

*Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our heavenly Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**Luke 10:25-37 (EHV)**

<sup>25</sup> An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

<sup>26</sup> “What is written in the law?” he asked him. “What do you read there?”

<sup>27</sup> He replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; *(Deut 6:5)* and, love your neighbor as yourself.” *(Lev 19:18)*

<sup>28</sup> He said to him, “You have answered correctly. Do this, and you will live.”

<sup>29</sup> But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

<sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He fell among robbers who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> It just so happened that a priest was going down that way. But when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup>

In the same way, a Levite also happened to go there, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> A Samaritan, as he traveled, came to where the man was. When he saw him, he felt sorry for the man. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He put him on his own animal, took him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day, when he left, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him. Whatever extra you spend, I will repay you when I return.’ <sup>36</sup> Which of these three do you think acted like a neighbor to the man who fell among robbers?”

<sup>37</sup> “The one who showed mercy to him,” he replied.

Then Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”



*Dear heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit on us so that we may show love and mercy to our neighbours for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

It happened on the Jericho Road.

In fact, it *a/ways* seems to happen on the Jericho Road!

The actual Jericho Road is the 27-kilometre road which connects Jerusalem to Jericho – about the same distance as between Kingaroy and Kumbia, or Murgon and Wooroolin. It's not far by car, but remember, they didn't have cars in those days and this road drops about a kilometre in that same distance. It's a steep, winding, little travelled road which gave plenty of opportunities for robbers and the like to prey on their victims.

But you could also say this 'Jericho Road' is representative of all the violent and oppressive roads we travel on in life.

In this way the 'Jericho Road' is the road of suffering, trauma, victimisation, abuse, and abandonment. It's the road of robbery, deception, and death.

The 'Jericho Road' is the long road of recovery after sickness, accident, or surgery. It's the invasive road of repetitive cancer treatments and prods and pokes by doctors. It's the downhill road of suffering we experience as we get older and more fragile.

The 'Jericho Road' is the declining battle of those suffering from Dementia, Motor Neurone Disease, and Parkinson's. It's the slow robbing of memories and physical abilities which steal a person's dignity and independence. It's the downhill road towards our own deathbed.

The 'Jericho Road' is the place where the homeless and drug addicted reside when they're abandoned by family and their friends, feeling neglected of love, hope, and mercy. Isolated from ones they loved, they no longer trust anyone and feel alone and discarded.

The 'Jericho Road' is the frightful boat trip by asylum seekers, or the road people travel when escaping war or family violence, or the road of racism and discrimination. Looking for a life of freedom and hope and peace, they often encounter suspicion, hostility, prejudice, and rejection instead.

The 'Jericho Road' is the road of depression. Each joy, each hope, and even one's faith are stolen by the whisperings of accusation, guilt, shame, doubt, and despair. For some, death would be a relief, and many die on that 'Jericho Road'.

So, for many, the 'Jericho Road' is a tragedy, a traumatic event, a time of suffering, struggles with health, a troubling place, or a nightmarish memory. The troubles of the 'Jericho Road' are lived by all of us sooner or later. It's that time or place or memory which robs us of joy, love, peace, health, sanity, dignity, and hope. After all, it *a/ways* happens on the 'Jericho Road!'

But what do we do with the people we meet on the 'Jericho Road?'

Well, we have our door knocks, telethons, fund raising appeals, touching TV adverts, and walks around an oval to we show we care. We talk about others who are suffering behind their backs in hushed tones out of respect or horror, or we demand someone else does something about those on the 'Jericho Road.'

But the people on their own 'Jericho Road' are still there feeling alone and abandoned. No matter how many times we shake our head in sorrow at their plight, no matter how many sermons preachers preach, no matter how many petitions we

sign and demonstrations we attend, and no matter how much we're moved by what we see on TV, they're still on that 'Jericho Road.'

Out of compassion we might donate toward their plight. This seems like a noble thing. Sometimes it's the only thing we can do. It makes us feel as if we've done our bit. Dipping into our pockets to hand over some money appeases our consciences and makes us feel good for a while.

But money doesn't always make things better. Money doesn't always take away cancer or make the suffering disappear. Money doesn't always save asylum seekers or provide for war refugees. Money can't turn back the clock or undo a tragic mistake. Money can't make you young again. Money can't erase a terrifying memory or restore trust. And what's more, many make a lot of money as they take advantage of those travelling on that 'Jericho Road.'

Today Jesus tells the story of just one person travelling the Jericho Road. No names are mentioned, but the suffering is clear – this man is beaten, robbed, stripped, and abandoned for dead.

Some people come by. Good people. They're the 'churchy' types of people who are usually moved with mercy and compassion. You know, people like us!

But it shocks us these people walk on by without offering to help.

It could've been you. It could've been me. After all, we've probably all done it. There are times we've all walked on by those who are suffering. We're too busy, too tired, too uninterested, too self-centred, or too afraid. Maybe it's just too inconvenient. Maybe we don't know what to do, so we don't do anything. Whatever our excuse, we've all turned a blind eye and walked on.

But Jesus isn't interested in excuses. He doesn't list any of them, even though there are good reasons why some people don't get involved. He knows we're being good Christians by going to worship, having devotions, and being faithful, but so were the Jews of the day.

They did all the right things except one – they didn't always show mercy to the poor. There were too many on that 'Jericho Road' being ignored and abandoned by God's faithful people. In this case, sin isn't always *doing the wrong thing*. Sin is also *not doing the right thing*.

So, it seems, the main point of this story was a direct attack on our indifference and lack of concern.

Jesus knows we're all sick with the disease of apathy and non-involvement. We see too much pain on TV or in our personal lives and do nothing about it. We've

taught ourselves to be indifferent and make out we didn't hear their pain. Too often we turn our heads and walk the other way.

Even though we've experienced Jesus' gracious love and have been taught to love as we've been loved, we still struggle to *do* it, especially to those on the 'Jericho Road.'

To shame us even more, the only one who helped the vulnerable victim was one of 'them'. You know the sort of people – the people we look down on, argue with, or stay clear of. They're the ones we avoid and gossip about. They're the ones we don't want to associate with. We usually consider these people as our enemy.

So, what puts us to shame is that Jesus says it was one of *these* people (whom we often class as our enemy) who helped the victim on the Jericho Road while we 'good people' walked on by.

It's like a Palestinian helping a Jew, or a Ukrainian widow helping a Russian soldier. It's shocking! In fact, it's meant to be shocking! Sometimes a shock is what we need to wake us out of our apathy and move us to action!

So, when we hear this parable, we often hang our heads in shame. Even though we're good people who sometimes help those around us, we too have let people down. We've walked on by showing indifference to people's plight. We've thrown money at them when we could have thrown our arms around them in love and service instead. We've been shamed by our enemies because *they* helped the needy when we didn't!

But there's more to this Jericho Road than meets the eye.

For starters, we might recognise ourselves on this Road. Sometimes we're the victim; beaten, robbed, and feeling half dead. Sometimes we're the one doing the abusing and stealing out of selfishness. Other times we're one of those walking on by. Perhaps out of a moment of compassion we've also been the Samaritan.

But where is Jesus on this Road?

Well, like us, he also plays different roles.

Perhaps surprisingly, Jesus is the victim. He was beaten by his own people, robbed of his clothing, deprived of justice and dignity, and left for dead on the cross. Accordingly, he identifies with all the victims on that Jericho Road. He's travelled that Road of suffering and death and is very familiar with it. He hangs out on that Road so that every traveller on that Road never truly travels alone. Not only this, but as the ultimate victim, he also proclaims forgiveness for you and me from that cross. In this way the unjustly sentenced, cruelly treated, beaten and naked victim

in the person of Jesus Christ forgives us for all our sins, including the sins of indifference and selfishness.

It shouldn't surprise us Jesus is also the Good Samaritan. He was abandoned on the cross because the Jews considered him an enemy – an enemy to the state, an enemy to their faith, and an enemy of God. But Jesus suffered and died for all his enemies, including you and me. He's the One who gave up his place in heaven to come down and save us. He's the One who paid the full price for our forgiveness, our healing, and our salvation. He's the One who attends to our needs, tends to our wounds, carries us through our pain, and provides healing and hope.

And Jesus is also the innkeeper, receiving us into his churchly Kingdom for healing and rest. Here he cares for our bodies, minds, hearts, and souls. He washes us and cleanses us from sin in the waters of Baptism. He comforts us with his Word, heals us with his forgiveness, and renews us with the holy medication of his body and blood. Here he gives us security, hope, and the promise of eternal life where the troubling 'Jericho Road' no longer exists. He assures us he's prepared a place for us in his eternal kingdom where we'll be safe and secure from sin, and evil, and death.

In this way, as we're helped by those who have compassion on us as we're travelling that 'Jericho Road', we're helped by Christ himself. Even if the hands are Aboriginal, Muslim, Atheist, young or old, they're the hands of Christ coming to help us in our time of need.

In the same way, whenever we help out the needy, we're helping Christ himself. As we offer a glass of water, bind a broken bone, or wipe away the tears of those on that 'Jericho Road', we're doing these things as if we're doing them to Jesus.

We never have to go very far to find people travelling on that 'Jericho Road'. We all travel that Road sooner or later, and some of us travel it more than others. This 'Jericho Road' doesn't distinguish between bad or good, old or young, friends or enemies.

Yet on that same Road travels our Lord Jesus Christ. He's the ultimate Victim who identifies with all our pain, heartache, abuse, and troubles. He's our Saviour who tends to all our physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs. Christ the healer speaks his words of forgiveness, grace, and mercy to us. He cleanses us with his washing of water and Word. He feeds us with his holy body, and his innocent blood. He's also the One who carries us to the Father who provides us with eternal rest in his holy kingdom.

Yes, we're all travellers on that 'Jericho Road,' and thankfully, so is Jesus.

*Fellow travellers on the Jericho Road, may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and tend our bodies and hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

*Amen.*

Pastor Stuart Kleinig  
South Burnett Lutheran Parish  
5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 10)  
13<sup>th</sup> July 2025