

The good Samaritan (Luke 10)

People often asked Jesus questions. Sometimes they really wanted to hear his teaching and sometimes they wanted to try to trick him because they didn't believe he was God's son.

One day, a religious teacher came to him and said, "What must I do if I want to live with God forever? I know that the bible says I must love God and love my neighbour as much as I love myself. But who is God telling me to love? Who is my neighbour?"

Then Jesus told him this story.

A man was walking down a road on his own and some robbers jumped out at him.

"Help, help!" cried the man – but no-one heard him. The robbers hit the man and hurt him. Then they took all his money and everything he had with him and ran away. The poor man was left lying at the side of the road.

"Oh! Ooh!" groaned the man. He tried to get up but he couldn't. He lay there in the burning sun. He couldn't do anything except wait and hope for help.

The next person to travel along the road was a priest who worked in the temple. The injured man could hear the priest's footsteps. Surely a priest from the temple would be kind and help the injured man? No, the priest had seen him lying there but he didn't come to help.

Time passed. Then the man heard footsteps again. Nearer and nearer the footsteps came. This time the person passing by was a Levite, another important temple worker. Surely he would be kind and help the injured man? No – the Levite had seen him lying there but he didn't come to help.

The man was feeling worse and worse.

Someone else came along the road. This was a man from another country, an enemy country called Samaria. The injured man heard his footsteps and then he saw him and recognised that he was from Samaria. The injured man was worried that this Samaritan wouldn't be kind and help a man from Israel. The Israelites and the Samaritans did not like each other. But, when the Samaritan traveller saw the man lying by the side of the road, he stopped. "You need help," the traveller said. So he cleaned the man's cuts and put on bandages. Then he lifted him carefully on to his donkey.

A little way on they came to an inn. "This poor man has been hurt by some robbers," the traveller told the innkeeper and he stayed for a day to look after the man. The next day he went to the innkeeper and said, "Please can you take care of him until he is well? Here's some money for you. I hope it is enough. If it costs more, I will pay you when I come back."

When Jesus had finished telling the story he turned and asked the religious teacher a question.

"Which of those people showed love to the man who was hurt?"

"The one who was kind and helped the man," the religious teacher answered.

"Then be like him," said Jesus.

Jesus told this story to make the religious teacher think deeply and realise what he was really like in his heart.