

*Text of a message delivered by Miko Williams at Windsor Park Baptist Church on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026.  
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## **Living the Samaritan Way**

### **Luke 10:25-37**

Hi everyone I'm Miko and it is such an honour to share what God's been putting on my heart through the parable of the Good Samaritan.

But first a question. What do you consider before helping someone? Is it who they are, where you are, the teachings of Jesus, or how much time you have? A study conducted at Princeton's Theological Seminary in 1973 tells us a lot about the way we respond in these situations.

The researchers wanted to figure out whether acts of kindness were more influenced by one's character or their environment. They asked participants, who were studying to become pastors, to present a speech on the Good Samaritan. They were told to travel to another building to present their speech and were split into 3 groups. One third were told that they'd be early, the second third were told they'd be on time and the last third were told they'd be late. On their way to give their talk, all of them passed by a staged incident with a "stranger" who was hunched over and coughing, in desperate need of help. Keep in mind they all had the Good Samaritan story in their head. I'll touch on this a little later on.

As for the results, I have bad news and good news. The bad news is that even aspiring pastors could completely ignore a stranger in need of help, on their way to give a talk about the importance of caring for strangers! The reality is our environment impacts whether we help someone more than we realise. The good news is we have Jesus, who knew we

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couldn't love people perfectly, so He did. I'm also glad to say that no one tested me on the way here. Phew!

Now the parable of the Good Samaritan is found in Luke chapter 10 verses 25-37, it reads:

*On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'" "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"*

*In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down 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. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'*

*"Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:25-37)*

### **Love Requires Humility**

The first thing we learn from the parable of the Good Samaritan is that *love requires humility*. The parable begins with a lawyer who would've had expert knowledge on religious law testing Jesus with a question. He says in v25 ***"Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"***

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Jesus, understanding this man was well familiar with the law, flips the question to him instead. The man responds in v27 **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’ and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’**

Jesus agrees with the lawyer’s answer. Whilst he could have focused on salvation matters, he solely focuses on love and the importance of relationships and we’ll soon find out why. I think we can all agree that we emphasise different parts of stories based on who we’re talking to, or at least I do.

He then poses the real question, **“Who is my neighbour?”** We see that the lawyer struggles to grasp the idea of loving everyone. I mean, he’s got a valid point. How are we meant to love everyone? Isn’t that practically impossible? We kinda saw that idea coming through the experiment I talked about earlier. The lawyer tries to narrow the definition of his neighbour to justify his current lifestyle. In other words, the lawyer is pretty much asking Jesus, “who isn’t my neighbour?” “Who am I not obligated to love?”

For context, the word “neighbour” in Greek actually translates to someone who is near and in Hebrew it translates to someone you have an association with. The lawyer would have viewed this word in a very limited sense, only seeing Jews as his neighbours, excluding all Samaritans, Romans and other ethnic groups.

As much as we can judge the lawyer for his pride, I think we all do this subconsciously to some degree. Last year, I had a group project at school and I think we can all agree there’s nothing worse than being paired with someone who decides that it’s their opportunity to relax. For me, this subject is bad enough on its own. An uncooperative partner made it almost unbearable. And after getting a lower grade than I wanted I won’t lie I kinda held a grudge against my partner. I found it hard to be kind to this person. I found it hard to see them as my neighbour.

That’s one example for me but I’m sure you’ve all encountered someone hard to love. We might only view our neighbours as people who treat us well, people on our sports team,

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people whose views we agree with, or who look like us, think like us, or vote like us. Like the lawyer we can become comfortable in our own parameters of what a neighbour means to us. But by doing this, we limit the richness of life that God wants for us.

### **God Values Obedience over Knowledge**

The second point we learn from the parable of the Good Samaritan is that God values *obedience* over knowledge.

The first man that comes across the beaten man is a priest and out of all the people we'd expect the priest to have helped the man because surely he's the epitome of God's mercy and compassion right? And yet in v31 it says, "**when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.**" He not only looked away but fully changed his course of direction. The priest didn't want anything to do with this hurting man. We then see a Levite who does the same thing. It says in v32, "**So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.**" Again another person who's supposed to be full of God's love rejects the man.

Because of their temple duties both priests and Levites were expected to remain ceremonially clean so coming into close contact with a dead man was an absolute no-go for them. The priest and the Levite were so caught up in following their religious practices that they became desensitized to the injured man in desperate need of help.

Next, in v33 it says: **But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.** Now, we might find that our impressions of the Samaritans are positive because we've heard of the Good Samaritan story hundreds of times. Or at least I have considering the number of Good Samaritan skits I've sat through at KidsChurch. But during this period, the Samaritan playing the hero in Jesus' parable would have been absurd! Samaritans were deemed as not only social outcasts of society but also despised enemies of the Jews. They were often viewed as half-bred and ritually unclean.

But despite all this, or perhaps because of it, Jesus chooses a Samaritan to play the hero. The Samaritan out of all people is the one who decides to risk his safety and help the man.

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He commits his time, his resources, his money and most importantly his heart to the suffering man.

Now there's a distinction between knowing the law and actually living it out. Did the priests and Levites know the law better than the Samaritan? Probably. But did they actually live it out? Not so much. Think back to the participants in the experiment I mentioned at the start. Even while on their way to teach about the Good Samaritan, many of them still decided not to help the stranger in need. Their excuse was time.

Where in our lives are we disobedient? What excuses are we making each time there is an opportunity to help someone out? Maybe we don't have enough time like the people in the experiment, maybe we don't have enough money, or maybe we assume someone else will take care of it? Are we satisfied with just *knowing* the truth or are we actually *living it out*?

James puts it like this:

***Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do (James 1:23-25).***

### **Jesus Redefines Neighbourly Love**

The third thing we learn through the parable of the Good Samaritan is that Jesus redefines neighbourly love. At the end of the parable Jesus asks the lawyer ***“Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”*** He asks the lawyer who “acted like a neighbour?” Jesus challenges the lawyer to think beyond what he's always known - that only Jews are his neighbours and introduces a new radical idea that in fact everyone is his neighbour.

Before the parable the lawyer would have only identified a Jew as a neighbour to the injured man but afterwards he replies ***“The one who had mercy on him.”*** Whilst the lawyer still feels uncomfortable admitting the Samaritan was the neighbour to the injured man, we can see that he is beginning to understand what being a neighbour means. He begins to

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understand that being a neighbour is about caring for others without the expectation of gaining anything in return. Neighbourly love looks like risking everything to help someone in need. Neighbourly love looks like doing the thing no one else is willing to do.

### **Go and Do Likewise**

Jesus then ends the parable by instructing the lawyer to **“Go and do likewise.”** This isn't meant to be taken lightly. He tells the lawyer to put into practice what he's learned. And it's no different with us! What will we do with this message? Will we let it linger at the back of our minds or will we choose to live the fullness of life that Jesus is calling us into?

Where will you see a neighbour this week? Maybe we'll see a half dead man at the side of the road - but it's more likely that we'll see someone at our school, university, workplace, or here at church that needs our help? Maybe it's that group project partner who let you down? Maybe it's the coworker who always wants help at the wrong time? Maybe someone needs a ride home, and it's not on your way! It's not just about doing the grand acts of kindness that make it on news headlines but actually using those daily opportunities to help and love others.

Ultimately, the parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us three things.

1. Firstly, **love requires humility**. Our neighbour isn't just someone who is easy to love but everyone whom we encounter. When we begin to see people through God's lens, all as deserving of love, that is when we can experience the fullness of life that Jesus promises us.
2. Secondly, **God values obedience over knowledge**. One can know all the law like the back of their hand yet their heart can be miles away from God. If we don't live out what we believe, what do we really have?
3. Thirdly, **Jesus redefines neighbourly love** as the genuine desire to help others without expecting anything in return. A loving neighbour is someone who looks for the opportunities to help others in need. Jesus challenges us to follow the Samaritan's example.

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**Reflecting on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2026:** Last week Caleb challenged us to think about the conditions we place on our discipleship. Where have you noticed yourself thinking “I will follow you Jesus, but first...”?

These questions help you think more about this message. We hope they might be a conduit for conversation and reflection, encouraging us to wrestle with how this message might practically work itself out in our lives.

1. What’s a small act of kindness you’ve seen recently that restored your faith in humanity?
2. If this parable was set in 2026, where would it take place — and what would the modern-day version look like?
3. When you see someone in need, what barriers most often keep you from acting?
4. Who do you instinctively struggle to see as your “neighbour”? Are there particular people (because of personality, politics, history, culture, or inconvenience) whom you subtly exclude from your responsibility to love?

If you’d like to chat with someone about your spiritual journey or anything else going on in your life, please contact us at [care@windsorpark.org.nz](mailto:care@windsorpark.org.nz); **we’re better together and no perfect people are allowed.**

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Below are some further resources that may take the message further and deeper and enable you to explore other viewpoints on the same theme. We also encourage you to engage with the preacher if there are further questions you have or if you'd like clarification on anything. Email [info@windsorpark.org.nz](mailto:info@windsorpark.org.nz) and we'll direct your query to the appropriate person.

1. Recently we launched a **Podcast** to dive **Beyond the Message** each week. Give it a listen as we reflect on this message and answer any questions you have on it! We're excited to continue the conversation!  
<https://www.windsorpark.org.nz/podcasts>
2. To find out more about the **Good Samaritan Study** and the social psychology of helping check out this short video.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-rt2X2JaDk>
3. **Right Now Media** has some amazing companion resources for our series on Luke. Jump into this video teaching from G.D. Greear on Luke 10 which covers the Good Samaritan – perhaps this could be helpful resource for your life group as you continue in our King & Kingdom Come series. (Note you can create a free account for Right Now Media via the resources tab on our website)  
<https://app.righnowmedia.org/en/player/video/908565?session=937517&position=246>