

## The Good Samaritan

This is one of the most important parables that invite us to love our neighbor and enemy. It starts with a dialogue between an expert in the law and the Lord, and this expert is a teacher of Moses' Law and of the whole Scripture in general. He was probably a Pharisee because he believed in eternal life after death. Jews, except for Pharisees, didn't believe in life after death, and they got this idea after the emergence of Christianity. The Lord answered his question with another one: "What was written in the law?" He answered: "Love the Lord your God... and your neighbor as yourself".

This answer combined Deuteronomy 6: 4 and Leviticus 19: 18. In the book of Deuteronomy, the commandment starts this way: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength". While in Leviticus it says: "You shall not bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself".

And when Jesus answered this man by saying: "Do this and you will live", he said to the Lord: "And who is my neighbor?" Is he the Jew that lives in Palestine with them? Then, Jesus started to tell a story that he composed, and the most important thing in it is that it shows a Samaritan, i.e. a man from another religion, taking care of a wounded Jew on the road and healing him while the two people didn't have any contact between each other especially that the Samaritans depended on the Five Books of Moses and refused the books of Prophets.

The Samaritan went beyond the existing religious separation and took care of this strange man, and our Fathers say that the Samaritan in this parable is a symbol of Christ who doesn't consider anyone strange but he is the one made strange by people while he takes care of everyone through his love, clemency, death and resurrection.

Notice that the law master asked the Lord: "Who is my neighbor?" This question was answered by Jesus with another question: "Which of these three (The priest and the Levite that passed by and left the wounded and the Samaritan) do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The answer was: "The one who had mercy on him".

The question, "Who is my neighbor?" seemed wrong in the biblical text. The real concern is "who do I consider my neighbor". The answer is that through the love that you have, you make the other your neighbor. Any other person is your neighbor if he needed your care regardless of his religion, color and country. You are a brother for every needy person, but do an act of care and attention so that he feels that he is your brother and neighbor. Love is a motion, and with it differences vanish.

All humanity is God's nation, and you are one with every person that might consider you his enemy. You serve him without looking to his feelings towards you or towards your religion or country. You walk on all roads of existence to search for a person to serve so that he believes in your and his humanness. Love destroys the differences between you, him and every other person. It purifies yourself, it makes you another person and, through it, you feel that you are God's son. Remember that if you said in the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father who art in heaven", you declare that all people, whether they sinned or not, are God's sons, and you should understand that the kingdom starts now in the hearts of loving people and in the hearts of those who they take care of. Search for those that have a bigger need because the Lord is very close to them.

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