

## ViralStJames Bible Study #10: The Good Samaritan

### The Background: Beware of setting boundaries

#### Luke 10 25-38

This story, found only in Luke, is often seen as one that simply encourages a duty to care for the less fortunate. Whilst that is present, there is far more of a challenge posed by Jesus in this parable than that. This is where it helps to understand the context. Jews and Samaritans were very hostile to each other, each seeing themselves as heirs to God's promises, and seeing the other side as beyond the pale. Jews considered that God dwelt in the Temple at Jerusalem, whilst Samaritans worshipped him at a mountain in their territory. The story of the Woman at the Well in John 4 highlights the mutual animosity (John 4.v 9). Perhaps a modern comparison might be Israelis and Palestinians. Jesus is questioned by 'an expert in the law' which would have meant a man familiar with the Torah, or Jewish law found in the first five books of what we call the Old Testament. The answers he received from Jesus may have surprised him somewhat.....

### The Passage

**Luke 10:25** Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" <sup>27</sup> He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

**Luke 10:29** But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" <sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' <sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" <sup>37</sup> He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

**Luke 10:38** Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.

### The Questions

- 1) What do you think were the motives of the Expert in the Law in asking these questions of Jesus? How does Jesus respond?
- 2) How does Jesus respond to the Expert's first answer?
- 3) Luke was not alone in bringing out the importance of action and not just knowledge. What does the Apostle John say in 1 John v 16-20? Do you see any similarities with what Jesus was saying in the parable?

