**Cranmer Group Sermon, Worship & Prayers**

**July 5th – Café Church
(The Fourth Sunday after Trinity)**

**‘The Good Samaritan’ (Luke 10:25-37)**

*Dear Friends,*

*I hope that this finds you all well. We’re back to the first Sunday of the month, which means that it’s time for Café Church once again, in our online service. So, as at the start of June, in our first video service online, it has a slightly different format, with contemporary worship songs, shorter prayers, and also a children’s film & activity led by Clare, which obviously aren’t incorporated here. Esther and Ella also featured – sorry you can’t meet them in print, so to speak!*

*Our reading and theme today is the Parable of the Good Samaritan, (Luke 10:25-37). It’s extremely pertinent, firstly as we’re starting to make the first significant steps out of the Coronavirus lockdown, with all the questions that raises about maintaining the connections and relationships we’ve built in our communities during these times of restrictions and physical isolation. And, secondly, as we seek to engage well with the Black Lives Matter movement, with its imperatives for repentance across our society and indeed within the Church of England, whilst acting to build a more racially just society.*

*However you will be spending this week, go well, and be blessed,*



**Rev. Tim Chambers
Vicar, the Cranmer Group
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Mobile: 07946 526569**The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

**The Collect for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity
(Common Worship)**

Gracious Father,
by the obedience of Jesus
you brought salvation to our wayward world:
draw us into harmony with your will,
that we may find all things restored in him,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
**Amen.**

**Jesus, Lover of My Soul

Played by Amy Taylor**

Jesus, lover of my soul
All consuming fire is in Your gaze
Jesus, I want you to know
I will follow you all my days
For no one else in history is like you
And history itself belongs to you
Alpha and Omega, You have loved me
And I will share eternity with You

It's all about You, Jesus
And all this is for You
For Your glory and your fame
It's not about me
As if You should do things my way
You alone are God
And I surrender to your ways

Paul Oakey

**Bible Reading: Luke 10:25-37 (New International Version)**

**Read by Tim Chambers**

***The Good Samaritan***

*25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he asked, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’*

*26 ‘What is written in the Law?’ he replied. ‘How do you read it?’*

*27 He answered, ‘“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, “Love your neighbour as yourself.”’*

*28 ‘You have answered correctly,’ Jesus replied. ‘Do this and you will live.’*

*29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’*

*30 In reply Jesus said: ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half-dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. “Look after him,” he said, “and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.”*

*36 ‘Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?’*

*37 The expert in the law replied, ‘The one who had mercy on him.’*

*Jesus told him, ‘Go and do likewise.’*

**Sermon: The Good Samaritan – Rev. Tim Chambers**

The story of the Good Samaritan is perhaps the best-known of all of Jesus’s parables. Everyone, everywhere seems to know what we mean when we call a person “a good Samaritan.”

So I wonder what the purpose of this story that Jesus tells is? Well, I think it describes for us the sort of person you’re going to need to be if you are going to be a follower of Jesus.

This story comes as the answer to a question to Jesus, from ‘an expert in the law’ (that is, a Jewish Biblical scholar): “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” It’s a big question! Perhaps the biggest of all questions: why are we here?

In response, Jesus turns the question back to the scholar: “What do you think?“

The man replies with two verses from the Jewish Law, from Deuteronomy and Leviticus, effectively ‘Love God’ and ‘Love your neighbour’.

And Jesus agrees - that is what we are here for; this is the meaning of life.

It’s remarkably simple. And difficult. And it’s because it’s difficult, that the expert comes back with another question for Jesus: what does it actually look like in practice to love your neighbour? Who, indeed, is my neighbour?

And so Jesus says, let me tell you, by telling you a story. A very familiar story.

I think we can all imagine a situation in our own lives parallel to the one which Jesus tells. You, or I, are in a real rush to get to an appointment in the centre of Nottingham when we stumble over a homeless man who appears to have been beaten up. We know we should stop, but there are all sorts of reasons why we can also justify in our minds not doing so. We’re in a rush. Dealing with this is going to be lots of hassle. Maybe the people who smashed up the victim are still around, and will go for us too. We’re confronted by a real dilemma.

It’s like this in Jesus’s parable. Deep down, I’m sure that all three men here know what they need to do. But two don’t do it, and one does.

If he’d stopped to help this man, the priest would have become ritually unclean, which meant serious inconvenience and expense to be able to serve as a priest again.

The Levite’s response may well have been, “Well, if the priest’s not helping him, then why should I bother?”

The Samaritan’s reason not to stop is that the Jews and the Samaritans hated each other. The guy in the ditch is a Jew. Jews have never helped him in the past. Why should he bother?

All three have good reasons.

So why does the Samaritan stop? It’s clear he’s no braver than the other two.

We find the reason in verse 33: the Samaritan “took pity on him”; he had compassion towards the victim. In the original Greek in which the New Testament was written, St. Luke uses a verb here that’s derived from a fantastic word, ‘splanknon’. Splanknon, meaning your guts; the seat of your emotions.

When the Samaritan saw the man in the ditch, something wrenched his guts. He was so overcome with compassion for him, that he couldn’t do anything other than stop and help.

This is the nub of the story!

If we go back to the scholar’s original question, this is what a person who’ll inherit eternal life looks like; someone who has learnt to love God and love their neighbour.

So we – you and I - are here on this earth to learn this kind of gut-wrenching compassion for those who suffer; for those whose life is hard; for a broken and hurting world.

If that’s what we’re all here to do – to learn and cultivate compassion in our own hearts – how then do we do this?

I’d like to suggest that there are three ways:

First, we’re to allow God to turn our pain into compassion. The Samaritan is in Judea, home of the Jewish nation, with whom Samaritans were sworn enemies. He’s surrounded by people who view him as worthless. So when he sees someone lying in a ditch, he somehow identifies with him; he knows what it feels like to be beaten up, and despised. He’s turning his pain into compassion; his struggles into love. We all have parts of our life that are really hard. We can let them make us bitter, or we can allow God to take them, and turn them into something that reaches out to those who share this same pain.

Second, we’re to remember our own poverty. When you hear a parable, you’re meant to identify with one character in it. The expert in the law identifies with the Samaritan; the one offering help. We tend to read the story this way as well. But there’s a little twist.

When Jesus gets to the end of the story, he asks the expert: “Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” But, if we go back to the very beginning, the scholar’s original question to Jesus is “Who is my neighbour?” So, through telling this story in this way, Jesus is replying to the scholar, that the Samaritan is his neighbour. And so we and the scholar are being placed in the situation of the man in the ditch. If we are to learn this compassion, we need to identify with the one who needs the help, not the one giving it out. So, then, who is the Samaritan? He is someone whose heart is filled with compassion. He’s someone who reaches down and rescues; doing everything to rescue, at great cost to himself. Jesus is the good Samaritan.

It’s only when we have a deep sense of our own poverty; and that we have been rescued, healed and forgiven by Jesus Christ; that we’ll be more likely to reach out to others in the same situation, who need our help too.

So, first, we’re to allow God to turn our pain into compassion. Second, we’re to remember our own poverty. And, third, we are to ask for the Spirit of Jesus. This word, splanknon, compassion from our guts, is associated with one individual, far above all, in the New Testament: Jesus. Jesus again and again has compassion on those in pain, suffering, in need of help. If there is one word above all that we might associate with Jesus, it’s compassion.

The heart of what it is to be human, the heart of what it is to be divine, is to stay close to Jesus, the one whose heart is full of compassion. We’re to ask for the spirit of Jesus that stirred his heart to be full of compassion, to live in us as well.

We’ve seen, over these last few months of the Coronavirus pandemic, some extraordinary acts of compassion, both within our local communities, and further afield, in the UK and overseas. People have reached out to their neighbours (in many cases, to those whom they would never before have considered to be their neighbours) in acts of great grace and beauty, bringing glimpses of God’s Kingdom into the here and the now.

But we’ve also seen, in many of the images and testimonies that have sparked the Black Lives Matter protests across the globe, abject failures between us as a society, and indeed within the Church of England and other denominations too / abject failure to recognise who is our neighbour, and to extend the compassion of the spirit of Jesus Christ to one another; failures of which we need collectively to repent, and from which we need to act for a racially just world.

As we start to come out of this lockdown time, we have seen, over these past weeks, what is possible. We perhaps recognise more readily now, when we hear the prompting of the Holy Spirit in us, to share Christ’s compassion with those whom we meet, who are in need. And maybe, just maybe, we’re more willing to act.

My prayer for each one of us, is that we will allow the Holy Spirit more deeply into our hearts; into our guts; into our ‘splanknon’, that we may be moved by compassion to act just as the Samaritan did. To act, in the way of Jesus.

In his holy and all-loving name we pray, Amen.

 **The Lord’s Prayer**As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

**The Collect for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity
(Book of Common Prayer)**

O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal: Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. **Amen.**

**Good, Good Father**

**Played by Clare Chambers**

I've heard a thousand stories of what they think you're like
But I've heard the tender whispers of love in the dead of night
And you tell me that you're pleased
And that I'm never alone

You're a good good father
It's who you are, it's who you are, it's who you are
And I'm loved by you
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am

I've seen many searching for answers far and wide
But I know we're all searching
For answers only you provide
'Cause you know just what we need
Before we say a word

You're a good good father
It's who you are, it's who you are, it's who you are
And I'm loved by you
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am

Because you are perfect in all of your ways
You are perfect in all of your ways
You are perfect in all of your ways to us

Chris Tomlin

**A Closing Blessing**

God the Holy Trinity make you strong
in faith and love,
defend you on every side,
and guide you in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you & remain with you always.
**Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
**In the name of Christ, Amen.**