

## WARM UP

1. How has 2020 been for you?
2. What plans and expectations did you have for 2020, and how much of it has changed?
3. What lessons did you learn from the most recent level 3 lockdown or shift to level 2 if living outside of Auckland?

## WORD

Luke 10: 25-37

<sup>25</sup> On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>26</sup> "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

<sup>27</sup> 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 neighbor as yourself.'"

<sup>28</sup> "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

<sup>29</sup> But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"

<sup>30</sup> 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. <sup>31</sup> A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> 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.'

<sup>36</sup> "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

<sup>37</sup> The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

In the context of ancient Israel, the Jews and Samaritans hated each other. The Samaritans claimed to be the true religion of Moses, whereas the Jews believed that the Samaritans were spiritually corrupt and ethnically mixed between the Israelites and pagan foreigners. Samaritans created a religion that was considered heretical by the Jews. It is uncommon for a Samaritan to help a Jew considering their long history of

hatred towards each other. It is for this reason the parable was called ‘the good’ Samaritan.

Jesus used the Samaritan as an example to demonstrate the unconditional love of God to others, particularly to their enemies. We learn three key characteristics of mercy and grace from the good Samaritan. He 1) cared for the man’s wounds, 2) provided him shelter (got him to safety), and 3) paid for his stay in the inn.

Following Jesus is a personal sacrifice. Often, there is something we give for someone else to live. In our discussion, we will explore how these good Samaritan principles can be lived out today so we can showing the love of Christ to our families and friends much like the three stories shared during online Church on August 30<sup>th</sup>. (If you have not watched the service, you’ll still be able to participate.)

## 1. Compassion

*“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had **compassion** on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

*Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”*

Matthew 9:35-38

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”*

2 Corinthians 1:3-4.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus demonstrated compassion towards the sick, the blind, people who needed comfort from God, just like the Samaritan showed care, concern, and kindness to the man who was robbed. It was very uncommon for a religious teacher to show compassion towards people who were from a lower status of society compared to themselves.

In David, Jessie, and TJ’s stories on August 30<sup>th</sup>, we learned that they showed compassion to their families and friends in different ways. David resisted arguing with his family about the love of God; instead, he learned to submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit by listening to his family’s needs. Likewise, Jessie continued to care for her husband regardless of his personal beliefs at the time, and TJ and her husband, Raymund, extended their connect group to a family in need. Often times, people (whether far from or close to God) do not care how much or what you know until they know how much you care for them and care about what matters to them.

## **2. The importance of prayer and the impact of making small investments in people.**

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”*                      Philippians 4:6

*“He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not despise their plea.”*  
Psalm 102:17

Prayer is fundamental act of worship in the life of a Christian. It shows humility when we surrender to God situations in our lives that are beyond our control. Worship is also praising God for the great things He has done for and around you. In David, Jessie and TJ’s stories, we learn that prayer was important. They spent years praying and believing for their families and friends to encounter Christ.

They made small investments of time and love to show that they genuinely care. TJ and Raymond included in their connect group a family, who they prayed with, ate with, did life with. They opened communication lines and provided food to this family. Eventually, God came through with a new job opportunity they had been praying for. God is still writing this family’s story, so it does not end there.

## **3. Turning uncertain situations into an opportunity to share the gospel.**

This year has been incredibly challenging for most people across our communities, the country, and the globe. With the Covid-19 pandemic, we have experienced government lockdowns and state regulations on a global scale. The restrictions forced businesses to close, unemployment to increase and mental health issues to soar with high levels of depression and anxiety. Mainstream media continue to provide updates on covid cases with the hope of mitigating the virus while the world hopes for a vaccine.

However, for Christians, this is an opportunity to share and demonstrate the gospel with the love of Christ to people who are in need—be it physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. We learn from David, TJ and Jessie that it’s possible for God to turn uncertain situations into an opportunity to change lives. While the media continues to feed fear and hopelessness, we can share the love of Jesus to our family and friends through the leading and power of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the persecuted church in Rome in the first century and encouragement relevant for us today (as covid in a way ‘persecutes’ us):

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*                      Romans 15:13

## APPLICATION

1. How has God helped you through this Coronavirus season?
2. What changes do you need to make to follow Jesus more closely?
3. Can you describe to the group any meaningful contact you've had with unbelievers during last week?
4. What reservations do you have about contacting and caring for two unbelieving friends or family members this week? What would increase your willingness to do this?

## Prayer

Please Pray for:

- People who are experiencing hardship in this time. Ask the Lord how He wants to provide for them and listen to what the Holy Spirit prompts.
- Our church family to have boldness to share and demonstrate the love of Christ to people in need.
- God to comfort people in our church and connect groups who are experiencing fear and anxiety.
- God to reveal His word to people who have deep questions about the state of the world today.