

# The Samaritan's Second Coming

The Good Samaritan is so popular that he's crossed over from the Good Book to medical and legal books:

"Good Samaritan laws generally provide basic legal protection for those who assist a person who is injured or in danger. In essence, these laws protect the 'Good Samaritan' from liability if unintended consequences result from their assistance. *All 50 [U.S.] states and the District of Columbia have some type of Good Samaritan law.*" (Emphasis supplied)

Not only are protections offered to Good Samaritans, but in some cases, there might be legal consequences for people that don't offer help:

"A person is not obligated by law to do first aid in most [U.S.] states. . . . However, some states will consider it an act of negligence though, if a person doesn't at least call for help."

Who was the original Good Samaritan that inspired so many modern laws?

## Let's read about him for ourselves

Luke 10:30-36, God's Word:

Jesus replied, "A man went from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way robbers stripped him, beat him, and left him for dead.

"By chance, a priest was traveling along that road. When he saw the man, he went around him and continued on his way. Then a Levite came to that place. When he saw the man, he, too, went around him and continued on his way.

"But a Samaritan, as he was traveling along, came across the man. When the Samaritan saw him, he felt sorry for the man, went to him, and cleaned and bandaged his wounds. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day the Samaritan took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. He told the innkeeper, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than that, I'll pay you on my return trip.'

"Of these three men, who do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers?"

The expert said, "The one who was kind enough to help him."

Jesus told him, "Go and imitate his example!"

## What do Samaritans look like today?



*Interesting who Jesus chose to be the  
"good guy." Who are the overlooked  
Samaritans today?*

We can't afford to miss the irony of the Samaritan being the good guy. Who would be the equivalent of a 21<sup>st</sup> century Samaritan in America? Perhaps Yemenis, Syrians, Haitians, or Guatemalans? Of course, scorning and suspecting African Americans never seems to go out of style. Even when working in helping professions, black uniformed firemen have to produce ID for bystanders to prove they're not burglars. Some view African Americans as such a menace that they call for police intervention on our 8 year-old girls for selling cold water on a hot day!

The point is that whoever we look down on in our society is the kind of person Jesus propped up as the model neighbor for us to emulate, but it goes deeper than that!

## **MLK's Key to a Deeper Meaning**

In a 1955 sermon, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. criticized the "The One-Sided Approach of the Good Samaritan." He stated we must not be content with "patching things up," but we also need "tear down unjust conditions and build anew." This was a frequent theme in his preaching.

In his 1962 sermon, "On Being a Good Neighbor," Dr. King admonished:



*Martin Luther King Jr., on being a true Good Samaritan: "True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. . . It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring."*

"It is not enough to aid a wounded man on the Jericho road; it is also necessary to change the conditions which make robbery possible. Philanthropy is marvelous, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the need for working to remove the circumstances of economic injustice which make the work of philanthropy necessary."

In his 1967 sermon, "A Time to Break Silence," King warned:

"One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. . . It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring."

Was King right? Did Jesus' model neighbor have a deficient, one-sided approach? Or have we overlooked some aspects of the Samaritan's plan?

# The Samaritan's Wholistic Plan

## The Samaritan Promised to Return

"Take care of him. If you spend more than that, I'll pay you on my return trip." The Samaritan didn't tell the innkeeper the day or the hour of his return, but promised to come back. This hotel owner was given an assignment to house and heal a penniless stranger for an unlimited period of time. How will this affect his business plan? What will the other customers think? How much personal and professional time would this take? What if the thugs who beat this man up come looking for more? Most importantly, can the innkeeper trust the Samaritan to return?

## The Samaritan Promised to Repay

"Take care of him. If you spend more than that, I'll pay you on my return trip." The Samaritan gave a broad command, with no spending limit in sight. Did the hotel owner have confidence the Samaritan had the ability and the integrity to repay? If he really trusts the Samaritan to repay any expenses, will he seek to create a profit margin by cutting corners in caring for his guest? If he truly believes the Samaritan's promises, then is the innkeeper actually sacrificing anything for coming out of pocket? Proverbs 19:17 says, "Whoever has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his good deed."

## The Samaritan Prompted Rehabilitation

The Samaritan wasn't merely a philanthropist. He became an advocate by calling upon the innkeeper to dedicate his time and resources to help relieve the suffering. He entrusted the innkeeper with the ultimate stewardship – a human life. The well-being of this roadside casualty was now in the hands of the hotel owner.

The Samaritan's promise to return and repay provoked an expectation. The innkeeper was a man of influence, who surely had conversations with other influencers about his mission to restore his new friend to wholeness. He probably appealed to his peers in government and business about the need to eliminate the repetitious episodes of roadside robberies. When they asked, "Why should we be concerned?" He responded, "Because the Samaritan is concerned." When they argued, "We can't afford it!" He confidently replied, "Don't worry. The Samaritan can."



## Doesn't this Samaritan sound familiar?

Jesus put himself in this parable to identify with the marginalized. Critics sought to insult Him by calling him a Samaritan – basically equating being a Samaritan with being demon-possessed (John 8:48). Instead of seeking to save his reputation by distancing himself from the disinherited, Jesus embraced their slur and transformed it. He proved that we can break the molds others press us into and promote new perspectives for our own lives.

By becoming the Samaritan in the parable, Jesus humbles his critics. They're called to honor "the other" if they seek to be honored by God. By putting Himself in a story showing what a true neighbor looks like, He also shows what a true follower of His looks like. True followers of Jesus, future citizens of His kingdom, aren't determined by nationality, race, social status, mistakes, or misfortune.

## Rebuilding Jericho Road

Following His example, Christ's true followers are willing to take on demeaning labels as they help people in need and advocate on their behalf. They – we – I, must remember that when we spend ourselves for others, our efforts will be repaid when He returns. We must also be mindful that the Jericho roads of this world won't be permanently and perfectly torn down and built anew until the Samaritan's Second Coming.