

James Rafferty-Q1-L12-2025-Whom is My Neighbor-March 20

Lesson 12: Love *and* Justice: The Two Greatest Commandments (Thursday) March 15-21

Thursday *March 20*

Who Is My Neighbor?

In Luke's account, just after Jesus declares the two greatest commandments of love for God and love for a neighbor, a lawyer, "wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' " (*Luke 10:29, NKJV*). In response to this, Jesus tells the now-familiar, but then shocking, parable of the good Samaritan.

Read the parable of the good Samaritan in Luke 10:25–37. What is this passage saying in light of the cry of the prophets for mercy and justice and of the kinds of injustices that different people groups have inflicted on "others" throughout human history?

30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

In the story of the good Samaritan Jesus has given a picture of Himself and of His mission.

Jesus did not just talk about justice; He came to bring it. He was and will be the fulfillment of the prophetic call and longing for justice (see Luke 4:16–21 in light of Isaiah 61:1, 2). He is the desire of all nations, especially those who recognize their need for deliverance.

In direct contrast to the enemy, who grasped for power and sought to usurp God's throne, Jesus lowered Himself and identified with those under sin, injustice, and oppression (without being infected by sin), and He defeated the enemy by giving Himself in love in order to establish justice as the One who is just and the Justifier of all who believe. How can we claim to be concerned about the law that Christ died to uphold if we are not concerned about what Christ calls the weightier matters of the law?

Psalm 9:8, 9 proclaims, “He shall judge the world in righteousness, and He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble” (*NKJV*). Likewise, Psalm 146:7–9 adds, God “executes justice for the oppressed” and “gives food to the hungry. The Lord gives freedom to the prisoners. The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord raises those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the strangers; He relieves the fatherless and widow; but the way of the wicked He turns upside down” (*NKJV*).

How much clearer could the Word of God be in regard to how we should seek to minister to those around us who are in need and are hurting?

What can we learn from the life and ministry of Jesus about reaching out to those in need? Even if we can’t perform miracles as He did, for many hurt people how could our help be deemed “miraculous” enough?

SE-1Q-2025, *God’s Love and Justice*, by John C. Peckham