

Saving My Enemy – Echoes of the Good Samaritan

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MAIN VERSES

[Luke 9:51](#) • [Luke 10:25](#) • [Deuteronomy 6:5](#) • [Leviticus 19:18](#) • [2 Chronicles 28:8-15](#) • [Luke 10:30](#) • [Luke 1:50](#) • [Leviticus 18:5](#)

Shabbat Shalom, everybody. If you are visiting us for the first time or watching online for the first time today, my name is Matthew Vandrells. I'm one of the community pastors here at Founded in Truth Fellowship. We are a Bible-loving, Sabbath-celebrating, and quite a nerdy community whose only desire is to orbit the person of Jesus that we call Yeshua. So welcome to Founded in Truth Fellowship, if it's your first time visiting today. We're so excited to be back together this week as a community of believers.

And as I was praying and seeking guidance on what the message should be this week, I got the sense to keep reading. And I took that at face value. Okay, I'll keep reading. So I kept reading where we left off from last week. And if you remember, last week we spoke on how to win according to Yeshua, how to get the prize, and also how to lose by trying to win the way the world tells us to. And we explored the gospel of Luke in chapter nine where Yeshua turns his face toward Jerusalem in verse 51. And this is a clear shifting point in Luke's narrative with all this momentum backing Yeshua in this new trajectory. This is the moment where Yeshua is focused on traveling to Jerusalem from this point forward. Everything's orbiting this event to face off against the beast through the power of the cross. And what's the first thing that happens? He turns his face to Jerusalem. It is time to accept his mission. And he begins walking. And the first thing that happens is he's rejected by the village in Samaria. The Samaritans reject him. And he's heading to Jerusalem. So obviously he doesn't believe the same theological position as the Samaritans where the temple belongs, which we'll talk about today. So they reject him. And this sets the tone for what happens in the next chapter completely. But the Jewish authorities have already rejected Yeshua. Now the Samaritans have rejected Yeshua. And his disciples get very zealous for him. They respond. They think they have an appropriate way to respond. And they respond by wanting God to kill them all, right? Yeah, hey, Yeshua, we

have a great idea how to handle these people who reject you. Should we go ahead and call down some divine fire and burn them all up? Like Sodom and Gomorrah. And Yeshua rebukes them. He's like, that's not how you win. This is not how you win. That's not how we're going to win. That's how the world wins. Our kingdom is different. Yeshua then sends out the 70 throughout the villages.

What Is a Samaritan?

And then the very next section is, of course, the parable of the good Samaritan. So I figured we'd talk about that since last week's message is still on our minds. So turn with me to Luke chapter 10, verse 25, and I just want you to stick a pin in it. And growing up, we've all heard the parable of the Good Samaritan, pretty familiar with it. And you hear about it, and it's the lesson about a person who does good things, and we're supposed to emulate that. And that is a major point of the story, but I never even questioned growing up what a Samaritan was or is because they still live there today. The only thing I knew about was some 501c3 that does a bunch of cool stuff at Christmas and gives packages, right? I mean, that's right. That's all I knew. And so I wanted to talk a little bit about Samaria and the Samaritans and the relationship with the Judeans at the time because I feel that we've missed a lot in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

So according to the Bible, Samaria had an earlier name. And earlier in the Bible, it was known as Shechem. Everybody say Shechem. You go, ah, Shechem. Okay, good. It was where Dinah, Jacob's daughter, was raped. That's where that story comes from. That's where it took place. There was actually a book that came out a long time ago, a fictional book. I've never really read it, but I know what it's about. It's called The Red Tent. If you ever see that pop up, remember that was big. That's what the fictional story in that book is roughly based on, loosely, very loosely. The second reference to Samaria or Shechem is in [Judges 8-9](#). It tells of Abimelech, a horrible judge of Israel who ruthlessly murdered anyone who opposed him. As the scripture recounts, the Samaritans originated after the monarchy under King David split into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. You guys remember that. It's a big-time story, right? There was a disagreement among the 12 tribes of Israel in the land of Israel, and they split into the north and the south. And the capital of the southern kingdom, known as Judah, was, of course, Jerusalem. It was their capital. The capital of the northern kingdom of Israel was Samaria. And not a lot of great things happened there in the Bible. It was ruled by many leaders, one being Ahab. Remember Ahab? He married that girl Jezebel who came in and built an altar to the Canaanite god Baal-Hadad. A little later, King Jehu, king of Israel, came in. He defeated Jezebel. And he turned that shrine to Baal into a latrine, a toilet, in

[2 Kings 10:27](#). You're allowed to laugh. He thought it was funny. Yeah, that's how we think about that. A funny story, but still not necessarily a tasteful story about the area, right?

The Assyrian Conquest and Replacement

Fast forward to the 8th century BCE or BC, 722 BC. And the entire northern kingdom of Israel is conquered and taken into exile by the Assyrian empire. Conquests—when a nation wanted to conquer another nation, especially in the ancient world and especially with the Assyrians—were brutal, absolutely brutal. This is what makes the book of Jonah so convicting: it was about the Assyrians and Jonah being commanded to go take the message of God's peace and mercy and grace to these people. And to be honest, if you lived in this time and you saw what the Assyrians did, you'd probably be a Jonah. I will gladly go the opposite direction and then get mad when God pours out his mercy on them. Assyrians were not good people when it came to warfare. There was no such thing as mercy. There was no such thing as grace. No, just pure brutality and violence. And one of the things they would do when they conquered an area, after wiping out the majority of it, was mix it up a bit. They'd mix up the population. It's like hitting a reset button in society, right? You take a lot of them out and you ship other people from other nations in. So they carted away a huge chunk of the Israelites that lived in the northern kingdom of Israel. They carted them away and then they replaced them with people from other nations. And we see this in [2 Kings 17:24](#). The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Kuthah, Ava, Hamath, Sepharvarim, and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites. They took over Samaria and lived in its towns. The resulting population that now lived in this area took on the name of its capital. And the Samaritans as a nation, if you will, were born. That's where they came from.

Return from Exile and Growing Conflict

Over the course of the next century and a half, we know that another large nation came into the borders of ancient Israel, into the southern kingdom, the kingdom of Judah, and they conquered it. It was Babylon. They conquered Judah, taking the king and many of its inhabitants away to Babylon to be enslaved. The Persians, after a few generations, conquered the Babylonians and allowed the Judeans or the Jews to return to their own land. Everybody with me on the history page? It's pretty dense, isn't it? It's a lot. I know. Persians now came in. All of the Judeans that were taken captive, you guys can go home now. Everything I just summarized is the overhanging story that's taking place in the background of most of the Old Testament, just so you know. Most of the Old Testament, this is what's going on behind the scenes of the stories

being written. And there we go. So some of the Jews or Judeans, and a Jew is shorthand for the word Judean. It's someone who lives or is from the land of Judah. It's not tribe affiliated, it's land affiliated. Some Jews returned to Judah. Some stayed in Babylon. This is where the book of Esther takes place. Esther and Mordecai are still in Babylon, which is now Persia. The Jews that returned to Jerusalem wanted to rebuild their temple. They're ready to reboot their nation. They move back, let's hit the reset button. We can rebuild again, this is fine. The Samaritans, on the other hand, they were like, well, no, no, you better slow your roll. See, we've been here this whole time. You don't get to dictate Jerusalem as this capital. No, no, no, no, no. [Nehemiah 4:1](#). When Salbalat heard that we were rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews. And in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, what are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from these heaps of rubble, burned as they are? Verse 8, and they plotted together to come fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. They went to war, went to war. Around 388 B.C. or B.C.E., the Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim in Samaria. This is the true site of God's people. This is where the temple belongs. Enmity only grew. You had the Judeans or the Jews building a new temple after their exile in Jerusalem, and now you have these guys fighting their enemies, building their own temple up in Samaria. For generations, you have this people in Samaria that claim that they are the true dwellers of the land. And Samaria is the true capital and the temple of God.

Samaria's Temple and the Long Feud

Samaria was the only true temple of God, in their eyes. And to make things worse, remember that whole incident where the Greek occupation took place in Judea, and the Greeks were tormenting and oppressing the Jews, and the Maccabees stood up and wanted to fight back? Remember Hanukkah, that whole story? Yeah, during that time, the Samaritans refused to give any aid to the Judeans during their suffering. "Nah, y'all are just going to die off. It's okay though." So once the Hasmoneans, the Maccabees, once the Hasmoneans pushed out the Greeks and established their dynasty, the Jewish king, John Hyrcanus, got a bright idea. He's like, "You know what? You guys didn't help us, and we're still kind of mad about that. So we're going to go up there and start a war with you." So they did. They went up there and burned down the Samaritan temple as revenge for the Samaritans not helping them in their time of need. It was King Herod the Great who actually rebuilt the Samaritan temple, on top of renovating, might as well have rebuilt the one in Jerusalem too. King Herod wanted a piece of the pie everywhere, right? Rebuilt all the temples.

In the first century, around the time of Jesus, a historian named Josephus writes about how the priests in the temple in Jerusalem used to leave the gates open during Passover week every single year, because it was such a divine and holy time that the last thing they wanted to do was have the symbolism of the doors being shut to God's holiness and grace. Here's a quote of what took place as a result: "And then when their opening first occurred, the Samaritan men, coming into Jerusalem in secret, began to scatter human bones in the porticos and throughout the temple. So the priests, who were not accustomed to such things before, managed the temple with greater care." Maybe we shouldn't leave the doors open all the time so people can come in. The Samaritans traveled to the temple around nine of the common era, within a couple years of Jesus being born, and brought human body parts with them and scattered them throughout the holy place of the temple. Toe over there, yeah, put a femur over there, a rib. I mean, seriously, who thinks of this? "I know how to get them back. Let's throw a bunch of cadaver pieces around, tossing them around like candy," desecrating the temple at the highest holy season of the year. There were not good feelings between the Samaritans and the Judeans, right?

The Samaritan Side of the Story

That's the Jewish side of this war. You guys want to hear the Samaritan side of it? Always two sides, right? The Samaritan side of the war is that they saw themselves as the only true Israelites and the only true interpreters of the Torah. These Judeans coming back from Babylon, carrying with them who knows what traditions, had been removed from the true ancient tradition of the Torah. And, "We're the only ones who are the true guardians of the Torah." That's what they saw themselves as. They didn't view themselves as a mixture of peoples, as recorded in the Jewish history in our Bible. They viewed themselves as the true bloodline from Ephraim and Manasseh. "We're the true Israelites, and we're the only ones left."

The Jews paint the picture of Samaritans being this half-breed mixture of pagans who made a bunch of stuff up about the Torah, and that's exactly what the tradition is in our Bible. I believe it. But the Samaritan tradition says that the Judeans, the Jews, got off track all the way back at the time of Samuel, when Eli, according to them, set up that heretical temple in Shiloh. They blame King Solomon for moving the location of where the temple was supposed to be to Jerusalem and building it there. They also believe that Ezra, after the Babylonian exile, came back and rewrote the Torah to be sympathetic to the Judeans and not the true history of the Samaritans. Think about that for a minute. Talk about a conspiracy theory, right? Because we know the canon of the Old Testament likely wasn't compiled till after the Babylonian exile — that's when it was really stitched together into what we have today. So imagine — I don't believe

that, I believe it's true, God's word, inspired by the word of God — but this is the tradition that ended up spreading.

Sore Enemies

From 700 years leading up to the time of Jesus, these jokers had been sore enemies toward each other, lacking love in any capacity whatsoever for each other. They viewed each other as terrorists. That's just how they saw each other. They wanted to kill each other. They did kill each other. So many records around the first century of Jews traveling to Jerusalem through the area of Samaria and being robbed, being beaten, being killed. So many records of Jews finding Samaritans and beating them and robbing them and killing them. They hated each other. This was not some hatred on a political level. This was not Republicans versus Democrats. This is more along the lines of America versus ISIS, and both sides think they're America, rooting out the terrorist organization that is opposed to them. That's the mindset. And so here we are — that's the atmosphere we're walking into. Everybody good with all that history? Fantastic. I love it, it's great.

Luke Chapter 10

So turn your Bibles to Luke chapter 10, verse 25, we're going to start there. Right off the bat, we have a few things to unpack here. In Luke, whenever Luke mentions lawyers — what's a lawyer? He's an expert in the law, right? Torah. That's why it's translated that way, an expert in the Torah. It was a respected teacher in the first century. And throughout all of Luke's narrative, the film that he's directing and writing, the lawyers are always portrayed in a negative light. You have the lawyers at the dinner banquet who accuse Yeshua after he makes those comments. You have the lawyers always trying to test him, to try to get him to trip up. It's just how Luke portrays it. And here he's testing Yeshua.

You guys know the first and only time that exact Greek word, or that form of that Greek word, appears before this instance in chapter 10? It appears one other time in Luke's narrative — when Satan was testing Yeshua, and Yeshua responded, "You shall not test the Lord your God." It's when Satan tried to test Yeshua. So here Luke could possibly be painting the lawyer as doing what Satan does earlier in the book.

And what does the lawyer ask? He asks, what must we do to gain eternal life? The word there for "do" has a tense that suggests a limited action, a single limited action. In other words, the lawyer here is thinking of eternal life as this type of commodity — if he can just find something

to check off a list, something he can just do to obtain it, he'll be good to go. Recite the right prayer, in other words. Or maybe recite the right prayer in the right language, right? Maybe go to that food drive and drop off a couple of cans of corn. Maybe pop an extra \$50 bill in the offering plate, which I'm not opposed to — just make sure your treasure is where your heart is, right? He's testing Yeshua here, and already his concept of eternal life is warped.

How Do You Read It?

Verse 26, Yeshua responds. What's he say? He replied, "How do you read it?" Look at that. Yeshua evades the trick question. And here's why it's such a huge deal when he turns it back onto the lawyer: because the literal text of the Torah doesn't really talk a lot about eternal life. You ever notice that? Like when we're looking for heaven, going to heaven after we die, the Torah, not a whole lot of information about that, about after death, eternal life. The Torah really doesn't focus on that. The focus of Torah is usually dealing with your actions here and now, as a community, here and now. [Deuteronomy 30:19](#) through 20, what's it say? Here and now — that's what the Torah kind of emphasizes.

Notice how Yeshua asks him, "Well, what is written in the law?" but then is also extremely interested in how he reads the law. How does the lawyer respond? Verse 27 — see, the lawyer fires back instantly with two verses from the Torah. [Deuteronomy 6:5](#), part of the extended Shema, if you will: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul." And [Leviticus 19:18](#), which says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." And the thing about having love for God is it has to be manifested. It's an action word. To love means to act, right? Yeshua himself said that all of the commandments of the Torah hang, all of the commandments of the Torah have to have the support from these two commandments to be relevant in any fashion of the word — which makes sense, you know? Do not lie, do not murder, do not commit adultery, care for the poor, the blind, the deaf. Love must manifest itself in and through the action of the commandments. The lawyer knew this about Torah.

Do This and Live

What's Yeshua say in verse 28? "Hey, you've answered correctly." Jesus replied, "Do this and you will live." You will live. Yeshua said the lawyer got the answer correct. The lawyer got the answer correct, but it seems the lawyer got the question wrong. The lawyer is asking about eternal life, and Yeshua responds, "Great, do this and you'll live," okay? It almost seems as if Yeshua is quoting [Leviticus 18:5](#), which says, "You shall therefore keep my statutes and my ordinances, which if a man do, he shall live. I am the Lord." Do this and live.

What he is impressing on him, I believe, is to live out this love that encapsulates all of Torah, as the lawyer even recognized. Live it out. It's not a one-time thing. It's not a checklist. It's a lifestyle, it's a devotion, and it's radical. It's as if Yeshua is trying to get the lawyer to understand that — fine, think about eternal life, cool, that's great. But think about life more. Life right now. Life in this moment.

Living Out This Ethic Now

Think about the actions and the ethics that you live out now. Because you know what? Eternal life will still be there when you get done with this one. This is the one that matters right now. Live out this ethic now and focus on the reality that you're living in now. And through that dedication and allegiance to God's kingdom, you might just get a glimpse of eternal life now. The gospel is only truly found in the death and resurrection of Yeshua. And through that, we experience the new reality of new creation now. Our calling is not to just sit here after we've pledged allegiance to Yeshua and wait to die. No, it begins now. It starts now and here.

If the lawyer had some wisdom at this point, he would have thanked Yeshua, went on his way, and lived out that love. But instead, the lawyer was malevolent. He wanted to try to trick Yeshua again. He wanted to see if he could throw another log in front of Yeshua. So he asks an even more inappropriate question.

Who Is My Neighbor?

Verse 29. But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "Okay, well, who is my neighbor?" Hmm, it's a great question. Who is my neighbor? The reason why it's a great question is because we're about to look at it in Scripture. But let's be honest about the question. Everybody knows that this is really just a nice way to ask another question: Who is not my neighbor? So I need to love. That's fine. Who is not my neighbor? Where can I draw the line?

And there's some merit to asking the question because some would argue [Leviticus 19:18](#) defines your neighbor as only your own people. That's what it says: "Do not seek revenge or bear grudge against any one of your own people, right? But love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord." There it is. My neighbor is only my tribe, my people.

Until you get to verse 33 in the same chapter: "When a foreigner resides among you in the land, one that is not your people, one that is from another nation, one that has crossed your borders to dwell with you." Because remember, you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

So who's your neighbor? Who is the one that you cannot restrict love to? It's your own people and those who are not your own people.

What the Law Commands

The thing is, the Torah never commands someone to love their enemy, though. Be blunt with that. A neighbor, okay, but we don't really see in the text clearly stated in the letter of the law, "you shall love your neighbor." I mean, you should love your enemy. I mean, what's it mean if you love your enemy? Like, doesn't the very act of you loving your enemy transform the relationship, at least through the lens of your own soul? They can't be your enemy if you love them, right? Nothing in Torah really talks about that.

Yeshua was clear in the Sermon on the Mount, though, right? The trajectory of God's ethic was limited by the written Torah and not culminated by it. He decrees that the true ethic of God, the perfect way of God, is to show love on both your friend and your enemy so that you will be the children of your Father in heaven in the Sermon on the Mount.

Now what's neat is some suggest, and we're a bit geeky, some suggest Yeshua is implying this to the lawyer because the lawyer would have obviously been familiar with these texts on the screen. He would have totally been familiar with that.

The Word Neighbor in Hebrew

What's neat about the Hebrew word for neighbor is that it is the word "Reah." Everybody say Reah. It is spelled with the two Hebrew letters Resh and Ein. Now, what's also neat is if you take the word evil in Hebrew, it's pronounced "Reh." Everybody say Reh. It's spelled with the two Hebrew letters Resh and Ein.

But it's okay because it has vowel points on the words. So you can distinguish the two words very easily because of the vowel points that they put on them sometime between 700 A.D. and 1,000 A.D. Before this, Hebrew did not have any vowel points in the written text. In the first century, there were no vowel points. Literally on the paper, it was the same word.

Could it be that Yeshua is asking the lawyer, what's written in the Torah and how do you read it? How do you see it? You shall love your Reah as yourself, or you shall love the Rah, the one that brings evil into your life as yourself, your enemy. Interesting, not dogmatic about it. I wasn't there.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

When the lawyer asks who is his neighbor, Yeshua is about to throw him into the grinder of this parable. You guys ready for it? It's verse 30.

In reply, Jesus said, "A man was going down. What direction? From Jerusalem to Jericho. When he was attacked by robbers, they stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road. And when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side." I don't want to do that. And a Levite came to the place and when he saw him, he navigated around him to the other side. "But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was. And when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him there. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. Look after him," he said.

That resonates with our culture, doesn't it? It's a big deal. Yeshua asks the lawyer. The expert in the law replied. Jesus told him. Now we're all familiar with the story, but what's really neat is there are some awesome echoes. Everybody know there are echoes from the New Testament from the Old Testament? The story doesn't just end and start anew. It's just an echoing trajectory moving forward that culminates in the ethic of Yeshua, this person. And the first one is right here.

The Road to Jericho

First off, a man, any man, we don't know, just some guy, walking down from Jerusalem. Not up, right? He was going down from Jerusalem, away from Jerusalem, heading to where? Jericho. Toward Jericho, on the road to Jericho. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is about an 18-mile rocky, dark, just not a great road. It's not a great road, and what makes it even worse is the elevation. So you have this road that's going from, geez, what is it, about 2,500 feet above sea level from Jerusalem all the way down to 825 feet below it.

The Romans actually came and paved this road, made it nice so you could travel, so that they could haul their war machines and their siege machines to Jerusalem to topple it just less than a decade later. They did that in the 60s. Robbers came and they beat, stripped, and left this man for dead on the side of the road. And Luke says that the man has wounds from it. It's the Greek word traumata. It means trauma—it's trauma this man has.

The Question of Help

And in the story, when Yeshua is telling it, we have this man that's on the side of the road with all this trauma going on. What's the question that the reader is asking? Who is going to help him? The lawyer just wanted to ask about some eternal life. And Yeshua's response is framed around the here and now, right now. Someone has to help him now. Someone has to intervene now.

And by coincidence, in the story, some priest goes walking down that road and he sees him and he passes him by. Likewise, the Levite saw him and passed by, going around him. Why? Why did they go around the man in the road? Why did they not help? Man, tons of commentaries about why these men did not want to help. Tons of comments. Some people say that, oh, they were scared to be made unclean as they went to work in the temple, but that didn't really work out because they were coming from the temple, right? Didn't matter.

The True Question

The explanation that Martin Luther King Jr. made, I think, was my favorite. When speaking, Martin Luther King Jr. gave his own commentary on this parable, and I love it. Well, let's just read it. He said this in speaking to why the Levite and the priest did not stop and help, and here is what Martin Luther King Jr. said: "I'm going to tell you what my imagination tells me. It's possible these men were just afraid. And so the first question that the priest and the Levite asked was, If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me? Are the robbers still around? Are they going to beat me too? Am I going to have my stuff stolen too? Am I going to make a sacrifice of my own part if I try to help this individual? But then the good Samaritan came by and he reversed the question. If I do not help this man, what will happen to him?"

King went on and he was speaking to the sanitation workers. It's a big speech. He went on to say, "If I do not stop and help the sanitation workers here now, what will happen to them?" After the speech, King then went on to Memphis where he was assassinated.

Whatever the motives, whatever the agenda were of the priest and the Levite, like the lawyer, they were only thinking of themselves and not the man in the ditch. The issue here does not seem to be about priestly purity. Instead, as author Amy Levine points out, she believes that the story is anticipating another person. In other words, the duo anticipates a third.

The Law of Threes

If we have any drama or authors in here, you've ever heard of the law of threes, right? It's called the law of threes, and it's a fancy way of saying that in storytelling or poetry, having patterns of

three are much more satisfying than any other pattern of numbers. Many stories are built specifically around this concept. Yeah. Where's the third? Where's the third? Larry, Moe, and Curly.

The Pattern of Three

Taking this into Luke's account, the priest and the Levite build an anticipation for a concluding third character. Who is coming next? Imagine the expert of the Bible listening attentively as Yeshua tells this parable. He tells the story. He lays it out. There's a priest. All right. There's a Levite. All right. Who's number three? And to the audience in the first century, it would have been a no brainer who number three was because this pattern of three shows up in the story of the Old Testament all over the place. We have two examples here, [Ezra 10.5](#) and Nehemiah 11.5. So Ezra rose up and put the leading priests and the Levites and all Israel under oath. Nehemiah 11.5. So Ezra rose up and put the leading priests and Levites and Israel under oath to the accession and they took the oath.

If we're going off the echoes of the Hebrew Bible, the next person to step out into the story is of course going to be who? An Israelite. Yeah. One of us. My neighbor. Right? You see it? Yeshua was about to get him so hard. Oh, man. He didn't see what's coming. But some Samaritan traveling came near to him, didn't run away, came near, seeing, and had compassion. Oh, man. So the lawyer was expecting Larry, Moe, and Curly, and instead the story has now shifted to Larry, Moe, and Osama bin Laden. What?

The Enemy Within

Again, the actions of this one Samaritan in this story should not blind you to what the first century audience likely heard. These aren't just some nice people that helped this man. These people are the enemy. Guys, if I say who is your enemy on a national level, who is your enemy? Someone just popped into your head. If it was 2001, it would be Al-Qaeda or Taliban. If it was 1940s, you'd probably think of the SS or the Nazi regime, the enemy. If it was to the decades long Cold War, it would be Russia, the enemy, right? The Samaritans are not the oppressed minority in the eyes of the first century Judean community. They are the oppressors of the first century audience. They fear them. It would be like being held prisoner in Vietnam and you hear the story of the good Viet Cong soldier. These are the people jailing you, torturing you, killing you and your friends. Some people may have been zealous enough to object to Yeshua's story and say, you know what? I'd rather die than be helped by one of them.

What if? What if the parable that Yeshua is telling is not simply a brand new story? What if Yeshua is using this parable as a way to resurrect a much older story that's found in the Bible? Another echo.

Breaking the Cycle

Alongside the story of Dina's rape in Shechem and Abilamech's murderous rage, the entire fate of the northern kingdom being wiped out because of their idolatry by Assyria, there is one more story about the inhabitants of this area of Samaria. And it's found in [2 Chronicles 28](#), verses 8 through 15. You guys ready to dig into the word? Because we're going to read a story. Pay attention to this. Pay attention to the wording. Imagine being there. Imagine the emotions. But the men of Israel, remember the northern tribes were Israel, so these are the Samaritans. The men of Samaria took captive from their fellow Israelites who were from Judah. Where's Judah? The south. 200,000 wives, sons, and daughters. They also took a great deal of plunder, which they carried back to Samaria. But a prophet of the Lord named Oded was there, and he went out to meet the army when it returned to Samaria, and he said to them, because the Lord, the God of your ancestors, was angry with Judah, he gave them into your hand. But you have slaughtered them in a rage that reaches the heaven. And now you intend to make the men and women of Judah and Jerusalem your slaves. But aren't you also guilty of sins against the Lord your God? Now listen to me. Send back your fellow men. And some of the leaders in Ephraim, Azariah, son of Jehonan, Berkiah, the son of Meshillamoth, Jehizkiah, the son of Shalom, and Amasa, the son of Hadlai, confronted those who were arriving back from war. They confronted the group of people carrying the slaves and the spoils. 'You must not bring these prisoners here,' they said, 'or we will be guilty before the Lord. Do you intend to add to our sin and guilt? For our guilt is already great and his fierce anger rests on Israel.' So the soldiers gave up the prisoners and plunder in the presence of the officials and all the assemblies. The men designated by name took the prisoners from the plunder and they clothed all that were naked. And they provided them with clothes and sandals, and they gave them food and drink, and they put healing balm on their wounds. All those who were weak, they put on their own donkeys. So they took them back to their fellow Israelites at Jericho, the city of palms, and then they returned to Samaria.

These enemies that contributed to the cycle of war and violence that just finished slaughtering each other, they stopped. And what did the Samaritans do to the Judeans? They clothed them. They gave them sandals. They fed them. They gave them drink. They bandaged up their wounds and they put them on their donkeys and safely returned them to, of all places, Jericho. The cycle

of violence can be broken. It can be. And the one who wants to kill you may just be the only one that can save you.

Be His Hands and Feet

Verse 36 of [Luke 10](#), Yeshua asks, "Which of these three do you think is a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers?" The guy who showed him mercy. Go and do likewise. See, the lawyer here struggles to even say the word Samaritan. Yeah, the Samaritan guy. That guy, the one who gave him mercy. Now notice that in the parable, Yeshua does not say the Samaritan gave the man mercy. In the parable, Yeshua says it was what? Compassion. The lawyer perceives it as mercy, though. Why is that important? Well, there's a slight difference, some would say, between compassion and mercy. Compassion tends to be a more gut feeling, but mercy, mercy is an action word, especially in Luke. It has to be enacted.

Again, who is the director of the story? Luke is directing the film here. Who do you think Luke attributes the Greek word for mercy to every single time in his narrative, in his story leading up to this parable? Well, let's see. Here we go. I think we have it on the screen, don't we? [Luke 1](#) 50. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy. And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to show the mercy promised to our fathers and remember his holy covenant. Every single time this word is used before this parable, it is used in reference to God. Here in chapter 10, the lawyer uses this as something that we should embody and move out for. For the lawyer and the first century audience, they attributed what this man was doing to what God does. This man is now embodying the attribute of God. The Samaritan does what God does. He is merciful. The divine is manifested through his actions. Not our thoughts, not our good intentions, not our gut feelings. It's when we choose to be his hands and feet that the world feels his mercy. How does the lawyer respond to Yeshua? Go and do likewise.

Choosing Life Over Violence

Guys, I want to end with a quote from a Jewish scholar that's actually a professor of the New Testament, author Amy Levine, in her commentary about the parable. And I just want to see what she says because I don't think I could get away with it. She says, Samaria today has various names. The West Bank, Occupied Palestine, Greater Israel. To hear the parable today, we only need to update the identity of the figures. I am an Israeli Jew. And perhaps on my way to Jerusalem, to Jericho, I am attacked by thieves, beaten, stripped, and robbed, and left for dead in a ditch. Two people who should have stopped to help pass me by did not. The first, a Jewish

medic from the Israeli Defense Forces. The second, a member of the Israel-Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church Unit of the USA. But the person who takes compassion on me and shows me mercy is a Palestinian Muslim whose sympathies lie with Hamas, a political party whose charter not only anticipates Israel's destruction, but also depicts Jews as subhuman demons responsible for all of the world's problems. The parable of the good Hamas member might be difficult for some people in support of the state of Israel. But remember, were Jesus a Samaritan, we'd today have a parable called the good Jew told in the streets of Ramallah. If people in the Middle East could picture this, we might have a better vision for choosing life. Can we finally agree that it is better to acknowledge the humanity and the potential to do good in the enemy rather than blow up their cities? And can we imagine that they might just do the same for us? Can we put into practice the inaugurational promise of not leaving the wounded traveler on the road? She concludes, the biblical text and concern for humanity's future tell us that we must.

A New Vision for the World

Guys, what would happen if we always read the Good Samaritan as an individual basis? I need to be like the Good Samaritan and we stop it there. Of course you do. Duh. But have we ever pondered to think what would happen if all of the world began to live out that example? Could we imagine that it could be your example that ignites a new vision for the world, for your enemies, that stops the cycle of violence? That extinguishes the hell on earth that we ourselves create? Is this not the ethic that Yeshua taught? Did he not bring forth the good news of God's kingdom finally clashing into earth? And there is a new king that is in charge now. And he is the prince of peace. And he is the conqueror of all.

Ambassadors and Soldiers of the Kingdom

And he calls us to not only be ambassadors of that kingdom, to be soldiers, soldiers of that kingdom. I don't know where you're at today, but the parable of the Good Samaritan at its base is about replicating good behavior and blessing and mercy towards your enemy. Despite the war, despite the battle, despite the violence you yourself may have partaken in, despite the differences between you and someone else, despite whatever excuse you can find to divide, to go and do as your father in heaven, as Yeshua says. You show God's mercy and become the vessel of God's love poured out into the world.

At a larger scale, the Good Samaritan shows us that the cycle of war, the cycle of trauma, the cycle of violence, the cycle of unforgiveness, the cycle of hatred, the cycle of anger can be

broken. Will you be a part of that?

The Right Question

Or will you continue asking, "Yeah, but what do I need to do real quick to obtain eternal life?" That's great. That has to do with the here and now. I'm not interested in that. I'm interested in what's gonna happen. Will you be the person that continues to ask that question instead of "How can I be the hands and feet? How can I be the ambassador, the very representative of Christ on the earth?"

A Radiant People

Yeshua is calling together a people that represents his bride, spotless, without wrinkle, blameless, radiant, radiant. Paul says Yeshua is looking for his church, his assembly, his ecclesia, the gathering of his community, to be radiant in contrast to the world outside. He's calling his people to go and do so that the power of his kingdom can actually be felt by others in the world.

Who Are You in the Story?

So if you're at a place today, maybe you already know who you are in the story. Maybe you're the Levite. Maybe you're the priest. At least I have good status. Maybe you know you're the lawyer. God can even use a Samaritan in Judea to show forth his power and ethic on earth and in your life.

So please stand. Worship team, you guys can come up as we conclude in worship.

Prayer and Transformation

Guys, we have a prayer team available on either side of the room as we conclude services. If you're in need of prayer today, it could be relevant to the story of the Good Samaritan or it could be another circumstance or situation that you're going through in your life. It could be something that you've been carrying around for too long now. Anger, unforgiveness, bitterness. Knowing you have drawn the lines in the sand, dividing yourself from others in your life.

Guys, his mercy endures forever. His mercy endures forever. So no matter what you're going through today, if you're carrying around something, guys, I have good news for you. And it's the good news that is repeated in the gospel. You don't have to carry that around any longer. You can be transformed. You can put that weight down today.

Maybe you're going through a situation where you just need encouragement and prayer and someone to come alongside you guys. We have a dedicated prayer team on each side of the room, so please utilize them if need be.

Alvina Morkenu, our father, our king father, we thank you for this opportunity to dive into your word, the words and the message of Yeshua. Such a radical message that we've read today. An almost unbelievable message, an almost joke to the world, almost sounds like foolishness that us showing mercy to someone that the world says does not deserve it could actually make a difference. But Father, we thank you for the truth in your word. We thank you for your guidance. And Father, I ask in the name of Yeshua that the spirit that the Bible says you have already given to us would continue to work in us in a way that the world would see and be transformed by. That, Father, we look forward and anticipate the days of eternity, but that we would be equipped with your armor today for the here and the now. In Yeshua's name we pray, amen.

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