

STUDY NOTES

The Merciful Samaritan

A MESSAGE AT NEW CITY CHURCH (Summer 2016)

WWW.NEWCITYPHX.COM/SERMONS - CHRIS TOWNLEY

The following content is based on the message “The Merciful Samaritan” spoken on 07/31/16 by Chris Townley at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis of the message but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective communities.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

THE SCRIPTURE: LUKE 10:25-37

THE LAWYER’S EXCHANGE WITH JESUS

A lawyer tried to put Jesus to the test by asking how to inherit eternal life. However, eternal life is a gift freely given. This lawyer is thinking in terms of a single action rather than an ongoing life of righteousness. Plus, he really does already know the answer to his question—he should love God and love neighbor NOW.

- *How do you tend to think of life—as single actions or ongoing commitments?*
- *Share about a time when you questioned God even though you already knew the answer.*

The lawyer still wanted to justify his own actions, so he asked Jesus, “and who is my neighbor?”. This was a polite way of saying, “who is NOT my neighbor?”

- *Why do you think we try to push the commands of Jesus as far as possible?*

JESUS RESPONDS WITH A PARABLE

Jesus responds to the man with a parable. Parables are intended to drive a wedge between how people *think* they are supposed to act and how people *actually* are supposed to act.

- *How do you normally approach a parable? Do you justify yourself with it, or are you challenged by it?*

THE UNEXPECTED RESPONSE

The listeners related to the man who was attacked. As they heard of his situation—robbed of his possessions, dignity, health, and almost his life—they would have been asking “will rescue come?”

- *In your world who do you relate to, asking “will rescue come for them?”*
- *To whom should you relate, but don’t want to relate?*

The first two people that passed by the victim were asking “what will happen to me if I stop to help this man?”.

- *How do you feel about the priest and the temple worker who walk by the victim?*
- *In what ways do you feel like these two people?*

THE REALLY UNEXPECTED RESPONSE

A Samaritan (who was considered an enemy of the listener) sees the victim, has compassion for him, and begins taking care of him. He does not just offer one-time aid, but long-term care.

- *What kind of sacrifice do you think it took for the Samaritan to care for the Jewish man who had been attacked?*
- *Why do we think caring for people will be easy?*

WHAT WILL OUR RESPONSE BE?

Compassion can be felt in the gut, but mercy must be enacted with the body. Loving neighbor simply cannot exist as something abstract. It requires action. Our only options are not 1) to ignore the violence and suffering as we insulate ourselves in our privilege or 2) to see nothing but the present darkness.

There is another way where we side with suffering and we choose love.

- *How do you usually respond to suffering—ignoring it or getting lost in the darkness of it?*
- *In what ways is the world dark right now?*
- *How can we choose active love and mercy in the middle of the darkness?*
- *Should it ever go bigger than what we just described?*
- *Why do you think God wants his people to care even for their enemies?*
- *Take a moment to reflect on what Jesus has done for us, and ask him to show us how to live an active love, not an abstract love.*