

7/13/25  
5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
For Group Meetings from July 6<sup>th</sup> – July 12<sup>th</sup>

**OUR MISSION:** As a missional congregation we *celebrate* Christ's presence, *invite* people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and *equip* them to *serve* in a broken world.

**Prayer of the Day:** O Lord God, your mercy delights us, and the world longs for your loving care. Hear the cries of everyone in need, and turn our hearts to love our neighbors with the love of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER**

**Share:** How did last week's scripture (Luke 10:1-11, 16-20) work in your life this week?

**Mission:**

- What was most satisfying about your ministry last week?
- Where do you see God at work?
- How did you participate in God's missional activity?
- How did inviting go last Sunday?

**Hear:** Luke 10:25-37

**Explore Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

1. Why does the lawyer ask Jesus the question, "Who is my neighbor?"
2. The lawyer's question in verse 29 and Jesus' answer in verse 36 don't quite match up. What's the difference?
3. What lengths does the Samaritan go to help the man in need?

**Connect Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

1. When have you felt like the wounded person in the story? Who showed you mercy?
2. Who do you struggle to see as your neighbor? What prevents you from stopping to help someone in need?
3. Have you been in a position to be a "Good Samaritan"? What made it hard or easy?

**Memorize this verse:** He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:37) What might it look like to "go and do likewise" in your own life this week?

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:**

**Obey:** During this week follow through on your intentions.

**Meditate:** Meditate on Psalm 25:1-10. How does this speak into your life?

**Reflect:** What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

### Notes for ChristCare leaders:

Two elements of this very familiar parable stood out that I'd not noticed before. First, I tend to think that the guy in the ditch is "my neighbor." And I think there's good reason for that. After all, the whole story is in response to the lawyer's question, "who is my neighbor." And Jesus confronts him with the need to define neighbor not in terms of proximity (the person next door) or tribe (the person like me), but rather the person in need. That interpretation remains both useful and important, as it calls us to put another's needs above all other considerations, something that seems sorely lacking from contemporary debate on all manner of issues.

The closing lines of the exchange between Jesus and the lawyer challenge that as the only interpretation, however. "Which of these three," Jesus asks, "do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" And the lawyer responds, "The one who showed him mercy." Suddenly it's not just the person in need who is our neighbor, but the person who responds to our need, even if it's not someone we expected to respond or even want to respond. That's the edge of having a Samaritan act as a neighbor. Could/would the lawyer accept help from the Samaritan, someone he'd been raised to despise? Could/would we? Jesus' twist on the directional force of the story - we assume right up to the end it's about us helping others, when suddenly it's about us being helped by others - creates a vision of greater mutuality than I'd realized. Jesus is inviting us to identify with each other primarily in terms of our vulnerability and shared human need rather than any external distinctions or circumstances. Whether giving help or receiving it, whether in the position of need or abundance, we are bound to each other in our vulnerability and mortality. What matters is that we are human, not what tribe or party or group or any other distinction that may matter to us but can't be used to reduce our very humanness, our status as children of God and kin and kindred with each other.

The second thing I noticed is another shift. The lawyer asks, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And when he responds to Jesus' question by quoting Scripture, Jesus says, "Do this and you will live." Live. As in now, this moment. Jesus doesn't say, "you will inherit eternal life," or "live forever" or "eternally," or "join me in heaven" or "experience eternal bliss," or any of a hundred things he could have said that would parallel the lawyer's question. Rather, he says simply, "Do this and you will live." Which makes me think that life isn't something to possess or strive for or covet or earn but it something to be, well, lived, acted out, embraced right now. To live in the kingdom of God is to see others with compassion, to see others as fellow members of God's kingdom and family, to see others in terms of how we are all joined by our need, our possibility, and our shared dependence on God's grace and each other.

**Thanks be to God,**

Pastor Thadd (tbook@desertcross.org)

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#### *Traditional version:*

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us  
from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,  
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen

#### *Contemporary version:*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those  
Who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial  
And deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the  
power, and the glory are yours,  
Now and forever. Amen