
Small Group Discussion Guide — June 19, 2022

- Series: The Reconciling Heart of God
- Sermon: Who Is My Neighbor?
- Scripture: Luke 10: 25-37

FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK

In what ways have you seen God's grace and/or mercy at work in your day-to-day life? Can you share specific examples of how He has poured them out onto you this week?

CONNECT

1. What stood out to you from this past week's service, and why?
2. Describe the last time you and your neighbor met unexpectedly. Perhaps in the backyard, or maybe at the grocery store. What were the circumstances, and how did the interaction play out? What did you learn about your neighbor? What did he or she learn about you?

ENGAGE

1. Read Luke 10:25-29.
 - So often Jesus spoke in parables, but here, Jesus seems to be speaking very, very directly. What does Jesus's response in verse 28, and its explicit claim, suggest to you?
 - How do you react to the response of the man, the expert in the law? What do you think the text means when it says he "wanted to justify himself?"
2. Read Luke 10: 30-37.
 - What do you make of Jesus's use of a priest and Levite as a foil for the response of the Samaritan? We could probably assume that, as men of the law, they had a pretty good idea that they were duty-bound to love their neighbors. But they not only passed by — they moved to the other side of the road, distancing themselves. What might Jesus have been suggesting?
 - In his book, *The Divine Conspiracy*, Dallas Willard calls the Samaritan, "the despised half-breed," and goes on to say, "Of the truly spiritual, as any Jew would have known, he (the Samaritan), hasn't a glimmer." And yet, Jesus uses the Samaritan to make his point. Why might that be?

APPLY

1. How might we hide our hearts behind our knowledge and right beliefs? How might we justify our failure to follow God's true law by searching for complications and technicalities?
2. Try to view each of the players in this passage with compassion. How can you identify with the man with whom Jesus is speaking? The priest and the Levite in the parable? Why might they have passed by? Self-preservation, as Pete suggested? Fear, perhaps? Something else?
3. Pete suggested that Jesus has redefined what neighbor means. We make a person a neighbor by loving them. Consider how Pete often says, "You go nowhere by accident." Connecting these thoughts, perhaps each person we meet is intentionally brought into our path as God's invitation to make them our neighbor. How might this affect your interaction with people this week?
4. Pete said, "This parable does not call us to great mission work or to save a nation but to simply notice the one on the side of the road." How might we use grand ideas and big campaigns to blind us to the needs of those right in front of us? How can we readjust our focus?

PRAYER

Beloved Jesus, how often we hide our broken hearts behind our big thoughts and wise interpretation. But instead of turning away from us, you see our hearts and respond to our questions in love. And rather than simply telling us how we might act, rebuking us, or waving a finger in our faces, you show us what it means to recognize the need in another, and to meet that need in a way that soothes. We are so grateful for your grace and mercy. Calm our hearts of our fears. Grant us a measure of your perfect peace, so that we might follow your example and offer wine and oil to those in pain, rather than instruction and advice. Amen.

GOING DEEPER

Who do you believe are the "Samaritans" of our day? You know, those people who, in Willard's words, haven't "a glimmer of spirituality" in them. People on the other side of the political aisle, perhaps? Those who do not share our Christian dogma and doctrine, maybe? What does this parable say about them? What might we learn from their examples?

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 5:17-20

QUOTES

"While we may be criticized for what we believe we (the church) should be famous for our compassion and generosity."

Andy Stanley

"So we don't first define a class of people who will be our neighbors and then select only them as objects of our love - leaving the rest to lie where they fall. Jesus deftly rejects the question, 'Who is my neighbor?' and substitutes the only question really relevant here: 'To whom will I be a neighbor?'"

Dallas Willard