

The Road to Jericho...

**You are Called to be a
Minister**

Lesson Eleven



The Road to Success in Christian Living

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COMMITMENT

I believe:

- that God the eternal Father, creator of all things, loved me so much that Jesus came to earth to be my Savior.
- that Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died to pay for my sins, was buried, rose from the dead on the third day, appeared to many people, ascended to Heaven where He sits at the right hand of God, and will one day return to earth taking all believers of all the ages to be with Him in Heaven forever.
- that when I made declaration of this, my belief, to God, I became His adopted child and His Holy Spirit came to be with my spirit forever.
- that my relationship with God is in His hands, and He will never let me go.

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Lesson Goal: To encourage believers to be involved in helping others.

Scriptures: Luke 10:25-37; Luke 4:16-21; Matthew 9:35-38; Isaiah 58, 61

Memory Verse: "...if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will arise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday." Isaiah 58:10

When Jesus wanted to tell the folks in His hometown, Nazareth, what His mission on earth was, He read Isaiah chapter 61 to them. He indicated that the prophecy of Isaiah was being fulfilled in Him. He said that He had come to earth to bring good news to the afflicted, heal broken hearts, give the blind new sight, tell those in captivity what real freedom was, and offer pardon to all prisoners.* He continued announcing His mission; He said He was proclaiming God's grace. If you read what is said after Jesus' quote, in Isaiah 61, you will find comfort for those who mourn, rebuilding of destroyed cities and other tangible benefits.

Now, there are those who will try to convince you that Jesus was talking in symbols here, and all His preaching, healing and helping was of the spiritual kind and not of the tangible, real, touchable, concrete kind. Those folks haven't read the rest of the story. In Matthew, chapter nine, we find record of His real ministry. Matthew kind of stops Jesus, on one of those dusty roads, and does a summary. He says, that Jesus "went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the Kingdom and healing every disease and sickness." (Matthew 9:35) **The Message** translates that, Jesus "...healed their diseased bodies, healed their bruised and hurt lives." Matthew goes on to report that when Jesus "saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." In other words, they were victims of assault, unable to help themselves, and no one cared.

This image was one Jesus carried around in His soul. On another occasion, (Luke 10:25-37) a lawyer sought to test Jesus by asking Him what he, the lawyer, needed to do to get eternal life. Jesus asked him to recite God's law. The lawyer rightfully replied that loving God and loving one's neighbor summarized the law. The lawyer continued his test by asking, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus then told him the story of the "Good Samaritan."

In that story a man is traveling northeast down the rugged road between Jerusalem and Jericho. It had many places for thieves to wait for victims. There were many travelers and one particular fellow, alone that day, was pounced upon, assaulted, left without ability to help himself, and several passed by but did not help. Do you see the parallels between this story and the focus of Jesus' compassion in Matthew 9?



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Jesus had compassion, actually hurt inside, for those who were victims of assault, who had been left on the side of the road to die, who had no one to help them...in Matthew's words, like sheep without a shepherd. We know that sheep without a shepherd are lost and helpless.

In the story, Jesus mentioned two religious guys who had ignored the broken, bleeding, helpless sufferer. He also mentioned a Samaritan who stopped, personally ministered to the victim, and saw that he got long term care. It might be good to mention here that the Samaritans were looked down upon by the Jewish leaders, of whom the lawyer in the story was one. After Jesus told the story about the traveler on the road to Jericho, He asked the lawyer who had demonstrated neighborliness in His story.

Again, the lawyer answered correctly. He said that it was the one who showed mercy. Jesus told him that to demonstrate a good relationship with God, he should go and do likewise.

We must not misunderstand this to mean that Jesus said doing good would provide a way for this lawyer to get eternal life. The rest of Jesus' words and teachings tell us otherwise. What Jesus said to this man was that living out God's love and compassion was the way of life of those who love God.

James, the brother of Jesus, in his letter "to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations," (James 1:1) says, "...faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (James 2:17) He continues, "...I will show you my faith by what I do." John, the beloved apostle, said, "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?" (I John 3:17)

The whole point is that Jesus and His followers told us in Scripture that all Christians are called to be helpers. Especially, we are to be helpers to those who are hurting, who are abused, who are victims, who are unable to help themselves, and who are ignored in their circumstances.

Actually, Jesus said that judgment would focus on how we have dealt with those who were hungry, thirsty, strangers with no shelter, needing clothing, sick, and imprisoned. (Matthew 25:31-46) There are many, many people today who have physical needs. Christians are called to minister to them at the point of their physical need, as well as focusing on their spiritual needs. Only then will we be like Jesus in His compassionate concern for everyone.

*Underlined sentences in the Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.

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The Road to Success in Christian Living *The Road to Jericho...You are Called to be a Minister*

Memory Verse:

“...if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will arise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.” Isaiah 58:10

You are Called to be a Minister:

>Jesus said that He had come to earth to bring _____ to the afflicted, heal broken _____, give the blind new sight, tell those in _____ what real freedom was, and offer pardon to all prisoners.

>Jesus “went through all the towns and villages, _____ in their synagogues, _____ the good news of the Kingdom and _____ every disease and sickness.”

>One particular fellow, on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, was _____, assaulted, left without ability to _____ himself, and several passed by but _____ help.

>Jesus had _____, actually hurt inside, for those who were victims of _____, who had been left on the side of the road to _____, who had _____ to help them.

>Jesus was saying to this man that _____ out God’s love and _____ was the way of life of those who love God.

>If anyone has material _____ and sees his brother in _____ but has no pity on him, how can the _____ of God be in him?

You are Called to be a Minister

What does this mean: “Called to be a Minister?”

Every Christian has opportunity and responsibility to be like Christ, and in following His example, serve others as Christ’s minister. It is clear from not only those on our list for today, but from other Scriptures, that God has plans for our lives and our service. As we discussed previously, He told us through Paul that we were given spiritual gifts for service. He told us through James that He expects us to demonstrate our faith through that which we do in service for the Kingdom. Our service to those who need assistance earns us the right to speak in a straight forward way about their need for faith in our Lord.

When Jesus told the lawyer that he should “go and do the same,” He was commissioning the lawyer to be a minister. Every Christian is called to be God’s minister, serving Him in everything we do and say. Jesus said, in Matthew 10:42, “...if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.” A cup of cold water! That’s not much to do as you demonstrate God’s love. Think how much more you can do:

Are there people in your city who need food? Create a way to distribute food that will really help them. We are not talking about candy bars here! There are individuals, commercial food suppliers, church groups, friends...an endless number of resources to get healthy foods to distribute to those who are hungry.

Are there people in your city who need clothing? Create a way to distribute clothing that will help them. We are not referring here to worn out, useless clothing! A trip around town to garage sales in late afternoon will net great stores of clothing that folks just can’t sell. Also, a word or two here and there will bring donations of clothes, outgrown, not the most current style, abandoned for other reasons...no longer used by their owners.

Are there people in your city who don’t have jobs? How about creating a job search ministry? The internet, local industries and other sources can help you find available jobs.

Are there people in prison to whom you can minister? Most prison systems have chaplains who welcome outside assistance for special events, Bible studies, holiday activities, etc. Introduce yourself and offer to be of assistance where they feel that it will help.

Are there people in your community who are lonely? You, your friends, and your church can sponsor activities that will provide socialization for such persons. Just a friendly visit now and then helps.

Is there a residence for persons who can no longer care for themselves? Activity directors in such institutions welcome friendly help with social activities, religious activities, hygiene/personal care, one on one visitation and many other things.

Are there people in your community who need to learn English? Teaching English as a second language, or assisting in such a teaching ministry is a good way to invest in Christian ministry.

Actually there are many such opportunities for Christians to be ministers in their community...and around the world. Some adopt; others seek ministry opportunities in foreign countries. The opportunities are only limited by the imagination and willingness of Christians.

How do you get started? Just ask God to lead you and when something comes to mind, when you see a need, get whatever equipment/materials you need and get started...**in Jesus’ name.**