

Social Distancing is in the Bible (and It's Not a Good Thing)

Luke 10:25-34

The lawyer wanted a legalistic answer that could be debated and ultimately dismissed

The specific question is, “Who is my neighbour?”

What?

You can't be the Samaritan showing mercy until you're in the ditch knowing mercy

The traditional view—

The man in the ditch represents people Jesus hung out with

The priest and Levite represent legalists—the lawyer

The Samaritan illustrates how to love your neighbour

But Jesus didn't answer the man's question, “Who is my neighbour who needs mercy?”

The Samaritan (the neighbour in the story) is the one who showed mercy; he's not the one in need of mercy

Then Jesus said something that was impossible for the lawyer to do—“Go and do likewise”

Connection with Jesus—

Later Jesus told a story to some other self-righteous people

A Pharisee went to the temple and said, “Thank you God that I'm not like others who sin”

Luke 18:13, NIV—“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner’

The tax collector went away right with God

Jesus often aimed this message at the lawyers and Pharisees, that righteousness can't be obtained by works

The priest and Levite in the story are examples of this
The Samaritan was acting outside the law, out of mercy

You can't inherit eternal life by works of the law

The Big Question—What did Jesus mean then?

The lawyer had asked, “Who should be the object of my love,” from his high and mighty position

But Jesus changed the question and forced the lawyer to answer from the perspective of the ditch dude

Reason—The lawyer needed to see he was the guy in the ditch; the route to being the Samaritan is to start in the ditch

So What?

Sometimes believers can be the robbers

Also, we can never act like the Samaritan with pride, because then we're as needy as the guy in the ditch

We love others by lifting them up as we humbly follow Jesus' example and are enabled by His Spirit

That can only happen by first becoming the guy in the ditch

In lifting others up, we need to remember our own ditch

The last word—Paul

I Timothy 1:15-16, ESV—Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life

Paul never forgot the ditch from which he had been lifted

Now What?

Take time to remember your ditch and the mercy that lifted you out

Pray for the Spirit's enabling to make you a person of mercy