

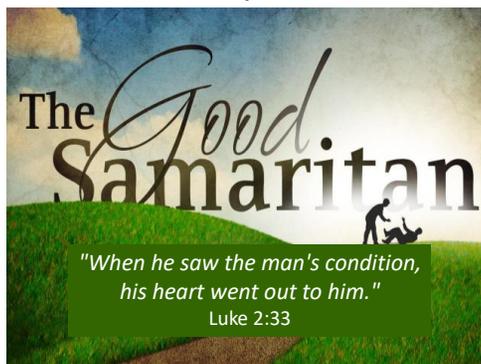
## A dangerous kind of mercy

Luke 10:25-37

By Pastor Ken Keyte

18th September 2017

1



This morning I'm *continuing the series* on the *Jericho Road* which I began a few weeks ago.

The objective of the series is to *help us put into practice* the *fourth of our five emphases* for the year which is:

'Unconditional, inclusive love of others', as per 2Tim 1:7

My paraphrased version of it goes:

"God *hasn't* given us warm fuzzy feelings of power, love and self discipline, he *has* given us a Spirit of *power, love and self discipline* to be *Jesus in the world!*"

The parable of the Good Samaritan is how Jesus taught his disciples about his *Spirit of love* that *helps us be Jesus in the world.*

Since you all probably know the parable of the Good Samaritan very well,

I'm *not* going to read it to you again,

but I *will zoom in* on one particular line in the story which goes:

"*When he saw him he took pity on him*"

Or in the Message version: "*When he saw the man's condition, his heart went out to him.*" (v33)

1a

But *what was it* that caused the Samaritan's *heart* to go out to the *wounded man* who was meant to be his enemy?

*Why* did he *take pity* on him, while *others hadn't*, including a *priest* and a *Levite* who'd *passed by* on the other side of the road?

This morning we're going to discover that *what motivates us* to *show mercy* for our neighbour and even our enemy in need, is the *undeserved mercy of Papa God*, the *dangerous mercy of Jesus Christ*, and the *inspiring mercy stories* we tell each other!

**Made meek by the undeserved mercy of (Pappa) God**

2



A parable is an *earthly story* with a *heavenly meaning*.

They were Jesus' *favourite way of teaching* truths about God, parables are *theology through story*.

A modern day example of *theology through story* that is the *book* that's now a *movie: The Shack*, (which is on at The Mount).

*Who's been to see it? Who's read the book? Who thinks the movie is just as good as the book?*

Without *giving too much away* for those who *haven't* seen or read either, the *synopsis* goes like this:

After suffering a family tragedy, Mackenzie Phillips spirals into a deep depression that causes him to question his

innermost beliefs. Facing a crisis of faith, he receives a mysterious letter urging him to an abandoned shack in the Oregon wilderness. Despite his doubts, Mack journeys to the shack and encounters an enigmatic trio of strangers led by a woman named Papa. Through this meeting, Mack finds important truths that will transform his understanding of his tragedy and change his life forever.

Depressed, grief stricken, angry, vengeful, crisis of faith, describe Mack's state of being *prior* to his *encounter with the three persons of the Trinity* at the *shack*.

"Meek" is how I would describe Mack *after* his *supernatural encounter at the Shack*. Mack was *made meek* by the *undeserved mercy of Papa God* who personally ministered to him at the Shack.

*Bethel Music's* song *Reckless love*, that we've been singing lately expresses the *undeserved mercy of God* like this:

*When I was your foe, still your love fought for me  
You have been so, so good to me  
When I felt no worth  
You paid it all for me  
You have been so, so kind to me*

*Oh, The overwhelming, never-ending  
Reckless love of God  
It chases me down  
Fights 'til I'm found  
Leaves the ninety-nine  
I couldn't earn it  
I don't deserve it  
Still you give yourself away*

In a *Shack-like encounter* with his disciples on a *mountainside in Galilee*, Jesus preached about *what happens* to those who encounter the *undeserved mercy of Papa God*.

*"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. ..  
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."* Jesus said.

*Like Mackenzie Philip's* encounter with Papa God in *the Shack*, *like the disciples* encounter with Jesus on a *mountainside in Galilee*, *like my first real encounter* with Jesus as a teenager at an *Easter Camp at Marton*, *like Jesus' encounter* with the *self righteous law expert* who wanted to know what he must do to receive eternal life, *we are all made meek* by the *undeserved mercy of Papa God!*

One of several *powerful scenes* in *The Shack* happens when Mack meets the *personification of God's wisdom*, who gives him an *object lesson* in the *undeserved mercy of Papa God*, that goes like this:

3



Wisdom tells Mack to sit in God's judgment seat and asks him who he thinks deserves to be judged:

*"What about the selfish? the greedy? those who harm others? murderers? drug dealers? terrorists?" Guilty?"* asks wisdom.

"Yeah", says Mack.

*"What about men who beat their wives? Or fathers who beat their sons to alleviate their own suffering? Should that man be judged?"*

"Yes" says Mack. *"I would damn him to hell!"*

*"And what of his father,  
the man who twisted him  
into this deviant monster?"*

*"I would damn him, too."*

*"How can you stop there?  
Doesn't the legacy of brokenness  
go all the way back to Adam?  
And what about God? Isn't He at fault?  
He set all this in motion.  
Especially, if He knew the outcome."*

*"Do you want me to say it?" asks Mack*

*"Absolutely."*

*"God is to blame!" declares Mack.*

*"Well, if it's so easy for you to judge God...", says Wisdom  
"then you must choose one of your children to spend eternity  
in heaven. The other will go to hell."*

*"I can't do that!" exclaims Mack*

*"Can't do what? I'm only asking you to do something  
you believe God does.  
So, who will go to hell?  
You could choose Kate. She said some pretty hurtful things.  
She shuts you out. You're not even sure if she loves you  
anymore.  
Or... you could choose Josh. He's been disobedient.  
Sneaking out. Lying to you. You didn't know that?  
Mackenzie, make your choice!"*

*"I don't wanna do this anymore. - I can't do this!" cries Mack*

*"- Can't do what?"*

*"I can't. I won't!"*

*"You must. This isn't a game. You have to.", implores  
Wisdom*

*"I can't!" shouts Mack, "Take me! I'll go instead of them.  
I'll take their place. You take me. You leave my kids alone,  
and you take me!"*

*"Mackenzie..." Wisdom softly says, "You've judged your  
children worthy of love...even if it costs you everything.  
Now you know Papa's heart!"*

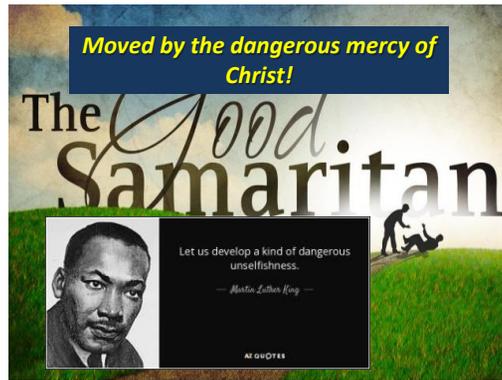
*What caused the Samaritan's heart to go out to the wounded man  
who was meant to be his enemy?  
Why did he take pity on him, while others wouldn't?*

*It was the overwhelming, never-ending  
Reckless mercy of God  
that'd chased him down  
Fought 'til he'd been found  
Left the ninety-nine.  
He couldn't earn it  
He didn't deserve it  
Yet still Papa God gives himself away!*

*The over-whelming never ending undeserved reckless mercy of  
God is what meekens you and me to be moved by the plight of my  
neighbour or enemy in need!*

## Moved by the dangerous mercy of Christ

4



When the Samaritan saw the injured Jewish traveler lying on the side of the road, and his *heart went out to him*, he took a *huge risk* when he stopped to help him.

You see it's is a *dangerous kind of mercy* that moves us to help our wounded neighbour or enemy in need!

It was a *physically dangerous* thing to do. It *could've been a trap!* The thieves might've been hiding ready to attack and rob the first person who stopped to help.

It was a *socially dangerous* thing to do. The Samaritans had long *been bitter enemies of the Jews*. Stopping to help a wounded enemy was *not* going to earn the Samaritan *any cudos* amongst his colleagues at home.

And it was a *religiously dangerous* thing to do. It might've been perceived that by helping a Jew he was *agreeing with the hotly debated religious points of difference* between the Jews and the Samaritans.

There was *absolutely nothing in it* for the Samaritan by *stopping to help*, in fact he had *much to lose* by helping him!

You see in helping him, the Samaritan was displaying a *dangerous kind of unselfishness*, like the *dangerous kind of unselfish mercy* Jesus displayed for *you and me*.

4a

Martin Luther King preached a very famous sermon on the Good Samaritan in which he called upon the African American pastors of Memphis to display a *dangerous kind of unselfishness* for the inequitable employment conditions of African American Sanitation workers in the city.

In his sermon, King wonders what was going through the Priest and the Levite's minds when they decided **not to stop and help the injured man**. He suggests they might've been thinking, "*If I stop to help this man, what will happen to **me?***"

But when the Good Samaritan came by, he *reversed the question*. "*If I **do not stop** to help this man, what will happen to **him?***"

Then King turns to his African American clergy colleagues and applies it to them: "*The question before you tonight, is Not, if I stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to my job. The question is, if I **do not stop to help** the sanitation workers, what will happen **to them?** That's the question!*"

And I can imagine Martin Luther King preaching that sermon here in Te Puke, turning to **us** and saying: "*The question is not, 'If I stop to help my neighbour in need, what will happen to **me?**' The question is, 'If I **do not stop to help** my neighbour what will happen to **them.**' That's the question!*"

Imagine if Jesus had made *similar excuses* to what we might make for *not helping* our neighbour in need.

*Like:* "If I stop to help my neighbour in need it *might cost me some money.*"

Well Jesus could've used the same excuse,  
"If I stopped to save the world it might cost me my life!"

Or we might make the excuse,  
"He doesn't deserve to be helped because of the bad choices he's made, I'll help someone more deserving instead!"

Well Jesus could've used the same excuse too,  
"You don't deserve to be saved because of the bad choices you've made, I'll help the deserving angels instead!"

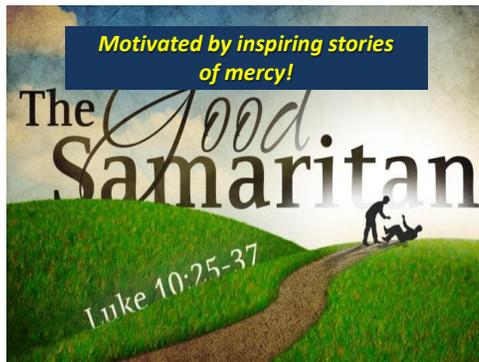
Or what about this excuse, "If I stop to help, they might take advantage of my generosity?"

Jesus could've made the same excuse about not wanting to be taken advantage of by you and me too!

What caused the Samaritan's heart to go out to the wounded man who was meant to be his enemy?  
He was moved to help him by the dangerous mercy of Christ!

### Motivated by inspiring stories of mercy

5



After the law expert had correctly identified "the one who had mercy on him" as the neighbour to the injured man in the parable, Jesus encouraged him to "go and do likewise!"

There's something *inspirational* about *hearing or seeing* acts of mercy that will *motivate others* to do the same.

The *Apostle Paul* does something similar in his *letter to the Corinthian church* whom he's *encouraging to give generously* to the *famine stricken church* in Jerusalem.

So what does he do?

In 2nd Corinthians 8 he *inspires the Corinthian church* with the story of the *Macedonian churches' generosity* in giving to the needy in Jerusalem. What's *really inspiring* about the Macedonians' generosity is that *they were in poverty too!*

Paul writes:

'Out of the most severe trial, [the Macedonians'] extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify they gave as much as they were able and even beyond their ability.'

But *just in case* that mercy story *wasn't inspirational enough*, Paul *backs it up* with the *ultimate mercy story of all* by reminding them of *Christ's generosity*:

'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.'

*Our buttons get pushed* by similar *motivational, inspirational mercy stories today*. But they *don't have to be amazing stories of incredible generosity*, often it's the *simple everyday stories* of mercy that are the *most inspiring!*

For instance, Mum has a neighbour in Feilding who has a minor intellectual disability. He lives on his own, he's unemployed but does some work fundraising work for a voluntary organisation by selling flowers.

Mum had learned that he also goes to a Saturday morning community breakfast put on by the New Life Church, but apart from the few occasions she'd bumped into him, she didn't know him very well.

The other day Mum was making soup ready for the cold Manawatu winter, when she remembered the story she'd heard Jenny Utting tell in church a couple of Sundays ago when Mum was here. How Jenny had taken soup to the people living in the Te Puke Camping ground.

Mum got inspired as she remembered how Jenny had done that, so she decided *she'd take some soup to her neighbour*. Unbeknown to Mum, he was moving to Otaki that weekend and was hugely appreciative of Mum's soup because he'd been busy packing up his things all day.

Remembering how he went to the New Life breakfast, Mum said to him, "Take God with you when you go to Otaki" and he replied, "Yeah I will, God is good!"

What would cause the law expert to "*Go and do like-wise like the one who had mercy on the injured man?*"

If he was *made meek by the undeserved mercy of Pappa God*.

If he was *moved to help him by the dangerous mercy of Christ!*

And if he was *motivated by the inspiring story of mercy that Jesus told*.

These are what move, motivate and inspire *us to go and do likewise as well!*