

2022-07-10 ... 10am Service Sermon ... Revd Sue Armstrong

Luke 10: 25 – 37

**'The Good Samaritan'**

The Lawyer is doing what lawyers do – trying to clarify what the question really is and Jesus decides that the best way to make sure what he is saying is understood is to illustrate it with a story.

And he is renowned as a story teller. So he sets the scene, but there are some things he won't need to explain. The antagonism between Jew and Samaritan is one of them. They may live close by but according to the Jews, Samaritans don't do things right!

Their interpretation of worship is different/wrong; the way they live is different/wrong and no decent Jew would associate with a Samaritan.

The setting for the story is, like all of Jesus' stories, easily understood by his listeners, but then things change. So, the story Jesus tells is quite shocking. It's not the fact that a man is attacked and left for dead by the side of the road, that was fairly commonplace. But saying that the Priest and then the Levite pass by – perhaps they had places to be, important things to do, perhaps they had already performed their purification rites so they could serve God in the temple. Jesus is again showing the hypocrisy of the temple hierarchy. The very people who should have demonstrated God's love and care failing.

But then along comes a Samaritan, a man on his way (undoubtedly with places to go and things to do) yet he stops, touched by the plight of the Jew, injured, stripped of what he had and left to die. He shows him care and compassion, revives him, picks him up, places him on his donkey and takes him to the nearest inn where he makes provision for his care and recovery.

How different from those who might have been expected to show compassion! And how pointed this would have been given the way in which Samaritans were regarded.

But then when Jesus asks the question: **'Which of these was the good neighbour?'** the lawyer can't quite bring himself to answer: **'the Samaritan'** but instead he says: **'the one who shows him mercy.'** It is very clear to those listening that the answer is the Samaritan. This man from the despised race of people is showing the qualities that place him closer to God than those who could have been expected to hold that place.

How shocking this must have seemed to be told to **'go and be like him.'**

Jesus was once again reminding his followers that God's love was for all people, friend or foe, known or unknown, and that it requires effort and commitment.

Today we know of the Samaritans as an organisation that reaches out to anyone in need no matter what race or belief, offering help and support without judgement and without charge, showing the impact that this story has had and continues to have.