

Lesson 10 1 October, 2017

"One Thing Is Needful"

Lesson Scope: [Luke 10:25-42](#)

References in brackets are to Luke 10 unless otherwise noted

Lesson Focus

In this lesson we have two stories that have become familiar to Bible readers—the story of the Good Samaritan and the story of Mary sitting at Jesus' feet. In both cases Jesus seeks to help individuals to a deeper understanding of the practical outworking of love for God.

It is interesting to notice that shortly before this, the Samaritans refused to accommodate Jesus because He was on His way to Jerusalem. Now Jesus demonstrates goodwill by immortalizing the Good Samaritan as the hero of this story. He has the Good Samaritan doing many things the Samaritans refused to do for Him.

As we study these accounts, we are made to evaluate our own actions and responses. Is our love for God and our fellow men strong enough that we will deny ourselves so we can give expression to that love?

Love for God and others is basic to Christian experience. A person motivated by this love expresses his devotion by worship and service.

It has been said that an important part of time management is knowing the difference between things that are urgent and those that are important. In our lesson Martha was ready to overlook the importance of spending time with Jesus because of the urgent need to prepare the meal. The priest and Levite may have overlooked the needy man because they allowed urgent obligations to eclipse the importance of helping others. In our busy lifestyles, we also must guard against the danger of giving our time to the seemingly urgent things of life at the expense of the truly important things.

Lesson Aim: To identify attitudes and actions that spring from devotion to the Lord.

Theme Verse: [1 John 3:16](#). Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Lesson Text

Showing Compassion

Luke 10:25-37

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? ²⁶ He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? ²⁷ And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. ²⁸ And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. ²⁹ But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? 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. ³⁶ Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? ³⁷ And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Sitting at Jesus' Feet

Luke 10:38-42

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. ⁴⁰ But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. ⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: ⁴² But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Questions for Study

Showing Compassion

1. What faulty thinking did the lawyer reveal by attempting to justify himself?
2. What are some basic truths that can be learned from the story of the Good Samaritan?
3. What might be some current parallels to the man who fell among thieves?
4. How might we be guilty of acting as the priest and the Levite did?
5. What action of the Good Samaritan showed most clearly his concern for the wounded man?

Sitting at Jesus' Feet

6. What faulty thinking did Martha reveal by her question in 10:40?
7. What was the one needful thing that Mary had chosen?
8. When might we be most prone to be like Martha?

Analyzing the Passage

The word tempt, as used in 10:25, means "to test thoroughly." It is the same word Jesus used when He responded to Satan, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:7).

The Jews of Jesus' day despised the Samaritans. Many Jews on their way to or from Jerusalem would travel many extra miles to avoid Samaria. It seems the lawyer's prejudice against the Samaritans was so strong that when Jesus asked who was neighbor to him that fell among the thieves, he could not bring himself even to pronounce the word Samaritan.

The word also in 10:39 indicates that Mary was involved in the preparations but had also found time to spend with the Lord. Martha was trying to give Jesus a warm welcome, but her consuming zeal for service, without taking time for quiet worship, caused her to cool the warm welcome by demanding, "Lord dost thou not care .. ."

Principles and Applications

Showing Compassion

1. Devotion to the Lord enhances a proper understanding of the way to eternal life (10:25). A big part of understanding the way to eternal life depends on our willingness to do what we know. Those who are devoted to the Lord are willing to give up pleasures, deny self, and endure hardship to win eternal life. Satan will use every method available to test our devotion. He will use misunderstandings in the brotherhood; inconsistencies, real or

imagined; and the human tendency to resist the direction of the church as ways to confuse us. The individual who is devoted to the Lord keeps his focus on the goal. His devotion allows the Lord to direct him through the circumstances of life and will culminate in eternal life.

2. Devotion to the Lord is all-encompassing (10:27-29). It seems this lawyer took a legalistic view of God's requirements and hoped he could make a loophole. True devotion produces a consistent life that honors the intended purpose of given direction. This consistency needs to be practiced in applying Scriptures to our lives. Do we consistently support and practice our church's direction regarding nonconformity, insurance, or the use of technology, or is our attitude similar to that of the lawyer when he said, "And who is my neighbour?"

3. Devotion to the Lord transcends entrenched animosities and racial and cultural barriers (10:31-35). Jesus showed in this story that animosities and barriers are issues that can afflict religious people. If an able-bodied beggar asks us to share our hard-earned money with him, feelings can arise within us that build barriers. As recipients of God's love, we should be able to overcome those barriers. We might feel that it takes a lot of giving, but the good Samaritan set us an example of how to overcome barriers in reaching those in need.

4. Devotion to the Lord produces compassion for one's fellow men (10:36, 37). It was not the risk that seems to have kept the priest and Levite from helping the needy man. The Samaritan had a life and material goods to protect just as much as they did. If as the priest and Levite, we see ourselves as being too good to identify with the needy around us, perhaps we need to ask the Lord to make us a despised Samaritan so we can find it easier to heed the command, "Go, and do thou likewise."

Sitting at Jesus' Feet

5. Hospitality is a fruit of devotion to the Lord (10:38-39). Our Lord, when He lived on this earth, was not a hermit. He moved among men, sharing their joys and sorrows. It is this interest in our fellow men that motivates the child of God to be hospitable. It causes us to reach out to the stranger we do not know or the withdrawn brother who is easy to overlook. Our love for them makes us willing to open our homes to them and share what God has so graciously given us.

6. Devotion to the Lord creates a thirst to hear His words (10:39). In human relationships, two people devoted to each other consider it a privilege to take time to hear each other. The same is true in our relationship with God, when the Holy Spirit illuminates our understanding of the Word of

God and helps us apply Bible truths to everyday life. This should inspire us to continual study of God's Word. We should not be satisfied to give the Lord the remnants of a day spent dealing with the cares of life. Like Mary, we must not allow the urgent material things of life to crowd out the more important spiritual things.

7. Devotion to the Lord is a singular affection (10:41-42). "No man can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). We cannot afford a secret love for the world. Even legitimate things can take too prominent a place in our life. Service for the Lord can become more important than giving Him first place in our life. We can be so consumed with what we want to do for Him that we do not take time to seek His will and direction for our life. It does not matter in what area our heart is divided; unless it is recommitted, it will work for us as it did for Martha and bring a strain on our relationship with the Lord.

8. No outward force can sever the bonds of devotion to the Lord (10:42). The apostle Paul wrote, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, . . . nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39). When we choose to put Christ first in our life, God honors that choice and enables us to keep it so.

Important Teachings

1. Devotion to the Lord enhances a proper understanding of the way to eternal life (10:25).
2. Devotion to the Lord is all-encompassing (10:27-29).
3. Devotion to the Lord transcends entrenched animosities and racial and cultural barriers (10:31-35).
4. Devotion to the Lord produces compassion for one's fellow men (10:36, 37).
5. Hospitality is a fruit of devotion to the Lord (10:38-39).
6. Devotion to the Lord creates a thirst to hear His words (10:39).
7. Devotion to the Lord is a singular affection (10:41-42).
8. No outward force can sever the bonds of devotion to the Lord (10:42).

Answers to Questions

1. What faulty thinking did the lawyer reveal by attempting to justify himself?
His question, "Who is my neighbour?" implies that he felt the requirements of the law were unclear and maybe unable to be reached. His defensiveness

makes us suspect that some inconsistencies were in his life that he thought could be justified.

2. What are some basic truths that can be learned from the story of the Good Samaritan?

God considers our neighbor anyone we have opportunity to do good to. Good values, good work habits, and a life free from the ravages of sin, if not under the influence of the Spirit of God can make us like the priest and Levite, insensitive to the needy around us. The church, like the inn and innkeeper, has sufficient resources to meet the needs of those God brings to her for care.

3. What might be some current parallels to the man who fell among thieves?

Any sinner who is being led to ruin by his carnal nature and the enticements of the devil is a needy person. Sometimes sincere people desire to live for the Lord, but for various reasons struggle with hurts and wounds that affect their spiritual life. These also need a "good Samaritan" to aid them.

4. How might we be guilty of acting as the priest and the Levite did?

We might refuse to give help in various situations where we could help. Like the priest we may sense a difficult situation from a distance and refuse to get any closer lest we end up giving of our own time and energy to help remedy the problem. Or like the Levite, we may begin to get involved, but sensing the cost of our involvement, withdraw, putting a heavier load on others.

5. What action of the Good Samaritan showed most clearly his concern for the wounded man?

His stopping and binding the man's wounds, and taking him to an inn, all show love and compassion. The greatest act of love, though, was his ongoing involvement in the man's recovery when he could have felt he had done all that duty required.

6. What faulty thinking did Martha reveal by her question in 10:40?

It seems Martha felt service was more important than communion with the Master. Perhaps she did not realize that for our service to be effective, we must first spend time with the Master.

7. What was the one needful thing Mary had chosen?

She was feeding her soul. Mary chose to take the time needed for those truths to reach her heart.

8. When might we be most prone to be like Martha?

When the cares of life are extremely pressing and we hardly feel we have

time for personal devotions, family worship, and midweek prayer meetings. When situations arise that require rather immediate action and we do not take time to seek the Lord's will.

Summarizing the Lesson

It is reasonable to expect that after all Christ has done for us, our devotion will continue to be a natural, lifelong response. However, as were the lawyer and Martha, so we are prone to self-justification and shortsightedness. Like Mary, we need to keep our devotion alive by regularly finding time to sit at Jesus' feet.

Research Guide

Read Hebrews 11. The heroes of faith were motivated by their devotion to God. Like the Good Samaritan and Mary, they did what to human reasoning seemed unreasonable.