



Life Group Study Notes

“The Authenticity of Love”

Ps. James Lowe - July 10, 2016

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- Has a stranger ever helped you in an unusual or unexpected way? What did they do for you?
- Have you ever helped a stranger in an unusual or unexpected way? What did you do for them?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Luke 10:25-37 ESV

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

- Eternal life is evidenced by those who put their love for God and others into action. This should be done not merely in an act here or there, but as a lifestyle. The one who has encountered God and tasted his love through Jesus Christ, who was crucified for our sins, is called upon to repent of living for oneself. The one who belongs to God believes in and experiences God's love (especially revealed through Jesus Christ), and expresses love toward others.

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'

- Who is the neighbor we are to love? Everyone, even our enemies. Who is expected to love their neighbor? All God's people, especially those who are religious leaders and servants. This is why Jesus' story is so shocking to his original audience. Jesus indicts those who claim to know and love God, but fail to love a stranger in need. The priest and the Levite should have known God's love not only for themselves, but also for others. They should have helped the stranger.
- There are many today who claim belief in and loyalty to Jesus, but fail to demonstrate compassion toward people around them who are suffering and in need. Jesus is not pleased. Are we also guilty?

Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

- Jesus tells us that we may be surprised by who God approves. Jesus commends the Samaritan. Many Jewish people of the time, especially the religious leaders, looked down with contempt on Samaritans. Cultural, religious, and ethnic prejudice hardened their hearts toward Samaritans. But Jesus approves of him.
- We must be more humble in our opinion of ourselves and of others. We must be more open to who pleases God. They may look different, talk different, and come from a very different background than you. But if they put love for God and others into concrete action, remember that this is the very thing that pleases God.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related point for discussion.

- How has God's love been expressed in your life? What have been some of his mercies and blessings?
- How have you perceived and experienced God's love even when you have experienced sorrow, pain, or injustice in this world? How does his love stretch beyond this life's circumstances?
- Who do you think God wants you to consider as your neighbor and to love as yourself? How do you think God wants you to love them? What does he want you to do?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Ask God for a fresh awareness of the love he has for you.
- Ask God for forgiveness for how you have failed to love others the way God loves you.
- Ask God to show you who you need to love more and how to express that love meaningfully.