

# The Kind Stranger

## A story about compassion.

Wherever Jesus went people would come to hear him tell about God. They loved to hear him tell parables. Parables were stories that helped people understand important lessons.

Once a man who was an expert in the Law of God asked Jesus a question, "Teacher, what must I do to live forever?"

Jesus knew the man was an expert in God's Old Testament Laws. He asked the man what the Old Testament Law said that a person must do to live forever.

The man's answer was, "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."

Jesus told the man that he was right. That was the greatest commandment. That is the way to live forever.

Then the man asked about loving your neighbour as yourself. Did he have to love all of his neighbours or just the ones that lived close by? He asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbour?"

Instead of telling him the answer Jesus told a parable. This is the parable:

A man was travelling by himself from Jerusalem to the town of Jericho. While he was on the road some robbers attacked him. They beat him up and took everything he had - even his clothes! The man

was left all alone on the road. He waited and waited for someone to come by and help him.

A priest came walking by on the road. Priests were God's helpers in the temple. They knew how to worship God. They knew all of the rules of God. Do you think the priest helped the man? No, the priest went on the other side of the road and passed right by the man without helping.

Next, a Levite came along the road. Levites knew all of God's laws. They were good Jews. Do you think the Levite stopped and helped the man? No, the Levite looked at the man and then crossed the road and walked right past him.

Finally, a man from Samaria came along the road. The Jews did not like Samaritans. Everybody thought that the Samaritans would never help anybody. But this Samaritan was good. He saw the man on the road and he stopped to help. He put oil and wine on the man's wounds. (Oil and wine were used for medicine in those times.) Then he lifted the man onto his donkey and took him to a nearby inn. He took care of the man all night to make sure he was going to be well.

The next morning the Samaritan had to leave to continue on his journey. He wanted to make sure that the injured man was taken care of so he gave money to the innkeeper. He gave him enough money so that the man could stay at the inn for two months! He even told the innkeeper that he would come back next time he was travelling and pay more money if the man was still sick.

Everyone was very surprised to hear this parable. When Jesus was finished he asked the expert in the Law of God a question, "Three men went on the road that day: the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan. Which of these men do you think was a neighbour to the man who was beaten and robbed?"

What do you think the expert in the Law of God answered? That's right, the Samaritan was a neighbour. Helping anyone who needs help is being the kind of neighbour that God wants. We don't even have to know the person. We should help them just because they need help.

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