

The Generous Samaritan

Luke 10: 25-37 | Ryan Pfeiffer | June 22, 2025

INTRO. JUNE OF 362 AD. Emperor Julian in a letter to Arsacius, the high priest of Galatia: “Why do we not observe how the kindness of Christians to strangers...has done the most to advance their cause? It is disgraceful that... the impious Galileans [Christians] support not only their own poor but ours as well, all men see that our people lack aid from us... Each of these things, I think, ought really to be practiced by us.”

From an emperor who vigorously discriminated against Christians!
There is something about generosity that uniquely witnesses to the gospel!
Yet despite biblical conviction we can find ourself struggling to be generous!

FOCUS: In his parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus helps us reflect on 1) the challenges of being generous. 2) attributes of a generous life.

THE CHALLENGES OF GENEROSITY. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

Fascinating that Jesus chooses a priest and a Levite as negative examples.

Lev 25:35 “If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them...”

Avoidance. The choice to not even engage someone in need.

- Busyness... schedules to keep... these men are on their way somewhere
- Controversial... purity laws re: touching dead people...
- Compassion fatigue... been burned in past... beyond cautious-> cynical.
- Desensitized- Overwhelmed by all the need in the world... we do nothing.
- Felt Helplessness... We feel our small efforts can't make a difference.
- Small vision... Strangers are beyond the range of our concern.

Co-dependency. Other end of spectrum is Co-dependency. Counterfeit Compassion.

Boundaries— a pattern of unhealthy emotional and relational boundaries, where a person takes responsibility for others' emotions, problems, or behaviors—often to their own detriment or the detriment of the other person. — Cloud and Townsend.

Signs of co-dependency:

- Enmeshed relationship
- Controlling... I am helping to have control over them/ their situation
- Compulsion... where we don't feel we can say 'no'. (People- pleasing)
- Strings attached... “they owe me... you owe me...”
- Enabling unhealthy, illegal, addictive, regressive patterns of behavior.

It's counterfeit because Spirit inspired generosity is driven by:

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1. Personal conviction
2. Joyful faith vs fear

THE ATTRIBUTES OF A GENEROUS LIFE. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 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. 35 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.'

Samaritans and Jews.

- It's startling that Jesus chooses a Samaritan to give the positive example.
- 500 yrs of Long standing history of violence and animosity between them.

2 wonderful qualities of a generous life

First: He's Interruptible.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*— "We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God. God will be constantly crossing our paths and canceling our plans by sending us people with claims and petitions. We may pass them by, preoccupied with our more important tasks... When we do that we pass by the visible sign of the Cross..."

Second: He has a BIG VISION. He sees that this stranger is his concern.

The Bible has a lot to say to us about generosity for the stranger...

In the Old Testament this includes the foreigner, the stranger, the sojourner:

"He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt."

Jesus takes up this concern for the stranger in Matthew 25:35-36: ("Cross")

1. I was hungry, you fed me.
2. I was thirsty, you gave me water.
3. I was a stranger, you invited me in.
4. I was naked, you clothed me.
5. I was sick, you cared for me.
6. I was in prison, you visited me.

When!!? To which Jesus responds, v40 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

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Third: He has a Generous Spirit. In v33 he sees AND takes pity before he acts

A generous spirit cuts through controversial entanglements... not concerned with placating the self-righteous demands of political parties/ ideologies.

I'm not prescribing policy... I think can have generous spirit on both sides...

A generous spirit sees Christ in the other person because Christ took the place of every person on the cross

Christ in the stranger...

Christ in the criminal...

Christ in the religious leader...

Christ in the desperate...

Christ in my neighbor...