

## Your Kingdom Role

Over the last couple weeks, we've considered what the Kingdom of God looks like. And while the Kingdom of God may look drastically different than an earthly kingdom, there are some similarities. Beyond needing a king, a kingdom must have citizens. Without people, there is no kingdom.

Being a citizen comes with the expectation to promote the values upon which the kingdom was established. As members of God's Kingdom, the same goes for us. The expectation for us is that we reflect the same values we see modeled by Christ, the values of love, mercy, and justice.

Love that sees others as equals.

Mercy that meets people in their pain.

Justice that brings restoration.

In Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, he puts on display all three of these values. But in order to see these values in action we need to understand the context and the characters. This is a story filled with political, ethnic and religious tension that would have caught its first audience by total surprise.

Place yourself in this story. As you read Jesus' words, ask yourself the question: **What is Jesus asking of us?**

### **Read Luke 10:25-37**

To say there was tension between the Samaritans & the Israelites is putting it mildly. By the time Jesus told this story, the conflict between these two groups had gone on for centuries. Israel's hatred for the Samaritan people even led them to believe they were less than human.

Jesus knew exactly what he was doing when he told this story. The original audience had assumptions about each character, and rather than fill in the gaps for the audience Jesus plays to their assumptions and biases.

The priest and Levite would've been considered the highest example of morality. These two devoted their lives to knowing the scriptures and adhering to the law. Both men had to stick to the laws of ceremonial cleanliness in order to perform their respective duties. Touching a dead body or the bodily fluids of another person would have prevented them from fulfilling their responsibilities in the temple.

Finally, there is the Samaritan. Jesus gives no other details about him, and he lets the audience fill in the blanks about the Samaritan's character. The audience would have assumed he was the story's villain.

We are never more like Christ than when we are serving, and Christ himself modeled the values of his kingdom by serving with love, mercy and justice.

### **Questions**

What stands out to you about this story?

***Love: to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly.***

How is love on display in this story?

If love sees others as equal, are there people you struggle to see as equal?

***Mercy: kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them.***

How is mercy on display in the story?

Share an experience of when someone met you with mercy in the middle of your pain.

***Justice: repairing the hard and rebuilding relationships in the community.***

How is restorative justice on display in this story?

Why do we hesitate to serve people who look or live differently than us?

### **Personal Reflection**

The priest and the Levite were obeying the ceremonial laws, but they missed God's heart. Am I afraid to serve people outside my circle?

Have I insulated myself from those in need?

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