

Parables of Relationships: Our Neighbour (Luke 10:25–37)

As Europe is rocked again by war, we see afresh the relevance of Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus tells a powerful story, which challenges us to reach across the most difficult ethnic boundaries and highlights human sin and the need for the rescue of our saviour. Jesus also sets us the perfect example of how to be a neighbour.

Peter J. Williams is the Principal and CEO of Tyndale House, Cambridge. He was educated at Cambridge University, where he received his MA, MPhil, and PhD in the study of ancient languages related to the Bible. After his PhD, he was on staff in the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University (1997–1998), and thereafter taught Hebrew and Old Testament at Cambridge University as Affiliated Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic and as Research Fellow in Old Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge (1998–2003). From 2003 to 2007 he was on the faculty of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where he became a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Deputy Head of the School of Divinity, History, and Philosophy. Since 2007 he has been leading Tyndale House, and he is also an Affiliated Lecturer in the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. He is a member of the Translation Oversight Committee of the English Standard Version of the Bible. He assisted Dr. Dirk Jongkind in Tyndale House's production of a major edition of the Greek New Testament (2017) and has written *Can We Trust the Gospels* (Crossway, 2018), which has now been translated into 7 languages.

I. Wider Setting

- A. Jesus sent 70 disciples out to 'every village + place where he was going' (10:1)
 - i. Big harvest / not enough workers (10:2)
 - ii. Ministry safety conditions: sheep among wolves (10:3)
 - iii. Accept hospitality, and don't try to get better deal (10:7–8)
 - iv. Woe to those who reject (10:10–16)
 - v. Disciples should be most glad that their names are written in heaven (10:20)
 - vi. Jesus thanks God that he's hidden things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to infants (10:21–22)
 - vii. Blessing, not to kings and prophets (10:23–24)
- B. Dialogue with a lawyer (10:25–37)
- C. It's more important for Mary to learn from Jesus than to help Martha with practicalities (10:38–42)

II. Narrower Setting (10:25–37)

- A. Question – counterquestion – statement – statement (x2)
- B. Jewish legal expert:
 - i. Knows Bible, but has corrupt motives
 - ii. Gives perfect answer (like Jesus's own statements in Matthew 22:35–40; Mark 12:28–31)
- C. Jesus replies, 'You have answered correctly. This do and you will live'. (Luke 10:28)
- D. Jesus shows the man's guilt in two ways:
 - i. The impossibility of perfectly obeying those commands

- ii. A scriptural knowledge test: these words are said by Joseph to his guilty brothers (see Genesis 42:18), who last time had stripped + abandoned him, as in story which Jesus tells
- E. Lawyer ‘wanting to justify himself’ (10:29)
 - i. Like ‘you are those who justify yourself before men’ (Luke 16:15)
 - ii. Like us (evangelicals, liberal democracies, the woke)
- F. Scholar wants semantic discussion of the word ‘neighbour’
 - i. Like Pilate wanted an academic discussion about ‘truth’ (John 18:38)

III. Story

- A. Local knowledge: *going down* from Jerusalem (+750m) to Jericho (–250m)
- B. OT parallel: “And the men who have been mentioned by name rose and took the captives, and with the spoil they clothed all who were naked among them. They clothed them, gave them sandals, provided them with food and drink, and anointed them, and carrying all the feeble among them on donkeys, they brought them to their kinsfolk at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.” (2 Chronicles 28:15 ESV)
- C. How would you retell this story for today?

IV. Significance

- A. Our neighbour may be our enemy
- B. We like to justify ourselves
- C. Scholars like to argue about words
- D. We must show love, sometimes in humanitarian forms
 - i. Humanitarian work can exist without love
 - ii. Mary–Martha story: Jesus’s word is the most important
- E. The opportunity for real love in a fake and broken world