

~Other Speakers G-L: Raymond Golsworthy:

“And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.” Luke 10:30-35

Most Bible-lovers have a special love for this story and having ourselves travelled down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, we can easily visualise the whole event as told by our Lord. It needs to be remembered that the story was originally told to a man who had enquired about eternal life (verse 25) and in these few sentences the Lord revealed the very essence of His gospel. What a master-teacher He was, and still is!

Leaving the details for a moment, we may say that the basic message behind the story is that if anyone of us would have eternal life we must see that it is not a matter of what we can do for ourselves, but rather of what Someone else has graciously done for us! The needy man in our story did nothing to save himself, but could only be grateful for what was being done for him. The Bible says that it is “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (Tit. 3:5). And that is the unique genius of the Christian gospel and it counters and condemns all those false gospels that are around us everywhere. Men love to do something to earn eternal life, but that makes proud men prouder and if those are the people to populate heaven, then heaven itself would only be another hell. (See 1 Cor. 1:29.) How much better it is to get low now, and just thank our Saviour for what He has done for us.

The story itself sets before us three important truths. First we see:

The plight of the sinner

We note that the man in question had fallen among thieves who had stripped him, and “wounded him” leaving him half dead. Possibly he had brought all this upon himself, not paying heed to solemn warnings, and travelling unaccompanied along the dangerous road, as most of us have done. We note that it says he went down to Jericho and that, we know, is a fast-descending road; exactly like the road of sin and self. And it says he fell among thieves, and who of us has not done that? Our father Adam was the first to fall and all of us have been dragged down with him in that fall. But, apart from that, each one of us has also fallen in the way, brought down by one vile sin after another. The thieves of lust and lying and self-indulgence and many others have all done their work, and we have been left half-dead. Indeed, as Paul puts it, we are totally dead toward God in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1). Great indeed is the plight of the sinner.

The next thing illustrated in our story, a matter particularly emphasised in it, is:

The impotence of mere religion

The record goes on to tell of long-robed priests and Levites viewing the scene but “passing by on the other side”. And how many of us have had to learn that lesson, or are still learning it. Religions of all kinds parade themselves everywhere, but we shall have to discover that even our diligent observance of prescribed tenets cannot lift us from the dust, or save a needy soul. Hope may rise for a season, but the wounds and impotence will still be there, and the inner grief will be left unchanged. Let us settle it, then, that once we have fallen among the thieves we need more than religions and philosophies to help us. For all such will only pass us by on the other side. But now we have the beautiful part of our story, for in the person of the Samaritan is depicted for us:

The power of the Lord Jesus Christ

We cannot here spell out all the details, but we can mention a few of the ways in which He is portrayed to us and in which His saving work is declared. First we read that he came where the dying man was.

Thank God, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15). That, we know, is simple history and Christ Himself said while He was here alongside us: “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Heavenly Samaritan indeed!

The good Samaritan

Next we are told, "He had compassion on him." With Christ, that compassion began in heaven, but how His heart must have ached as well when here at our "roadside"™ He saw the countless evidences of the plight into which humanity had fallen. That same divine compassion finally took Him to the Cross where His own pure blood was willingly poured out as an atonement for our sins and follies. Like that first Samaritan, His own garments were stained indeed while He worked on us and for us (see Isa. 63:1,2), but, thank God, He did not pass us by. Truly, "His compassions fail not" (Lam. 3:22).

We further read that the Samaritan "bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine." This reminds us of three very precious verses:

- 1) "He loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).
- 2) "The Blood of Jesus Christ (wine indeed) cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).
- 3) "He (the Holy Spirit) shall be in you" (the real oil of heaven) (John 14:17).

There, we would say, is the real Christian message. Christ Himself cleanses our sins with His own blood, and then, as the Risen Lord, He comes in to indwell and transform us, making us whole indeed!

Finally, we note the statement that, "He set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him" (verse 34). The first phrase depicts us as "raised up"™ and identified with Christ in His ascendancy (as taught in Eph. 2:6). "Brought to the inn"™ speaks of our entrance into His church, to enjoy the care and fellowship of His people; and what an inn that is! (See Acts 2:44; Psalm 133.) We are told, moreover, that the Samaritan then made himself personally responsible for the future needs of his saved one, declaring: "whatsoever thou spendest more, I will repay." The message here is that Christ Himself is our new sufficiency for all things and, as John puts it, "We live through Him" (1 John 4:9). We ask you, then, why not confess your need to Him this moment, taking Him to be the complete answer to your fallen spiritual condition, and the compassionate healer of all your wounds? He will not fail you. But you must have dealings with Him, Himself. The cry of faith will do it.