

BRIEF PERSPECTIVE ON GRACE AMONG RACES

At the time of the parable, the Jews and the Gentiles had been in enmity for years. The differences between them were cultural and religious. The Israelites, who were not carried away by the Assyrians, intermarried with other resettled people in that area and a new race emerged (the Samaritans). Some of the Jews that returned from exile viewed the Samaritans as unclean (having intermarried the Gentiles) and renegades of the faith (Samaritans adopted only the Pentateuch into their canon and worshiped on Mount Gerizim instead of Mount Zion). This was the cultural setting of the parable.

This problem of cultural and religious differences was so deep-seated that Jesus rebuked the religious Jews in Mark 7, even Saul (before he became Paul) thought he was doing God a favour by exterminating people who were not one of their own. Paul, then elaborated on the grace of God in reconciling the Jews and the Gentiles in his various letters (Rom 3, Rom 11, Gal 2).

The ploy by the Devil in playing up cultural and racial differences was evident early on and is still deployed today.

The grace of God overcame by God reconciling people to Himself and reconciling people to one another.

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WARMING UP

1. How many inter-racial couples do you know?
2. Have you suffered racial discrimination? How did that make you feel?

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read Luke 10:25-28- The events leading up to the parable

3. What was the lawyer's (or expert in the law) question to Jesus? Was it a valid question?
4. What was Jesus' reply to the lawyer's answer?

Read Luke 10:29-37 - The parable itself

5. Note carefully the response of the priest and Levite. What does it say about the attitude of the priest and the Levite?
6. How did Jesus describe the Samaritan? How did you think the lawyer felt when he heard Jesus describing a Samaritan in such good light?
7. Note Jesus' response in verse 28 and 37? Is it what the lawyer knows or what he does that will save him?

Read James 2:17, Matthew 25:35-40 - The transformed life

8. The Message's rendering of James 2:17 is 'Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?' What was apostle James trying to say?
9. What was the context of Matt 25:35-40? Who were those who were allowed into the Kingdom? Who did the sifting?

MOVING FORWARD

Fellowship with God is the birthright of all men, not just the Christians.

Those of us who have responded to the grace of God in Jesus must now be God's hand, feet and mouth to extend that grace to others so that all have a chance to accept or reject Jesus.

Be thankful for the grace of God in our lives and allow the compassion of God to move us (among our neighbours, colleagues and friends).

LIFE TOGETHER

We are to be a gracious community. The adjectives, courteous, kind, and pleasant, are good but not adequate.

This Christian graciousness is rooted in God's grace in forgiving our sins, exchanging our old nature (along with all the cultural bias) for His righteousness and allowing Him to live His life through us.

Ask the Holy Spirit to lead your small group to doing something for the community.

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These notes are primarily for the Into the Passage portion, and are to be used just as guidelines or commentary notes. Most of them are my own thoughts, so take that with a grain of salt. Let the Word of God lead you to truth, not these notes.

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read Luke 10:25-28- The events leading up to the parable

3. What was the lawyer's (or expert in the law) question to Jesus? Was it a valid question?

What must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus met the lawyer at where he was in his understanding of God's truth. The reality is that no one can love God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength. And no one can love his neighbour as himself.

4. What was Jesus' reply to the lawyer's answer?

Jesus pointed the lawyer to God's solution in His Word. It was and will always be God's solution.

Read Luke 10:29-37 - The parable itself

5. Note carefully the response of the priest and Levite. What does it say about the attitude of the priest and the Levite?

Both the priest and the Levite can just passed the injured man on the same side of the road, they need not cross to the other side. Being injured that seriously, there is little chance the injured man might reached out to touch the priest and the Levite thus making them 'unclean'. So, it was more likely that Jesus was teaching the Jewish audience of cultural bias and their lack of understanding of God's love and grace.

6. How did Jesus describe the Samaritan? How did you think the lawyer felt when he heard Jesus describing a Samaritan in such good light?

Compassionate. The expert could not even bear to mention the Samaritan. His answer was 'the one who showed him mercy'.

7. Note Jesus' response in verse 28 and 37? Is it what the lawyer knows or what he does that will save him?

Do this (verse 28) and do likewise (verse 37). A person's faith is proved genuine not by what he says but what he does.

Read James 2:17, Matthew 25:35-40 - The transformed life

8. The Message's rendering of James 2:17 is 'Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?' What was apostle James trying to say?

Verse 1 of chapter 2 of James sets the tone. James rebuked the people for favouring the rich. The essence was that we cannot choose who to love.

9. What was the context of Matt 25:35-40? Who were those who were allowed into the Kingdom? Who did the sifting?

It was Judgement Day. The separation between the sheep and the goat is not done until the very end and it will be done by Jesus Himself. The preceding verses were not Parable of the Ten Virgins and the Parable of the Three Servants.