



The Good Samaritan

Two good men saw the wounded stranger and crossed to the other side. The one who stopped was the last man anyone expected.



KINDNESS · WEEK 2 OF 4 · THE ROOT

A QUICK NOTE TO PARENTS

Before you read together

Last week kindness wore modern clothes — a lunchroom, a tray, an empty seat. This week the trail digs down to the **root**: the oldest kindness story most of the world has ever heard, told by Jesus about two thousand years ago. It is only a few sentences long, and it has never stopped being dangerous.

Here is why it startled the people who first heard it. A man asked a clever, self-protecting question — “*Who counts as my neighbor?*” — hoping to draw a small circle he could be done with. Instead of answering who was *inside* the circle, the story erased the circle. The hero turns out to be a **Samaritan**: a foreigner the listeners were raised to despise, and who was raised to despise them right back. That is the whole shock. Kindness, at its root, is not something you owe your own kind. It is what you do for the stranger in the ditch.

WHERE KINDNESS COMES FROM

Not from liking someone. From *mercy* — being moved by another person’s trouble and doing something it costs you to do. Feeling sorry is where mercy starts, not where it ends.

HOW TO USE IT

Read the story aloud. Pause where the priest passes, and again where the Levite passes, and ask: *why is it so easy to walk by?* Then meet the one who didn’t. About 15 minutes.

A NOTE ON THE SOURCE

This is a parable from the Bible (Luke 10), told here plainly as the root story of kindness in the Western world — the way we told the just weight and the feather of truth in the honesty month. You do not need to share our faith to use it; you need only a child and a hard, good question: *which one was the neighbor?*

HERE IS A STORY WORTH KEEPING. READ IT SLOWLY.

The road down to Jericho

There was a road, and everyone who used it was afraid of it. It ran seventeen miles downhill from Jerusalem to Jericho, through bare red cliffs and blind curves and caves where robbers waited. People called it **the Way of Blood**. You did not walk it alone if you could help it.

One man had to. He was somewhere on that lonely road when the robbers came out of the rocks. They took everything — his money, his coat, even his sandals — and beat him until he could not stand, and left him in the dust at the edge of the road, half dead. He could not call out. He could not move. He could only lie there and wait to see who came next.

Someone did. A **priest** — a good man, a holy man, the very best kind of person the road had to offer — came down the same way. He saw the man in the dust. There is no pretending he didn't; the story says plainly that he saw him. And he crossed to the far side of the road and kept walking.

Then a **Levite** came — a man whose whole job was helping in the temple, a man everyone would have trusted. He came to the place, and he too *looked* at the wounded man. And he too crossed over and went on. Two good men. Two long looks. Two backs, walking away.

And then came a **Samaritan**. Now, you have to understand what that word did to the people first hearing this. Samaritans and this wounded man's people had hated each other for hundreds of years — different worship, different blood, old wounds that never healed. If anyone had a reason to keep walking, to call it none of his business, it was this man. He was the enemy.

But when the Samaritan saw the man in the dust, something turned over inside him. The old word for it is *compassion* — a feeling so deep it is almost physical, a pity that grabs you low in the chest and will not let you walk on.

And here is the difference between him and the two good men who passed: he did not just feel it. He got down in the dust.

WHAT THE STORY IS REALLY ABOUT

The question, turned upside down

The Samaritan knelt in the road. He cleaned the wounds with his own oil and wine, and bound them up. He lifted the stranger — a man of the people who hated him — onto his own donkey, and walked beside him the rest of the way. He brought him to an inn and stayed the night caring for him. In the morning he paid the innkeeper two days' wages and said: *look after him, and whatever more it costs, I will pay you when I come back.* He did not even leave his name.

THE TURN

The man who started all this had asked, “*And who is my neighbor?*” — meaning, *where is the edge of who I have to care about?* At the end, the question comes back flipped: “**Which of these three was a neighbor to the man who fell among robbers?**” Not *who qualifies* — but *who acted like one*. The answer could only be: the one who showed mercy. And then four words that have echoed for two thousand years: *Go, and do likewise.*

NEIGHBOR IS NOT A CATEGORY

The priest and the Levite failed a test they didn't know they were taking. “Neighbor” is not a kind of person you are lucky enough to be near. It is something you *become*, with your hands, toward whoever is in front of you — even the enemy, even the stranger, even the one it costs you to help.

SEEING WAS NOT ENOUGH

Both good men saw him. Last week we learned kindness begins with noticing — but this week shows the second, costlier step. The priest saw and crossed over. Kindness is *seeing a person and moving toward them*. The Samaritan closed the distance the others opened.

The old English word *kind* is cousin to *kin* — family. That was Theo and the empty seat, and it is the Samaritan in the dust: to be kind is to treat a stranger like your own blood. The root of kindness is **mercy that crosses a line** — and the deeper the line it crosses, the more it looks like the real thing.

TALK IT OVER

Three questions, no wrong answers

1. The priest and the Levite both saw the wounded man — the story is careful to say so. Why do you think it is so much easier to look at someone in trouble and keep walking than to stop? When have you looked, and walked?

2. The hero is a Samaritan — the enemy, the one the listeners were raised to look down on. Why do you think the story made *him* the good one, instead of the priest? What is it trying to knock loose in us?

3. The Samaritan's kindness cost him oil, wine, his donkey, two days' pay, a whole night, and a promise to pay more. Pick one person outside your circle this week. What would "*go, and do likewise*" actually cost you — and is it worth it?

COPYWORK

Copy the line below in your best handwriting. Old words, worth keeping.

"Go, and do thou likewise."

— LUKE 10:37 (KJV)

WHERE THE TRAIL GOES NEXT

From the road to the real world

The story never tells us if the wounded man ever learned the name of the one who saved him. He couldn't have — the Samaritan didn't leave it. That is the root of kindness in one small detail: it does not stop to be thanked, and it does not check whose side you are on. First you *see* the empty seat. Then you kneel in the dust of the road.

Next week on the trail: the parable steps off the page and onto a real island. A young priest sailed to a place the whole world had walled off — a settlement of people sick with leprosy, sent away to die where no one would have to look at them. Everyone else stopped at the water's edge. He did the one thing the story asks: he crossed it, moved *toward* them, and stayed — building, bandaging, burying — until he caught their sickness himself. The Good Samaritan, lived out on a beach at the edge of the map. His name was **Father Damien**.

The parable has a paid companion — the whole trail of Kindness.

A schoolteacher who drove a wagon of bandages straight toward the cannon smoke when everyone else was running from it, the road to Jericho, and a week-long challenge that turns “go and do likewise” into seven days your child can actually walk: that's **Constellation Trail Unit Three: Kindness** — the third star of the constellation.

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