pagan man asks 'What shall I do to be saved?' we can simply say 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ'. Justification is 'without the law'^{□1}.

But 'inheriting eternal life' is a bigger matter than simply one's initial experience of salvation. It is a larger matter than being 'justified'. Inheritance is reward. It is fully reaping the benefits of salvation. This lawyer is not asking a question about 'justification by faith'. His question really means: what must I do to get everything that God wants to give me? The man takes it for granted that this will involve doing, and Jesus does not contradict him, for Jesus only speaks about 'doing'^{□1}.

2. Next we have **an important method of answering a question**. 'What is written...?' asks Jesus^{□1}, or 'How do you read?' Jesus wants the man to answer for himself and He wants to encourage the man to get the answer from the Scriptures. Jesus often does this. Our teaching must come from the written Scriptures.

3. Then we have a **wonderful answer**. Which part of the law would we quote in answer to the question: what must I do to enter into everything God has for me? There is not much in the law that you can quote at all in answer to this question. Actually the Mosaic law when it was first given on Mount Sinai scarcely spoke about love. It does once talk about loving God^{□1} and there are two verses that say that we should love our neighbour^{□2} and Moses referred to loving God^{□3} when he was preaching forty years after the first giving of the law.

This man is seeing something very profound about the law. He is seeing exactly what Paul said when he wrote Romans 13:8–10. There is much legislation in the Mosaic law, but for the Christian disciples one regulation is the key to everything else. The law points **in the direction** of love. There are about two thousands verses of legislation in the law but this lawyer was sufficiently discerning to see that the law is taking steps in the direction of love.

4. Jesus says that **the practice of love will lead to life**. 'Do this and you will live!' said Jesus. When the Old Testament says this it refers to national life. But I believe that when Jesus says these words He is referring to something more personal. Love leads to life! – to liveliness, vigour, energy, mobility of action. Love is invigorating because it gives a clear conscience.

None of this has anything to do with 'justification by faith'. Jesus is assuming that the person who is to show love is one who believes in Him. He is going **further** than answering a question about how we first step into our earliest experience of the kingdom of God. 'Inheriting eternal life' refers to entering into everything that God wants to give us. It is the practice of love

□1 9:51-18:14

□1 10:25

□1 Romans 3:21

□1 10:28, 37

□1 10:26

□1 Exodus 20:6

□2 Leviticus 19:18, 38

□3 Deuteronomy 5:10; 6:5; 7:9; 10:12,19; 1:1, 13, 22; 13:8; 19:9; 30:6,16, 20

5. The parable of the good Samaritan

• Samaritans hated and despised by Jews

• Live out what you've just said – Mr Lawyer..

• The Samaritan – no religious qualifications but he did have wonderful compassion

• Go and do likewise!

that will lead to our laying hold of eternal life.

5. This conversation leads into the famous **parable of the good Samaritan**. It is well-known. A man is badly injured; he could die at any moment¹. Two highly respected religious experts come by, a priest and a Levite². They keep well away. They do not want to get involved with the time-consuming needs of an injured person. It might be dangerous; the robbers might still be around. It will be expensive for them financially. It will have repercussions for them for a long time ahead.

A Samaritan comes by. Samaritan religion was corrupt. They were famous for idolatry. For many centuries they had a rival temple on Mount Gerizim. Jews hated them and despised them. As Jesus tells His story one can imagine a kind of shudder of horror as he says 'a Samaritan, as he was travelling, came to that very spot where the injured man was lying on the ground...' ¹.



'Now, Mr Lawyer,' says Jesus, 'Mr Expert-in-the-Scriptures, you have just talked about loving God and loving your neighbour. But you have got to do it! You have got to actually live out what you yourself have just said is the secret of entering into the inheritance of the kingdom of God.'

What was so wonderful about this Samaritan? He had no religious qualifications. He had no theological qualifications. He had nothing to commend himself in the eyes of the average Jew. The Samaritan did not run away from a situation of need. He looked. He felt compassion. He decided he would have to get involved. He did what needed to be done. He sacrificed something of his own comfort. He took upon himself a commitment that would give him some trouble in the future. His love touched his finances.

Jesus asks a question: 'which of these three .. . proved to be a neighbour?' The answer was obvious. 'Go and do likewise', says Jesus. What is needed for the Christian to enter into everything God has for him? It is being like the good Samaritan. Religious professionalism will not achieve much. Compassionate love will lead into the experience of reaping the kingdom of God.

10:30
10:31-32

10:33

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