

Ice breaker question:

Have you ever been robbed or has your house or car been broken into? What was that like? OR Have you ever stopped to help someone hurt or in trouble? What happened?

Discuss:

1. When the expert in the law asks, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answers with a parable. How would you answer that question today: Who is my neighbor?
2. When speaking of inheriting eternal life, the expert in the law gives the answer in terms of actions – love God and love others. Jesus tells a story of action – of a Samaritan showing mercy – and then Jesus says, "Go and do likewise." Why do you think this parable focuses more on actions than words?
3. Often when reading this familiar parable, we put ourselves in the place of the Good Samaritan, the hero of the story. What would it be like to be the person hurt on the side of the road? How does this perspective change your understanding of the story?
4. How have the times when you have been vulnerable or in pain helped you to love others in ways you would not otherwise have been able to do?
5. In the story, a Priest and a Levite (good guys) don't help the man beaten by robbers. The Samaritan (the bad guy) helps the man in trouble. What is Jesus teaching through using these characters?
6. The Priest and the Levite may have had reason not to stop and help. If they stopped, they would be defiled by touching the injured man, and would risk being robbed themselves on this road. In what ways have we been reticent to care for someone in need when we have been fearful for our spiritual health or our physical well-being?
7. Who would win the Good Samaritan award in your life or in our church and why? Where in our church or community can we show mercy?

Prayer:

Question 4 talks about times you have been vulnerable. As you close in prayer, tell your Home Group how they can be praying for you specifically. Asking for prayer for ourselves helps us show our vulnerability to one another and helps build community. Additionally, keep the following prayer requests from our church family in mind as you close.

- > Prayers of comfort for the Baker family in the death of Erika's grandmother.
- > Prayers of healing for Johnny Lawrence, step mother of Margi Peake; Mark, son of Shannon Robinson, assistant director of Noah's Ark, and Hadley Lehr, daughter of Heather and Jim.

Upcoming events at ZPC:

- > Provide food for ZPC's High School Ministry. Contact: Linda Forler [lindaforler@gmail.com; 317.402.9613]
- > A few spots are still available to serve homeless families through the IHN from November 8-15 | every day from 5 pm-6 am. Contact: Margaret Gordon [shirazguru@aol.com; 317.219.9017]

Background for home group leaders:

Jews hated Samaritans. Jews saw themselves as pure descendants of Abraham and saw Samaritans as half-breeds – the Samaritans were Jews from the northern kingdom who had intermarried with other people. Jesus says to love our enemies, and is challenging this expert in the law and us today to see our enemies with fresh eyes. The Samaritan is the hero of the story, because he showed love and mercy in his actions – just as we are called to do today.

[Question 1] The neighbor in the parable is the one who had mercy on the injured man. The neighbor is the Samaritan. Our neighbor today could be anyone, not just our physical neighbor that lives on our street. Our neighbor could be one that we are uncomfortable with, one that we might disagree with, and the one who shows love and mercy.

[Question 2] Often in the parables and elsewhere in Jesus' teaching, we are called to love with actions more than words. We are saved by faith through grace – the grace of Jesus Christ. Yet at the same time, we are called to live out our faith with actions. We are called to go the extra mile, to turn the other cheek, to love the enemy, and to care for those who are hurting.

[Question 3] Each of us probably has a story where we have been hurting or on "the side of the road." What is it like to be there? What is it like to be helped when hurting? Having this perspective can make us more humble in a healthy way. We realize we can't do everything by ourselves or always "pull ourselves up by our bootstraps." It is healthy to allow others to help us when we are truly in need. That perspective then encourages us to serve others.

[Question 4] Most of us can relate to a time when we, or someone we are close to, has been in the hospital with an illness. During those times, we can be vulnerable or open to others that we trust to share our troubles with. By being vulnerable, we allow others to help. By allowing others to help us, we learn what it is like to be served and loved and can share that experience with others.

[Question 5] Jesus often goes against the norm and the expected in his teaching. The good guys might not always be so good, and the bad guy might not always be so bad. We are called to love others, even our enemies, even those we find hard to love. The one in this story who shows mercy, normally the bad guy, is actually the hero.

[Question 6] An example here might be when you thought about stopping for that person whose car was broken down on the side of the road, but it was in an area you thought might be dangerous. You might have risked your own safety by stopping, so you kept driving. Do your group members have stories like these?

[Question 7] As the group leader, you might have an example in mind of who would win a Good Samaritan award. Who has shown mercy in a really difficult spot? We may be called to show mercy in difficult spots where people are very different than us – similar to the differences between the Jew and the Samaritan. Jesus calls us to be different, to show mercy, to any neighbor.