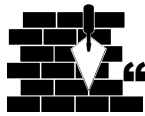


THE GOOD SAMARITAN - "Who Is My Neighbor...Really?"



"Building Blocks"

1. **(Q1)** Jesus' question in verse 26 employs a word that means "to be continually coming to know every detail through personal experience." Jesus is essentially asking this teacher of the Law, "What's your take on this?"
2. **(Q1)** The "lawyer" in this passage is most likely a scribe by profession. They were the resident biblical scholars of Jesus' day. They had the entire Torah memorized, and were those who taught the Law. They were consulted on questions of "what the Law said" about certain matters. In some places they are simply called "the teachers of the Law."

(Q2a) Jesus artfully switches the issue from what sorts of people *are* my "neighbor," to what someone *looks like* who is being faithful to the second commandment.
3. **(Q2)** The Assyrians were the first real world empire in history. They were brutal in war and oppressive in ruling the vanquished. They sought to destroy the ethnic and religious fabric of conquered peoples through a very efficient system of prisoner relocation. (In the ANE, to fully conquer a people, a nation also had to demonstrate that they had conquered that nation's god.)
4. **(Q3-vs12)** The Samaritan woman is claiming to be a true Israelite, citing the land on which she lives and the well from which she and her people drink, as belonging to Jacob, the father of Israel (cf. Gen. 33:18-19; 48:22; Josh 24:32)

(Q3-Luke 9) This is an important verse because it substantiates that the hatred flowed in both directions, not just from the Jews toward the Samaritans.
5. **(Q5-Luke 5)** Associating with lepers had both a religious *and* a health risk. Becoming "unclean" through association with someone who was "unclean" wasn't so much forbidden as it was "costly." There were a variety of ceremonial rituals that a Jew would have to perform to return to a "clean" status. And unclean Jews were forbidden from participating in most of the religious activities associated with Judaism (e.g. Temple worship, celebration of feasts, community interaction, etc.). Imagine if you were forbidden from taking communion or going to church because you associated with a hospital patient who was HIV+. Would you?
6. **(Q7-Jer 22:16)** The phrase, "poor and needy" in the Bible speaks of a distinct people group, not a social problem. The two Hebrew words both refer to individuals unable to speak for, or defend themselves *and* who are "targets" of more powerful people. They are the abused and oppressed poor.
7. **(Q7 & 8)** It is significant that the one characteristic the "poor and needy," the blind, the lepers, and the demonized have in common is that they can't "repay" Jesus. This must be understood as ministry to those *outside* the Church.



"Stumbling Stones"

1. **(Q3)** It is very important to isolate this as *primarily* an ethnic issue. Of course there are theological differences between the two people group, as well as others issues. But, the bottom line here has to do with two entire people groups being "profiled" because of something that had happened hundreds of years earlier.
2. **(Q4)** We must be extremely careful to keep the context of this story in plain sight. This parable is leading towards Jesus' answer to the lawyer's question, *Who is my neighbor?* But, even that question arose from Jesus' answer to the lawyer's previous question, *What must I do to inherit*

eternal life?” This story is inseparable from that first question. In other words, Jesus here dismantles forever the notion of devotion (to God) without compassion (towards people).

3. **(Q5-Matt 19)** This verse is very foreign to American Christians. We tend to worship our children. One scholar even called America a “feliocracy” – a land ruled by children! But, in the Ancient Near East, children were valuable primarily because they were a commodity. They were a form of labor assistance when parents were of working age, and a form of social assistance when parents became too old to work, or if the husband and father of a family unit died. Jesus’ action here is not only out of step with his age, it also tells us a great deal about the heart of God and how valuable children are to *Him*.
4. **(Q5-Luke 7)** Blindness had immense social consequences. A blind person was basically of no value to society. They could not contribute to their own needs, and they were a drain on the resources of others. Begging was typically the only means they had to survive if they had no family to care for them. Our modern view of blindness is nowhere in the picture here. This is much more than a “disability.” Demonized people were even more marginalized, socially, because they were dangerous and unpredictable.
5. **(Q8)** We need to distinguish between the biblical poor and the culturally “lazy” (cf. Prov. 21:25; 2 Thess. 3:10). The biblical poor are those without options and without means. They are typically the victims of circumstances beyond their control or people of greater influence and power.
 Also, this is a passage about compassion, not “volunteerism.” Isaiah is portraying a *lifestyle* of mercy, not one day a month at a homeless shelter, or one week a year on a mission trip.



“Going Deeper”

1. **(Chesterton quote)** What is Chesterton saying here?
2. **(Q5-Matt 9)** Do you think “sinners” *know* they are “sinners”? What would this have to do with their attraction to Jesus?
 How is Jesus’ statement in verse 13a an abbreviated version of the parable of the Good Samaritan?
3. **(Q5-Matt 19)** In Jesus’ day, children were valued only for the contribution they made to the world of adults. Are there any people groups or types of people in your world that you value primarily (or only) for the service they provide to you? If so, which ones and why?
4. **(Q6)** How is the opportunity before the first servant similar to the opportunity that faced each of the three men in the parable of the Good Samaritan?
 How are these stories different, especially on the level of motivation?