

The Life and Ministry of Christ, Part 29

Those who criticized Jesus had just said He was a Samaritan and had a demon, (John 8:48). When Jesus revealed that He was the great I AM and that He made Himself to be equal with God, those in the Temple “took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by,” (John 8:59). Shortly after that, one of the experts in the Law of Moses began to question Jesus. **Luke 10:25–26 NKJV** And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?”

Calling Jesus teacher seems to be a continuation of the question of His credentials and right to teach. The word “teacher” comes from the word *didaskalos* — *διδάσκαλος* — which means one who provides instruction. Although they all questioned His right to teach them, the lawyer recognized that Jesus was teaching. Throughout the gospels, the disciples called Jesus both “Teacher” and “Rabbi” because He held a unique position and model for all believers. “Rabbi” - *רַבִּי* is a title of respect meaning master, my great one, or my superior. The distinction between “teacher” and “Rabbi” is subtle. A rabbi was a distinguished teacher or someone respected who imparted information that presented a comprehensive understanding of God’s instruction and the Torah as a way of life. A rabbi was not just one who imparted information but embodied the traditions to new generations. This lawyer’s use of the word “teacher” was not a statement of respect, but challenge. Jesus said the scribes and Pharisees love to be called “Rabbi.” It was the great aspiration of a student to become a rabbi like his teacher. In Matthew 23:8 Jesus told His disciples, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Rather than answering the man, Jesus asked him “*What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?*” When Jesus asked this, the lawyer quoted from the Shema, Judaism’s foundational declaration of faith from Deuteronomy 6:4-9. It begins with “Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one!”



Everyone in Israel knew these monotheistic words of faith and obligation to love and serve God with complete devotion. They practiced this by reciting the shema, wearing phylacteries, putting mezuzah on their doorposts, and rejecting other gods,

(Deuteronomy 6:4-9). Both the phylacteries and mezuzah contained these Hebrew scriptures from the Torah and Deuteronomy 11:13-21.

Luke 10:27 NKJV So he answered and said, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’ ”

There are two parts of his response.

The first part spoke about loving the LORD your God above anything else. The second part of his answer came from God’s command to “love your neighbor as yourself.” Notice the degree of this love and devotion to God and one’s neighbor.

Luke 10:28 NKJV And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.”

In Matthew 19:17 Jesus said: “If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

His words raise an important question that many are still debating. Are we free from keeping the commandments since Christ died on the cross and we have been given grace? Does grace remove the commandments and law of God?

Ephesians 2:8 NKJV For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

Galatians 2:16 NKJV Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Many questions arise if we remove any part of God’s word. If salvation by faith in Christ releases one from obeying the commands of God, do we also remove loving God and loving one another? The real question is not whether the law has been removed or made invalid, but how can a person be made right in God’s sight? It is quite clear that through the obedience of the Law none can be saved, because we all sin and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23). In Romans 3:10-12, we are told that none is righteous, no, not one... there is none who does good, no, not one.” The only way one can be saved and made righteous in God’s sight is by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Law serves to point each of us to our need for a Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. Do you understand the value of the Law?

Luke 10:29 NKJV But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

The suggestion implies there must be some limit to my duty to love. He was looking for the minimal obedience, while Jesus looks for unconditional obedience. Jesus explained that your neighbor encompasses not just blood relations, acquaintances, or those who share your nationality or religion, but anyone you can help—including those you would normally avoid and even your enemies. This lawyer's question "Who is my neighbor?" emphasizes worthiness rather than the attitude of love.

As a response to this dialogue, Jesus gave the Parable of the Good Samaritan – Luke 10:30-37

Luke 10:30 NKJV Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho descends about 3,325 feet in 17 miles. It was known as the "Way of Blood" because bandits would hide in the difficult terrain along the road.

Luke 10:31-32 NKJV Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.

Luke 10:33 NKJV But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.

It is interesting that Jesus used a Samaritan in the parable to minister to the man that had been attacked and left to die.

Luke 10:34 NKJV So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

Luke 10:35 NKJV On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.'

Luke 10:36-37 NKJV So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

There are probably two ways to interpret this parable.

First, we should show mercy to others in need. Second, when looking back at the lawyers and Pharisees comments about the Lord, Jesus was like the Good Samaritan. The Parable of the Good Samaritan was an attack on the practices of the priests and Levites because they refused

to do anything that might make them impure. The Law condemned touching anything that was unclean and they would never come near a person's body that was ritually unclean or possibly dead. When Jesus spoke of a despised Samaritan showing compassion rather than their spiritual leaders, He was saying they were a contradiction to the very law they were trying to uphold. They prioritized ceremonial purity over love and compassion.

In continuation of the theme of this parable, we are given contrasts between Mary and Martha – Luke 10:38-42.

Jesus just had the dialogue with the lawyer where they discussed loving the Lord your God “with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.” (Luke 10:27) In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus showed a specific level of compassion and care. As Jesus enters the home of Martha and Mary, watch their attention and devotion to the Lord.

Luke 10:38-39 NKJV Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

The house of Mary and Martha was a few miles east of Jerusalem. This is where Jesus stayed during His final week on earth.

Luke 10:40 NKJV But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.”

Which one of the two sisters was demonstrating love for the Lord? One was busy taking care of all of the stuff because they had guests in the house. The other sister sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. Martha became disturbed that Mary was not helping her prepare to serve everyone. Listen to what Jesus said was the one thing that is needed.

Luke 10:41–42 NKJV And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

Each of us must determine what is the most important thing in life. Mary chose the good part. She had a hunger for what Jesus was giving and the LORD said, “That will not be taken away from her.” When you go after the LORD with all your heart and soul, you are going after the good part.

Was Martha doing the wrong thing?

Jesus did not say that Martha was wrong in taking care of the natural needs of her company, but she was worried and troubled about many things. The focus of this text was not that people should ignore the chores around the house, but that our attitude toward Jesus and His word should take their proper place. All of the lessons in this study relate to the value we place in the Lord. He is the Lord and Master. He is the One who takes castaways and binds up their wounds, pouring in oil and wine. He is the One who pays the full cost for our recovery. He is more valuable than any thing else.

What lessons can we learn from these two texts?

The Good Samaritan shows service...

Mary and Martha shows service and devotion...

Which is of greater value?