



The Good Samaritan: Justin O'Brien

Shaped by a parable

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii,

gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay whatever you spend." Which of these three, do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

The wisdom of the parable lies in recognising the needs of the 'other', and reaching out with compassion and love to whoever they may be, and in whatever circumstance prevails. Our compassion and love cannot be limited to those we know and like. True compassion extends the warmth of love to the 'other' – the one whose circumstances, race, religion, beliefs and values are so different from our own. The innate wisdom gifted by the parable is as relevant and significant now as it was when first recounted by Jesus over 2,000 years ago.