

**TFTD 2025.12      Tuesday March 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**The good Samaritan: Luke 10.25-37**



**A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and took off, leaving him half dead.**

**How often have we heard the parable of the Good Samaritan? It must surely be the most well-known of the parables Jesus told. Its message of an inclusive love, of a sense of neighbourly responsibility that overcomes all barriers of race and religion, is the basis of Christian ethics and the standard to which the church is judged.**

**A couple of years ago, I noticed something about the parable that I hadn't especially noticed before and wondered about its significance. In the story Jesus told, he says that the man attacked by robbers on the road to Jericho was stripped and beaten. Which means that all the people who saw him in the road would have been looking at a naked man. Might this be significant?**

**We know that two of the three people who passed by the man who was lying in the road were Jewish and the third was a Samaritan. But we are**

not told anything about the identity of the man lying in the road. If he was lying naked in the road, I wondered if that meant that passersby could see if he was circumcised and, therefore, whether he was Jewish or Samaritan. But then I discovered that the Samaritans also practised circumcision so that isn't the point here.

Instead, I got to wondering whether the fact that the man was naked meant that nobody could tell what his identity was. He was just a man, without any other identity than a man who needed help. I think this is the point.

When we run the idea of nakedness through our Biblical echo chamber, what do we remember? There is the nakedness of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden – a man and a woman without any religious or ethnic identity – the ancestors of all people. And then there is the nakedness of Jesus on the cross. His clothes were removed, and the soldiers drew lots for them. His nakedness was part of his humiliation. But it also serves to underline that he is the Son of Man – he is like all men.

(All of the pictures of the good Samaritan suggest that the man he helped was not naked but had been left a sort of loin cloth by the robbers to protect his modesty. In the same way very few pictures of the crucified Christ show him naked. The text tells a different story.)

When we think about parables, we usually ask ourselves where we are in the parable. And so we ask, would we walk past a fellow human being who needed our mercy or would we help them. But we may also ask where is Jesus in the parable? Does the nakedness of the robbers' victim point to where Jesus is in the parable? Is he also lying in the road, in the same state as when he was nailed to the cross? Is this a parable about how we respond to the crucified Christ and all the people he represents that we pass by on the road?

"Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who

fell into the hands of the robbers?" The lawyer replied, "The one who shows him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

The parable is told as a response to the lawyer's question which is essentially, 'Surely we are not responsible for the whole of humanity; just those to whom we are related?' Jesus tells us to do as the good Samaritan did. Responding to the needs of all humanity may be too big a task for us to take on. But God will show us whom we are called to help. He will lead us to them – they will be lying in our path.

And when we see them, may we see only their essential humanity. May we see their Christ likeness. So we will do as the good Samaritan did and love our neighbour as if we are loving our God.

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