

Serving Neighbors, Serving God

Key Verses: *“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.”*
—**Luke 10:36,37**

Selected Scripture:
Luke 10:25-37

inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.”—Luke 10:25-27

Our Lord then affirmed the lawyer’s reply was accurate and added that if he kept the Law he would obtain life. This response placed his questioner in a difficult position, because even though outward claims were

TOWARDS THE END OF

Christ’s earthly ministry, he received increased opposition from prominent leaders of Israel. These sought, in any way possible, to discredit him because of his popularity among the common people.

On one such occasion, a lawyer who was an expert in the teachings of the Mosaic Law sought to entrap the Master by engaging him in dialogue. “Behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to

made by the scribes and Pharisees that they kept the Law, as fallen human beings it was impossible for them to do so perfectly. Nevertheless, in an attempt to justify himself, the lawyer questioned Jesus as to who would constitute his neighbor.—vss. 28,29

Jesus responded to this inquiry by relating a parable. It concerned a man who traveled to Jericho, and on the way was attacked by thieves who also left him half dead. A Jewish priest and Levite passed by the victim without offering to render any assistance. Then a Samaritan came along and, filled with compassion, gave first aid to the injured man. He took him to an inn and made provision for his care until he would be well enough to return to his home.—vss. 30-35

In our Key Verses, Jesus inquired as to which of the individuals in the parable proved to be the neighbor to the man who was attacked by thieves. When the lawyer responded, that it was the one who showed mercy towards the victim, Christ told him he should do likewise.

This lesson illustrates the principle that love is the fulfilling of the Law, as opposed to harboring an attitude of professed superiority over others. (Rom. 13:10) The Samaritan in the foregoing parable was an outsider as far as the Jews were concerned, but it was he who demonstrated the quality of mercy required in all who would prove acceptable to God.

As believers strive to manifest holy conduct, we should recognize that acts of kindness and service, especially to the members of Christ's body, are expressions of the Heavenly Father's mercy towards us. (Gal. 6:10) As we demonstrate acts of kindness on behalf of others, we are imitating the Heavenly Father. It is his abundant mercy that provided for our redemption and the invitation to become members of his divine family. "O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."—Psalm 136:1 ■