

Eternal Life Is it Earned or Inherited?  
Luke 10.5

*And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"*

What question is Jesus answering in this parable?

The players in this three-act play

Man

Robbers

Priest

Levite

Samaritan

Innkeeper

Can we get so wrapped up in the story, that we forget the principle players: Jesus and the lawyer?

Question: What Must I do to inherit \_\_\_\_\_.

"Go and do likewise." Who is my neighbor? Anyone born in the image of God.

Discovering God on Parable Lane 2

Sometimes we lose the point of a parable because we know the title Bible editors give it. We derive meaning, not from the parable, but what we think we know of it. What question is Jesus answering? Once we know that, we can discover what Jesus is telling us about God and our relationship with him. Remember – Jesus is also God – so, this is God revealing his will toward humanity. The question is in Luke 10.5.

Jesus' answer, which I provide at the beginning, is found after the lawyer asks his final question: "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10.37) "Preacher" you might say, "that requires an explanation!" Right you are.

The lawyer wanted to "justify" himself; that is, he wanted to convince himself that he was doing the will of the law. So, he asks, "who is my neighbor." There is a foundation of nationalism and a roof of racism in this lawyer's self-made house.

A look at the characters as we go through the passage.

**The injured man:** Robbed, stripped of all possessions beat to the point that without medical attention, he would die. Still conscious and rational. He speaks no words in the parable.

**Robbers:** Are violent and savage and bound by greed.

**Priest:** Is God's intercessory bound by oath and anointment to give care and comfort to serve the LORD and his people.

**Levite:** Is a servant of God; like all Israelites bound by Deut 6.5 and Lev 19.18.

**The Samaritan:** A national, religious, and racial "bad guy" – the hero.

**The Innkeeper:** Gives three weeks care.

I don't think the lawyer ever got the meaning. I think he went away confused and made a list of how to fulfill this work of mercy his way. His answer to Jesus sums up his heart, "the *one* who showed him mercy." He could not dirty his lips with the name, Sa-mar-i-tan. He called him, "the one who showed him mercy." Jesus gives him the hard answer, "Go and do likewise." Be a neighbor—to everyone.

You cannot do anything to inherit eternal life. To inherit, one must be born into the family. Be born again and have a relationship with the Father, through the Son, with the power of the Holy Spirit within.