

2. KEY TEXT: Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

2.0 The immediate context

Jesus and the Lawyer – positive figure for Jews – here misunderstands – eternal life – a commodity? Yet the answer of lawyer – perfect: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Dt 6:5) and “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Lv 19:18). Context of Dt 6 and Lv 19 – fills out what is expected...

The Role of the Neighbour

Neighbour also translated as “friend”, “lover” and implies a close intimate or legal relationship. In Hebrew the term is close to that for “enemy” – the consonants are the same – only vowels differ...(Hebrew *resh ayin*).. note how do you read?

2.1 What is the Context of the Parable?

2.1.1 Time

What time is it? For Jesus? Jesus has begun his journey to Jerusalem (9:51). He sends his disciples ahead to a Samaritan town, where they are rejected, and the disciples seek to take punish them (9:52-55). Readers are thereby reminded of the enmity between Jews and Samaritans.

What time frame is it for the lawyer? Eternal life!

What time frame is it for action? Now!

2.1.2 Location

What is the location? For Jesus? Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem travelling through Samaria (9:51)

What is the location in the parable? The road from Jerusalem to Jericho.

2.1.3 Setting of Parable – audience

Who is with Jesus? The lawyer, his disciples, possibly others.

2.2 Who are the characters in the Parable?

Long list – injured traveller, robbers, priest, Levite, Samaritan, inn keeper. (5 road users)

Group of 3 who see: Priest, Levite, Samaritan (S) –only S responds.

Many stories tell of the triad: **Priest, Levite, Israelite** – usual. Emblematic of all Israel.

2.3 Old / New Testament Background

2.3.0 Quotations & Allusions

Shema - Dt 6:5; Neighbour – Lv 19:18; do & live - Lv 18:5 Dt 4:1; 8:1 Ez 20:11,21 Neh 9:29

2.3.1 Jewish – Samaritan relations

Shechem/Samaria is the location of the rape of Dinah (Gen 34) and the massacre of the sons of Gideon by Abimelech (Judges 8-9). Samaria (the Northern Kingdom) was defeated in 722 B.C.E. (2 Kings 17), and new populations brought in (2 Kings 17:24). A rival temple was set up on mount Gerizim which was destroyed by the Jewish Hasmonean dynasty. Samaritans in 48 C.E. killed Galileans on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. See also John’s Gospel (John 4:9). But see Luke 9:51-56 – hospitality expected; Luke 17:11-19 – Samaritan who shows faith in Jesus!

See M. Chalmers, “Rethinking Luke 10: The Parable of the Good Samaritan Israelite.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 139 (2020) 543–66; J. K. Brown & K. Yamazaki-Ransom, “The Parable of the Good Samaritan and the Narrative Portrayal of Samaritans in Luke-Acts.” *JThInt* 15 (2022) 233–46. (Ecclesiology > Ethics); J. Bourgel, “Brethren or Strangers?: Samaritans in the Eyes of Second-Century B.C.E. Jews.” *Bib* 98 (2017) 382–408

2.3.2 Places

Jerusalem - Place of death and resurrection of Jesus

Jericho – near Jordan where Jesus is baptised

2.3.3 Objects

Wine – used in offerings in Temple in Jerusalem

Oil – mixed in with grain for offerings in Temple in Jerusalem

Priest & Levite come from Temple; Samaritan has no access to Temple cult (not a Jew)

Liturgy of Temple takes place by roadside through actions of Samaritan

Denarius – wage for daily sustenance – when might the Samaritan return to the inn?

2.3.4 purity laws

Rules of purity – yes; but rules against neglecting burial of a corpse – Tobit. Rules for liturgy in Temple but note direction of journey!

2.4A Christological Reading of the Parable – seeing Christ in the parable

2.6 A Contemporary Look

Minority Biblical Criticism – Samaritan / Post-Colonial Criticism – boundary crossing

Or Ecclesiological / theological reading – who form the people of God, how do they act?

3. A new look at Luke

After reviewing traditional treatments of Luke's literary style, substance, and audience experience, I propose two key reframes: first, I suggest that we consider dynamic narrative communication through the lens of one of our most valuable human resources – attention. Second, I argue that literary forms present not certitude or singularity but ambiguity and multiplicity; the concept of affordances can help us to honor Lukan literature's unpredictable, uncontrollable power.

Michal Beth Dinkler, *Literary Theory and the New Testament* (New Haven: Yale University, 2019).

The striking attention-grabbing nature of parables and their ambiguity and possibilities are characteristic of the wider Lukan narrative.

4. The Parable of the Minas / Pounds (Luke 19:11-27)

As they were listening to this, he went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. ¹² So he said, “A nobleman went to a distant country to get royal power for himself and then return. ¹³ He summoned ten of his slaves, and gave them ten pounds, and said to them, ‘Do business with these until I come back.’ ¹⁴ But the citizens of his country hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to rule over us.’ ¹⁵ When he returned, having received royal power, he ordered these slaves, to whom he had given the money, to be summoned so that he might find out what they had gained by trading. ¹⁶ The first came forward and said, ‘Lord, your pound has made ten more pounds.’ ¹⁷ He said to him, ‘Well done, good slave! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities.’ ¹⁸ Then the second came, saying, ‘Lord, your pound has made five pounds.’ ¹⁹ He said to him, ‘And you, rule over five cities.’ ²⁰ Then the other came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your pound. I wrapped it up in a piece of cloth, ²¹ for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man; you take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’ ²² He said to him, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked slave! You knew, did you, that I was a harsh man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? ²³ Why then did you not put my money into the bank? Then when I returned, I could have collected it with interest.’ ²⁴ He said to the bystanders, ‘Take the pound from him and give it to the one who has ten pounds.’ ²⁵ (And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten pounds!’) ²⁶ ‘I tell you, to all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ²⁷ But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and slaughter them in my presence.’”²⁸ After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

Context

Preceded by Zacchaeus (19:1-10)

Followed by entry into Jerusalem (19:28-40)

Context of Gospel of Luke – wider teaching / ministry of Jesus / OT references

Luke's Context

Gabriel revealed that Jesus is to sit on the throne of David (Luke 1:31-33) which occurs at Jesus' resurrection and ascension (Acts 2:29-36). This information is not accessible to characters within the narrative who misconstrue what type of king Jesus will be.....

Teaching of Jesus

Jesus teaches to lend without interest (Luke 6:34-35); preaches God's kingdom – different ++

Ministry of Jesus

Jesus more closely reflects the executed opponents of the ruler, when he is crucified as an opponent of Herod and Pilate.

References to Scripture

OT references – Isa 53; Psalm 2; Psalm 30

And he was reckoned among the lawless (Isa 52:13; Lk 22:37) – Jesus speaks of fulfilment!

“Into your hands Lord I entrust my Spirit” (Lk 23:46): you have redeemed me O Lord God of truth (Psalm 30:6 LXX)

Luke 23:34-35 – Psalm 21

They cast lots and divided his garments (Ps 21:19; Lk 23:34b)

Let him save himself (Lk 23:35) He hoped in the Lord, let the Lord deliver him, let the Lord save him, because the Lord cares for him. (Ps 21:9)

Problematic readings:

Allegorisation – problematic to have Jesus as “King”, ascension, Parousia, judgement..

Problems: slavery; roman imperialism; extortion of slaves; execution of opponents....

For majority at subsistence level of living - accumulation of resources an affront – hierarchy of dominance...

Parable a parody of Jesus' understanding of the kingdom of God –

Jesus' coming as a king (19:38) inverts the image of a rapacious king in roman political systems who operates on the basis of reward and punishment.

R. Alan Culpepper, “The Gospel of Luke”, vol. 9 *The New Interpreter's Bible*, 361-364.

Carnavalesque – inversion of social order and reduction to absurdity.... (Bakhtin)

5Parables: Icons for the Power of the Kingdom

Parables are only told by the character Jesus in the Gospel. They occur through the Gospel but especially in the journey to Jerusalem. This journey is punctuated by predictions of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. The parables provide a lens to view the central Paschal mystery. The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31) speaks of death and the afterlife, at a time when Jesus' death is coming more clearly into view. The Rich Man asks Abraham to send Lazarus back so that his brothers will not be afflicted like him in Hades, but Abraham refuses saying that even if someone should rise from the dead they will not repent (16:30). Might the Rich Man's request be answered in the wider Gospel story and how might readers respond?

The apocalyptic discourse in chapter 21 speaks of the future suffering of the disciples before the Son of Man returns at the end of time to judge the evil and vindicate the good. This serves as a reassurance to disciples and readers of God's victory and salvation as they begin the passion narrative in chapter 22. The parables provide a lens to view the wider story of the Gospel, a preview of much failure and waiting, but also ultimate success.

Reflection Questions:

- How do the parables bring us to the heart of Luke's Gospel?

Bibliography & Resources

Videos

Bible Project – Introduction to Reading the Parables

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/how-to-read-the-bible-the-parables-of-jesus/>

Recommended reading

Donahue, John R. “The Parables of Luke.” *The Bible Today* 41 (2003): 283–88.

Snodgrass, Klyne. “The Parables of Jesus.” @ *Bible Odyssey* website:

<https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/people/related-articles/parables-of-jesus>

Wink, Walter. “Letting Parables Live: The Parable Has the Capacity to Tell Us Something We Do Not Know and Could Not Come by in Any Other Way.” *The Christian Century* 97 (1980): 1062–64. (2 pages)

Optional reading

Judge, Peter J. “Mercy Gained, Mercy Given: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector and The Great Feast.” *The Bible Today* 57 (2019): 27–32.

Koester, H. (1992, 10). “Finding Morality in Luke's Disturbing Parables.” *Bible Review*, 8 (1992):5, 10.

Schubert, Judith. “The Parable of the Good Samaritan: A Compassionate Enemy.” *The Bible Today* 45 (2007): 22–27.

Upchurch, Cackie. “Mining the Parables for Mercy.” *The Bible Today* 55 (2017): 263–70.