

Series - Open Topic
Topic - Who is My Neighbour? (Luke 10:25-37)

Date - 02 Feb 2020
Speaker - Pastor Ernie Song

WELCOME [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

[Ice Breakers 1](#)

[Ice Breakers 2](#)

WORSHIP [15 min]

You may select songs like

1. Making A Difference
 2. Purify My Heart
-

WORD [45 min]

Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

1. Make a commitment to live a life that exhibits God's compassion and social justice
2. Respond with a practical action they wish to take to care for the poor and needy

Sermon Summary

The following are the key points of the sermon:

1. Caring for the poor and needy is a characteristic of those who are saved and are children of God.
2. Caring for the poor and needy must move beyond intentions to practical actions.
3. RCS provides ways for the church to care for the poor and needy

Sermon Recap (Full Summary)

The Bible insists that the best test of a nation's righteousness is how it treats the poorest and most vulnerable in its midst. – Jim Wallis.

Pastor Ernie shared about the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). In the passage, the person who asked Jesus the question "Who is my neighbour?" was likely an expert of the law and Jesus responded in the way the lawyer needed.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the road from Jericho to Jerusalem is one fraught with danger, filled with caves and lower valleys where people can hide to rob others. Therefore, it is of no surprise that the individual travelling alone fell prey to robbers and bandits.

In this parable, there were three people who encountered the dying man. They were grouped into two groups 1) The religious leaders – the Priest and the Levite and 2) The Good Samaritan.

Examining The Religious Leaders – The priest and the Levite

It was likely that Jesus recounted a real story as many Priests and Levites stayed in Jericho and travelled to Jerusalem to serve.

The religious leaders could have passed the dying man by for the following reasons:

1. **Inconvenience** – The religious leaders would be considered unclean if they touched the dying man. They would have to undergo a ceremony to be considered clean and this might hinder their service. Pastor Ernie shared that the religious leaders likely travelled in big groups. The religious leaders could have chosen to get their helpers to care for the dying man but did not do so. Instead, they passed the dying man by.
2. **Busyness** – The religious leaders did not have space for interruptions in their lives.
3. **Boundaries** – in those days, it was acceptable if people drew boundaries around their social circle. There was a Jewish saying - “if you do a kindness, know to whom you do it... Give to the godly man, but do not help the sinner.” The culture of that day gave people the legitimacy of not helping a person in need who is not in their social circle.

During the time of Christ, the definition of “neighbour” excluding the following:

- Non-Israelites - The Israelites were for the idea of caring for their own people
- Enemies
- Non-Pharisees - Pharisees may have excluded the non-Pharisees as they were outside of their social circle. Some people were also of the view that those living in the lower circles of society were being punished or had contributed to their own situation.

At that time, the rich, influential and religious leaders were the ones who determined how a relationship with God looked like, and the poor and ordinary had to abide by their standards. Jesus was different. He chose to be amongst the poor, the orphans, the needy and the ordinary. Jesus also became poor for us – he was born into a poor family, he chose to live amongst the poor, was rejected and was crucified for us. Jesus understands what it means to be poor and rejected. That is why, to not have a relationship with the poor, the widows and the orphans, is not to have a relationship with Christ.

Pastor Ernie exhorted us to follow God wholly in choosing to love people who are different from us like how Jesus did. The worship we give to God is to be backed up by a life of integrity.

*“A person may think their own ways are right, but the Lord weighs the heart. To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice” - **Proverbs 21:2-3***

Pastor Ernie also shared from Matthew 25:31-46, where God will separate the sheep from the goats. Like how a sheep displays the characteristics of being a sheep, a branch abiding in the vine produces the fruit of the vine – which should naturally include compassion and social justice (Isaiah 58:6-12, Psalm 68:4-6)

“An authentic and genuine commitment to Christ will be accompanied by demonstrable evidence of a transformed life. In contemporary terms, those who talk the talk but do not

*walk the walk will be exposed as false.” - **Brandon Hatmaker, Barefoot Church***

The Good Samaritan

1. He had compassion for the man (vs 33).
 - The Samaritan most likely rescued someone who was a Jew. Jews considered the Samaritans as enemies.
 - *“I imagine the first question the priest and Levite asked was “If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me? But by the very nature of his concern, the good Samaritan reversed the question: “If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?”- **Martin Luther King Jr.***
 - It started with compassion for the Samaritan man who helped.
 - Compassion is an indicator that we are open to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, when we see the poor and needy, our hearts should be moved by compassion for them. A hardened heart will not be moved at all.
2. He acted on his compassion – he went to him and bound up his wounds (vs 34a) - Is there space in our schedules for the poor and needy?
 - It is not enough to have compassion. Action must follow. The Samaritan put feet on his compassion.
 - The best thing we can give the poor and needy is our availability. This communicates that we value them and desire to help them.
 - *“People don’t follow vision, they follow availability... loving people well means living with interruptions.” – **Bob Goff***
 - *“Unselfishly giving of our time is one of the most powerful ways we can communicate worth and value to those around us” – **Sarah Gill***
3. He was willing to sacrifice for the sake of another – he set him up on his own donkey and brought him to an inn (vs 34b).
 - He was not afraid to bear the cost in caring for the dying man. He sacrificed and saw through the whole process.
4. He got others involved – he asked the inn keeper to take care of him (vs 35).
 - The Samaritan got others involved where he was limited. He left the man with the innkeeper and gave him enough resources to help the dying man.
 - In the church, there are many gifts. Reaching the community requires ALL of us to be involved because we each have unique gifts. It is not a solo mission.
 - RCS is not a program that the church pays so that we are “doing something in the community”.
 - RCS is a vital part of RLC. RCS paves the way for the church to be in the world, to reach out to the poor and needy in our society.
 - All of us should get involved in the various projects organized by RCS. At the very least, we should give for the work of RCS in the community.

Discussion Questions

1. **“Who is my neighbor?” Share your experiences interacting with others in need or a time when you were in need. How was your experience?** [15 min]

Leader’s Notes:

The purpose of this question is for members to share about their experiences in serving the poor and needy or their experiences when they were people in need. Please be mindful that there are members who are also facing financial difficulties, or members who have experienced personal/family losses or difficulties.

Some possibilities for members to share about

- *Mission trip(s)*
- *Volunteering experiences*
- *Serving experiences*
- *Experiences where they were blessed in times of need*
- *Members can also choose to share about stories of mercy and generosity that inspired them (e.g. the wedding couple who invited the homeless to their wedding)*

Leaders can choose to facilitate by asking members to expand on their experiences – what were some beliefs / ideas they had about the poor and the needy? Were there challenges and disappointments they faced, were there times they regretted showing compassion, and how did they overcome it? How were they blessed by others in times of their own need and how has it shaped them to love others? Were there lessons they learnt that they wish to share with other cell members? How were they shaped through the experiences? What are some reminders they want to bring with them in their future interactions with those in need?

Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving To The Next Question)

Stepping out to care for our neighbours comes with its blessings and its challenges. We are blessed through the interactions with those we serve, our worldviews are challenged and there are times where it can be draining and we are moulded in the process. It is important for us to treasure the lessons we have learnt while we continue to fix our eyes on to choose to love like how Jesus did. Let us now look at the different groups Pastor Ernie preached about in the sermon.

2. **Read Matthew 25:31-40. Pastor Ernie shared about how the religious leaders did not attend to the man who was hurt because of inconvenience, busyness and boundaries. How can we make space in our schedule for interruptions?** [15 min]

Leader’s Notes:

This is a reflect/relate question.

The passage is about separating the goats from the sheep. Leaders can ask members to reflect on the actions of the righteous (verses 35-36) and how meeting the needs of others would look like in our world today.

Leaders can get members to share about the struggles / difficulties they face in making space for interruptions. How open are we to interruptions? How much of it could be due to inconvenience, busyness or boundaries? What are some other

hindrances we face? What are some changes members would need to make in their daily lives to make room for such situations?

Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving To The Next Question)

One incorrect view – the poor and needy are always well taken care of by the government. Therefore, I don't need to do much as they are well taken care of.

The truth – not all the poor and needy can receive SUFFICIENT help from the government. This is due to various reasons – unable to meet qualifications for assistance, bad financial planning, etc.

Even in the past, there were subtle beliefs that we may hold that affect our ability to make space for others in our lives. It is important for us to allow ourselves to be open to the Holy Spirit and to each other to discern and obey God when the "interruptions" come. These interruptions are often by God to help soften our hearts. Let us now look at the Samaritan who did what was considered radical at that time, yet he was the one who did what was pleasing to God in loving his neighbour.

- 3. Read Luke 10: 33-35. Pastor Ernie shared about four things the Good Samaritan did. Elaborate on one of the four things caught your attention. How does compassion and social justice shown in our world today? What is one practical action that you would like to take to exhibit these in your life?** [15 min]

Leader's Notes:

This is a response question. Leaders can do a recap of the context of the passage (Luke 10:25-37). The road from Jericho to Jerusalem was a dangerous one; and the Samaritan most probably helped someone who was a Jew (who considered the Samaritans as enemies).

The Samaritan responded in the following ways:

- a) He had compassion for the man (vs 33)
- b) He acted on his compassion – he went to him and bound up his wounds (vs 34a).
- c) He was willing to sacrifice for the sake of another – he set him up on his own donkey and brought him to an inn (vs 34b).
- d) He got others involved – he asked the inn keeper to take care of him (vs 35).

Leaders can get members to choose a pointer that caught their attention and elaborate on it. Leaders can also ask members to think about how they would like to apply the pointer they chose in their lives to a particular area of their life

Leaders can also choose to get members to talk about the definition of compassion and social justice and how it would look like in our everyday life. The cell can also brainstorm about how they would like to participate in caring for the poor and needy in small ways.

Transition (Wrapping Up, Vision Casting To Cell & Closing The Discussion)

In today's discussion, we looked at and shared about the experiences we had in giving (or receiving), we reflected upon how to make space for interruptions in our lives and how we would want to show love to our neighbours in practical ways.

You can challenge your members to get involved in the various RCS Projects so that the church can be in the world to reveal Christ! Challenge each one to give to RCS so that their \$450,000 budget can be met. Remember – a lack of budget would mean some in society will not be able to receive the help that they need from RCS. (Refer to the announcements below to find out more.)

We are called to abide in Him and bear fruit, compassion and social justice is a natural fruit. May we continue to look to Jesus as our role model in how he advocated for the marginalized and rejected in our communities, and may we do the same to love our neighbor as ourselves, the way Jesus loved.

WORKS [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. For Ourselves

- a. That our lifestyles will be more Christ-Centered and less Me-Centered.
- b. That we will allow God to mould our hearts so that we have greater compassion for the poor and needy in our society.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. RCS Opportunities

a. Give

Help RCS to meet their budget target of \$450,000 so that as a church we can reach more poor and needy people in society. You can do so via PayNow or approach the Information Counter over the weekend.



b. Movie Event

You can support RCS financially as well by purchasing 2 Movie Tickets @ \$100 for Minions 2. You can do so at this QR code:



c. Participate In Projects

There are many community projects that you can participate in. Visit the RCS booth during our Sunday Services (whole month of Feb) to find out more. Alternatively, you can email RCS at volunteer@rcs.org.sg to enquire about project opportunities.

2. Alpha

Sun, 23 Feb to 29 Mar | 2pm-4pm

Register online at bit.ly/rlalpha by Sun, 9 Feb. For enquiries, please contact Karen Koh at 65114139, email her at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg

3. Water Baptism Class

Sat, 29 Feb | 9am-3pm | Faith Chapel

Register online at www.riverlife.org.sg/eforms by Sun, 23 Feb. For enquiries, please contact Karen Koh at 6511 4139 or email her at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg

Church Vision

“A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations.”

Mission

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.