



Sermon Outlines



Our gospel reading from Luke 10 The Good Samaritan Fr Kevin Cable, Jaffa Port in Israel

- People hear the words of this parable today and can immediately understand the kindness shown by the Samaritan. But, if we were to rewind the clock by 2,000 years, on hearing this parable we would have been shocked, in some cases maybe outraged, and seen a Jesus who challenged those around him head on.
- His choice of language, people, setting, and place would have directly put him into opposition with the leading and ruling religious elite.
- Jesus gives this parable after being challenged by an expert in religious law. Jesus has already given an answer summarising the whole of God's law and how we should relate to one another. However, this expert presses further asking, "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus uses the parable of the Good Samaritan to answer him, and in doing so would have shocked those who heard.
- We don't know much about the traveller who is attacked, though we do know that those who heard this parable would have been shocked that this man had risked travelling the Jericho road alone. Foolish or ignorant of the danger that lay ahead of him, or perhaps obliged to take this journey for personal reasons, Jesus does not reveal why this man was making this long hard journey alone.
- We do know, however, the reaction of those who came across him, and it is the reaction of the three passers by that would have shocked the listeners. You see, fundamental to the religious life of the Israelites was the protection of life and as Jesus had just said, "love your neighbour."
- But the first two passers-by shock by their actions.
- Both the priest and the Levite, religious men, fail in that duty to love their neighbour.

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Why?

- Yes, it's true helping involved taking a risk. Especially as this wounded man might be a trap, with the robbers waiting to strike and lure in anyone who tried to help. Remember where you are – miles and miles of barren wilderness – no one will come and help you.
- For those listening to Jesus the shock continued when they heard the Samaritan, who represented a people who, at the time, were despised by both Jew and Roman, shames these other two by helping this man. The man the other two were content to forget and walk by, placing their safety and their needs over everything else.

How does this relate to seafarers?

- Well, many seafarers are forgotten, unseen, and working in a dangerous environments at sea, where they experience long hours, poor working conditions, and further threats such as piracy.
- Like the traveller on the road, we don't know all the reasons these seafarers choose to work at sea – money, to support family, to gain work experience – there could be a whole host of reasons. But we do know that we all benefit from the work they do nonetheless – our cars, computers, food, most of which is brought across the sea, by seafarers.
- And like the man in the parable, many of the seafarers can end up in trouble financially, with their health, in some cases subject to working conditions that pay them a pittance for long and strenuous work. All the while they are unable to reach family, or, as in recent times due to the COVID pandemic, stranded thousands of miles from home, many have been to contact family or friends.
- And just like the priest and the Levite who were more concerned with their own lives and goals, these seafarers can be passed-by by governments, and other organisations involved with the shipping industry. Often, they can be abandoned alone in a distant port, or just simply not paid.

Who is the Samaritan to them? Who is their neighbour?

- This is where The Mission to Seafarers comes in. The Mission is the Samaritan at the side of the road, going above and beyond to help.
- Being their advocate where injustices occur.
- Providing the means to connect with families via free Wi-Fi access, and offering centres for the seafarers to come to and talk while in port, to relax, to feel human and to feel welcome.
- From providing warm clothing to meeting their spiritual needs, the Mission does not leave them helpless and alone. Like the Samaritan, we tend to their needs and provide respite, bandaging the wounds of whatever experience they may have had. We do this not for praise or adoration but because, although unseen by many, they are still our neighbours.

Sea Sunday is just once a year, but loving our neighbour is a 365-day a year job for all of us.

This year, more than just asking you to make a donation towards the year round work we do, can I also ask you to pray, and to commit to pray for the work of The Mission to Seafarers, and for all seafarers.

Maybe you'd like to become more involved and generate support and awareness, to be in some senses an ambassador for the work we do. Get in touch, and see how you can be a good neighbour to those who work at sea.

Walking by, letting someone else help is the easy option. But Jesus's point in this parable is just the opposite. For His followers, for members of His Kingdom on earth, walking by is just not an option.

God bless all who work on the sea. Amen.