

Luke 10:25-42

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Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

[0 : 0 0] book chapter 10 we read that verse 35 on the model when he departed he took out two pence and gave them to the host and said unto him take care of him and whatsoever thou spendest more when i come again i will repay thee now if we turn back to the beginning of this parable that jesus tells if we look at verse 25 here for example we see that jesus has a clear objective in the telling of this parable in other words the living out of god's laws and commands requires us to show true sacrificial love in action the lawyer who questioned jesus he knew all the head knowledge he knew all the facts he even knew about the greatest commandment of all about loving the lord your god with all your heart and soul and mind and strength and your neighbor is yourself and jesus said well that's fine you've got the answer and he sort of then felt a wee bit foolish having asked jesus so he tried to justify himself so who's my neighbor in other words who is the person or who are the people i have to show this love to to others as myself and jesus as you probably noticed turns the parable around or turns the teaching around so that instead of saying these are the people to whom you should show love rather this is the kind of neighbor you should be to others it's not so much who is the neighbor to me that i have to show this love to but who can i be the best neighbor to myself i'm the one who must be the neighbor to them that is the way that jesus turns it around he has a clear objective in doing so that we have to show this love in action uh including toward our enemies uh that you do unto them as you would hope that they would do to you if the situations were reversed now as we've said this parable has a clear objective so that there's always a danger with a parable in in allegorizing too much now what's allegorizing and allegory is a means whereby a story is each detail of a story is given a particular application you know as though everything means something else to give you an example in matthew 13 uh an example probably used this instance before but it's quite helpful one where jesus tells the parable about the uh the wheat and the tares in matthew 13 he says um he talks about it uh the the wheat and the tares and he says the kingdom of heaven is like to a man who sowed good seed in his field but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way when the blade was sprung up and brought forth then appeared the tares also so the servants of the householder came and sent him sir it's not thou sowed good seed in thy field from whence then hath it tares he said unto them an enemy hath done this the servant said unto him wilt thou then we go and gather them up but he said nay lest while ye gather up the tares ye root out also the wheat with them let both grow together until the harvest and in the time of harvest i will say to the reapers gather ye together first the tares bind them in bundles to burn them but gather the wheat into my barn and then later on the disciples ask him about this parable and he says and he says declare to us the parable of the tares of the field he answered and said unto them he that sowed the good seed is the son of man so jesus is the householder the field is the world the good seed are the children of the kingdom but the tares are the children of the wicked one the enemy that sowed them is the devil the harvest is the end of the world and the reapers are the angels as therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire so shall it be in the end of the world the son of man shall send forth his angels they'll gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and so on and so forth every little detail every person every character in that parable has an application has a person it represents that is an allegory

whereby the parable is in fact a picture of something else the field is the world the man who owns the field is the son of man the servants are those who go out and sow the seed in the field the reapers are the angels and so on everything answers to something else that is an allegory now some of jesus parables obviously were intended to be allegories but not all and there is a danger of seeking to allegorize too much oh yes this represents that and this represents that you know um the medieval church for example in the in the days before the reformation used to take the the parable of the good samaritan here said oh yes he's going down from jerusalem to jericho so jerusalem is

man's state of innocence jericho down below that's man's state of sin he's on the downward path so he falls in amongst trouble serves him right and then along comes uh let's say uh the church or jesus and helps him and picks him up and the and the man is asked in our lost condition puts him on his on his donkey the donkey represents the uh the church or the apostles and he takes him to the inn and then he and the innkeeper there represents saint paul he gave he pours in the man's wounds oil and wine that represents the sacraments he gives him two pence that represents the old and the new testament and so on as though every little detail of it answered to something else now jesus does not tell this parable in that way and although we can find details that answer to yeah well that's just like something else that's just like such and such that may all be true but jesus remember does not tell every parable as an allegory the parable of the wheat and the tares he does and he spells that one out but there is a danger a problem with potentially reading into a parable elements which perhaps jesus never intended so we have to be wary of that at the same time it is not wrong necessarily to find depths and details in a parable which although not perhaps part of the main objective are still in line with christ's teaching still honoring to the lord obviously it would not be honoring to the lord to try and make a parable of jesus say or teach something of which he would not have approved but to try and make it say the opposite of what he intended you know the parable of the prodigal son for example you can't you can't teach that parable and say so this just proves you know do you like you're gonna have a great party god will always bring you back at the end of the day he'll always have mercy so do you like live how you like and blow it all and it'll still all be all right at the end of the day that is not even if that were true which it isn't this is not what jesus is trying to convey in that parable so that would be an abuse of the parable but where what we seek to draw out of a parable can still be in line with the teaching of jesus still honoring to the lord then it is not necessarily wrong obviously uh we we can't abuse that sense but if you think of the old testament prophets are we to understand that that everything that they spoke and everything they did by inspiration of the lord that they definitely knew in advance that the lord would apply it in the fullness of time to the messiah that it would all be fulfilled and completed in jesus of nazareth even if they had a sort of vision of messianic fulfillment they couldn't have known the details about jesus life but how it would all pan out and how their words would all end up being fulfilled it's not wrong to take deeper fuller detail or meaning out of something which is in line with god's word aspects or details of parables which we may not have thought about but which may still be part of god's truth i would suggest to you that can't necessarily be wrong in many of jesus parables that's what we might

call a certain invitation to think oneself into them you see what i mean into the story into the plot to imagine oneself as one or more of the characters and to seek to understand or even empathize with their position even if they're wrong you know because quite a lot of people no doubt would have empathize to an extent with for example the elder brother think well sure enough there he is slogging his guts out away at home back on the farm and he's he's not going off and partying he never gets a chance to have a party with his friends and here comes his younger brother and suddenly they roll out the red carpet of course he's a bit niffed course he's a bit cheesed off naturally he's going to be angry and part of the sort of human empathy if you like with part of the elder brother's position is what jesus is seeking to draw out otherwise there wouldn't be the punch to his teaching saying oh that's why this is wrong because this is about the love of god for the lost sinner in his hopelessness not in his partial righteousness not in having done you know some good or whatever this guy's lost hopeless doesn't have a chance and this is about the mercy and love of god which is so forgiving and so gracious that's the message and it wouldn't have half of that edge unless as human beings we could relate a wee bit to the elder brother we could relate a wee bit to the laborers in the vineyard who said well come on i know you agreed with us for a penny a day but come on we've been slogging away all day in the vineyard these guys turned up last minute and he paid them the same as us how is that right and people would have said well yeah we could see that we can see how that's a wee bit a bit wrong and again the point jesus is trying to convey would lose some of its punch some of its cutting edge if people couldn't imagine themselves into the situation of say the workers in the vineyard or the elder brother or some of the characters in the plot there's with every parable jesus tells there's a subtle invitation to imagine yourself into it to empathize or at least to understand where some of the characters are coming from it's part of what he intends to do so that there is a punch so that there is a an understanding element so that his teaching when it is brought out in the conclusion makes the contrast with the normal everyday human reaction to situations people think like this but god thinks like this people respond x god responds y you know

the world says do god says do better so this is part of what jesus seeks to convey with the parable it's the contrast between how people react and how the lord would react because the audience can't think themselves into the parable see something of where the other characters are coming from then the parable loses some of its impact so in the parable of the good samaritan the punch the impact is the contrast between the sadly all too human reaction of the priest and the levite neither whose business about the things of god and his house translated into love for their suffering fellow men you know they knew what their job was turn up at the temple do the sacrifices burn the incense sort out all the practicalities of the temple that was their job just like somebody else's job was tilling the fields somebody else's was making pottery somebody else's would be a stonemason somebody else's would be a counter and their job go to the temple do your stuff come home again doesn't have to affect your heart doesn't have to affect your mind your thought your relationship with the lord or compassion for anybody else it was official institutional religion detached from humanity and its needs

and people would have been able to relate to that they would have understood that and you've got institutional religion and then you've got the god it is meant to be serving and there is a breach almost between the two a cleavage between the two their business the priest and the levite was about the things of god in his house that didn't translate into a fellow feeling love for their suffering fellow man much less that it encouraged them or think that caused them to think to do it at personal risk to themselves so again the contrast between them and the samaritan remember who is the traditional enemy of the jewish people who without any incentive sacrificially helps the poor man on the roads this is the contrast between them and him the contrast between how the all too human reaction of ordinary folk or even institutional religion and the way that the lord would have people react thinking ourselves into the story thinking ourselves into the plot we like to think oh yes we would have helped we like to think well we are good we would have compassion we would be nice but i would like to suggest to you that we might actually be represented by more than one character in the plot when we look at this parable from a spiritual point of view we see that we represent not or we are represented not by the good samaritan or perhaps even the priest or the levite but we are certainly in a spiritual point of view we are the helpless bleeding victim that the opposite door are our lives we are the authority not by the firer in our lives our lives we are on a path downwards yes we don't want ■■■itt otow much but there is no doubt that everything Jerusalem represents the holy place of god the place of his temple the place of a symbolic residence we are going down from there we are going as down as it's possible to do now as

Jesus tells this story, I've only been in the Holy Land once and they took us down in a bus down the now nice wide tarmac road from Jerusalem down towards Jericho and it is steep and it is rugged and it is rocky and dangerous and you can see how in olden times where it was just maybe a track that is sort of dust road or dirt road, it would have been totally dangerous, especially for anybody on their own it would be a complete gift to thieves and bandits and so on, loads of rocks to hide by no help for miles anywhere they could disappear into their caves, nobody would ever know it is a gift to the lawless it was a highly dangerous road and when you see it, you can begin to imagine a hot, dry, dusty, merciless to rake and here is this man, here is us we could see coming down from Jerusalem to Jericho

[15 : 28] Jerusalem physically is 2,300 feet above sea level some of the Holy Land of course is below sea level including the Jordan plain in which Jericho is it's 1,300 feet below sea level so you've got a 3,600 foot drop from Jerusalem down into the plain Jericho so it's a big descent and you know, if this is us going through our lives and yeah, we're wandering away from the Lord as we often do, we don't ask to be attacked we don't ask for the bad things that happen to us in our life we don't invite hassles and attacks and difficulties and troubles and all the buff of things that we get in this world and we all get them we all get hassles, we all get grief we all get attacks from one side or the other we didn't go looking for it we didn't ask for it, but it happened and we just know and if you go down that road you just know you're inviting it to happen that's one reason why people often travel in large convoy because there was safety in numbers bandits might think twice about attacking 200 or 300 people at once they won't think twice about attacking one guy on his own so we're kind of inviting it although we didn't ask for it we think we can do it alone we don't think we need the strength of the Lord or his protection or his angels we don't need the Lord to surround us with his spirit ah, we can do this ourselves is that not our attitude so often in life?

I can do this myself I have my own identity I am my own person I'm going to do what I think is right what I want I'm not going to be bound by his huge surrounding of God's rules and regulations and his people and so on I can do this myself and so the Lord in his mercy backs off and allows us to do it ourselves and of course what happens we are prey to every attack of the devil and the world and the flesh and we haven't got a chance we don't ask for the attacks and the backwings we get in life but we are helpless to prevent them and we are powerless to resist them backward religion and its representatives cannot help us in such a case you know if we have a spiritual need if we are under attack from the devil and physically sitting inside a church is not going to help you physically opening a Bible and reading it physically speaking to a minister or an elder or whatever is not itself going to help you because at the end of the day these are people these are buildings these are things they may be people of God they may be buildings of God they may be things of God but at the end of the day they are things they are people they cannot reach your soul they cannot minister to your need they are represented by the outward helplessness or indifference of the priest the Levite institutional religion cannot help you in your worst case scenario because it's all made up of fallen sinful men and women who are themselves afraid and feel very inadequate for the challenge and the danger and making themselves vulnerable to help someone in need there's not going to be any cure for your soul in your institutional religion in the end and when we are all but given up hope the only person with the resources and the power and the strength and above all the personal will and desire to help us is the person we always thought of as indifferent to us the person we thought couldn't possibly care about us or this wouldn't have happened or that wouldn't have happened it is the Lord we always thought of perhaps even as our enemy the Samaritan in one sense you could say represents God the Lord Jesus Christ who puts himself at risk and expends himself and his resources to save sinners like you and me from death part of what this parable is teaching although it's not the overt message that Jesus wants to teach the lawyer part of what this parable is teaching is this is what God is like this is what the love of God is like it puts itself at risk it takes it takes time itself it reaches out itself the love of God makes itself vulnerable

Jesus himself exposes himself to danger and suffering and death in order to redeem those who otherwise will perish this is what God is like the helpless bleeding dying man of the Lord this is the state of your soul until God intervenes but there is more to be done than just the ambulance work remember how I said that we might be represented by more than one person more than one character in this plot in this story there is recovery recuperation regaling of strength rest and food and attention and the daily needs of someone who to begin with has been so near death that everything must be done for them enter the innkeeper on the morrow when he departed he took out two pence and gave them to the host the innkeeper and said of him take care of him and whatsoever thou spendest more when I come again

I will repay thee silent and unnamed but who if the story were to be carried on to its presumably happy ending we must presume that he received the victim half dead and after the man had spent that night looking after him himself he then worked away little by little day by day meal by meal initially no doubt spoon feeding him just sort of soups and things when he couldn't eat properly because he was so bashed up broken teeth broken jaws what have you I don't know and then a little more food and then little by little constantly washing the bandages changing the bed sheets changing the clothes slopping out keeping the attention focused on him keeping providing everything he needs day by day replacing the dirty bandages eventually we must believe the victim to have been well enough to leave the inn and to return home or to go on to

Jericho or back to Jerusalem there would come a time when the innkeeper's ministrations would be finished for this man there would be others who would come through his doors some of whom would need just as much attention perhaps some of whom most of whom perhaps would need a lot less but it's never just about one person what you do in your calling in your task in your life is it there would come a time when the innkeeper's ministration would be finished for this man but not yet here in the parable his work if you like is just beginning there will come a time when it's finished but for now it's just beginning if the helpless bleeding dying man represents the state of your soul until God intervenes might I humbly suggest that the innkeeper may represent the response of your life your physical context your body your living your soul has to inhabit something has to inhabit your body it has to be cared for in terms of how the body is cared for your soul will perish if the body is not fed like Isaac will also perish if it's not fed spiritually there is work for body and soul to do the innkeeper could be said to represent the response of your body your earthly life and labor to what God has himself done for the soul then there is the one off thing that God does and then there is the ongoing

response to that it's not a picture of our relationship with the Lord there is that saving which he alone can do and then there is that ongoing living for him some of which in the initial stages is like building back up a broken vessel healing back up a broken man giving strength giving a little food then a little more changing the bed sheets changing the bandages replacing the dressings slopping out all the we might say undignified stuff but by doing it giving dignity back to this one who was so near death that he had given up hope it is only the Lord who can redeem us it is only the Lord who can save us and it is only the Lord who does that once and for all thing we call justification sanctification it is also only the Lord who does that ongoing work of what we call sanctification making a person holy making a person gradually day by day fit more and more for heaven but in that also a work of God that more gradual work

[25 : 06] God often always is making use of means circumstances things people like us on the Lord when he departed he took out two pence and gave them to the host and said unto them take care of them and whatsoever I spendest more when I come again I will repay thee God is no man's debtor first of all he is saying I will come back again when I come back whatever it is you think you've spent I will make it up to you but in the meantime you be faithful and you diligently fulfill this task you look after this broken man this lost soul do you feel your contribution to the work of Christ's kingdom to be anonymous well so is the innkeeper in this parable he is known to God as we are if he was a real person of whom

Jesus was thinking he would have a name he'd probably have a family but certainly have a parents the Lord in his ultimate knowledge would have known his genealogy all the way back to Adam just as he knows yours and mine we may be anonymous in terms of the wider story we're not anonymous to God do you feel as if your work is unknown unrecognised it is nonetheless vital where you are and where you have been placed if it is done faithfully in response to what the Lord himself has done then it will have an impact slow perhaps gradual perhaps but vital that it be done at that gradual day by this faith as some of you will know our two oldest children are going to be married next year Lord willing I find it strange to think of them being at that age because I remember only too well when they were in cradles and nappies and crawling about on the floor and it seemed at the time that that stage would go on forever how did we get from that stage to this not in a flash of lightning it may seem like the blink of an eye but in fact it happened not by years passing calendars ripped off the wall and another one goes on then another one no day by day by day by day feeding bathing nappies bedtime broken nights up again dressed off to playgroup off to school whatever the case may be sought the next one day by day by night by night one at a time somehow you went from the end to this and so it is with your life it won't seem like the blink of an eye since you were young since you were little since these sort of things were being done for you when you looked in the mirror and you wondered what you were going to do with your life and now suddenly here we are years have gone by how did it happen day by day by day by day and each individual day would have seen in itself incident and it would have seen as though it didn't matter too much what choices you made or what things you did but it is very important that you do it if we cease to do the feeding the changing the washing would have you for children or for an elderly person or whatever for even a day or two they don't get fed they don't get water they don't need what they need what will happen they've died this man isn't cared for by the innkeeper then all the ministrations all the emergency ambulance work of the Samaritan on the road down to Jericho will go for nothing if it's not carried on if yes he set him on his donkey he brought him to the inn he looked after him wonderfully for a night but after that he never got fed his bandages never got changed he never got looked after he never got turned in his bed he never got help to get up or to walk or to regain his strength he just got left he'd have died and all the emergency intervention would have come to nothing you see we love to hear about conversions about people professing faith in the Lord about people being born again just as we love to hear about babies being born in this branch of the family or that branch of the family so and so has got a new niece so a nephew isn't it wonderful a new grandchild that's great yes and we love the birth and the baby pictures but behind these happy smiling faces there's broken nights and dirty yappies and lots of laundry and lots of work and effort and time and weariness yes joy is well but day by day by day all of that which must be done and we see the big events

and we don't necessarily see the day by day quiet anonymous work behind the scenes but it is every bit as vital and if it is not done then all the big occasions won't count the line the innkeeper is anonymous but unless he does his work unless he fulfills the duty that is laid upon him this man will

die now your soul has been redeemed by Christ and it has but unless that soul is fed and nurtured and unless part of that involves you caring for the physical needs of yourself and others and so on unless you prepare to stand with that to be that witness to be that person in your ordinary daily life then that witness will perish it will wither and die just like this broken man who may have been lifted off the road from Jericho he may have been placed in the inn but if the innkeeper doesn't do his job then he's going to die just the same now the Lord you may think has not called you to anything spectacular he doesn't call many of us to anything spectacular there aren't many of us who are Billy Grahams or Martin Lloyd Joneses or whatever the case may be we are just very ordinary where we are and we may think that we are anonymous and you may think yeah but hang on this isn't such a Christian service that the innkeeper is doing he's being paid to do his job we all of us get paid to do our job one way or another whether you're an engineer or a teacher or a doctor or a nurse or an office worker or a factory worker or a shopkeeper or whatever the case may be we're doing our jobs where we are but we're doing them as those who serve the Lord we're doing them as those who do it for the Lord and in doing it for the Lord we do it also for those who are brought across our path brought into our sphere of labour and influence what we are meant to do we must do and if we don't do it faithfully quietly day by day this work which may seem to be nameless and anonymous and insignificant is nonetheless vital and if we do not do it souls will perish perhaps including our own the innkeeper's doing of his bit makes the difference between the victims relapsing into death or going on from strength to strength whatever it is the Lord is calling you or has called you to do maybe it is just your job to do it as a believer as a follower of him where you are whatever it is you're doing you do it with all of your might all your heart and soul and mind and strength that's part of how you love the Lord and you're scrubbing his step then do it as though the Lord was about to walk in it with his sacred feet you're serving up food do it as though the Lord was about to sit down at that table and eat it like here's poor

Martha here she is slogging away in the kitchen maybe just sitting down at Jesus feet and they has chosen a good part and Jesus is perfectly right about that Martha yes she's taking her eye off the ball but what is she doing still with the best world she is serving the Lord with the gift he has given her she's preparing for the Lord she's seeking to feed him to serve and to look after him yeah she's lost sight for a wee minute about what is most important but she's doing what she's been given to do the world is full of Martha's yes thankfully it's full of Mary's as well and Lazarus's and victims and sufferers and innkeepers those quietly anonymously are called to do what they are required to do do the bit you can do and don't say oh I can't do anything I can't do anything for the Lord I don't know gifts I don't know calling I don't know nothing no do the bit you can do do the bit you've been called to do sat in the place where the

Lord has placed you but do it for him do it faithfully do it day by day night by night that's how you get from the toddler or the baby in the cradle to the young man or young woman who we pray would be the Lord's as they grow to maturity and the fullness of time it doesn't happen suddenly in a flash of lightning it happens day by day by day by day nappies are changed babies are bad bandages are washed and changed on this broken man the beds are changed the food is painstakingly spoon fed into his mouth he is sat up in bed he is laid down in bed he's got up given a few steps then he's back to bed again it's tiring it's consuming it is what we may be called to do it is vital that it be done do the bit you can do do what you were always meant to do your job this guy is paid to do it what he's doing here but do it as unto the lord devoted to the lord what do we need more of in this world we need more christian everything christian teachers scientists engineers office workers nurses doctors businessmen factory workers road sweepers septic tank emptiers we need more homemakers and home keepers we need more raisers of children more lovers of children more drivers more taxi drivers more bus drivers we need all these things but we need them as christians and where they are and what they do on the land or on the sea or out in the north sea or in the air flying their planes whatever it is that they are doing they are being there for christ they are serving who they are serving day by day by day somebody will be brought across their path whom they are required to give that little bit of help to that little bit of extra love to that little bit of time to be lavished upon young old retired disabled paid yeah this guy's paid the innkeeper is paid to do it it's his job do your job but do your job as unto the lord an innkeeper yes to be maintained to do what the lord would have you to do yes for yourself because as we say we're represented in this parable by more than one individual if the man on the road represents the state of your soul the innkeeper could be sent to represent the body and its needs that you must attend to if the soul is to be kept within this temple of the body if body and soul are to be kept together it matters that you feed yourself it

matters that you get sleep in the lord it matters that you are able to do the task the lord has called you to it matters that you do your duty your bit your labour for the lord what he would have you do you do yes for yourself you do it for the occasional victim that may pass across your path and yes you do it for others god is no man's debtor he will come again he will repay whatever your ugly may be he has done the difficult dangerous bits this is what we read in romans 5 when we were yet without strength in due time christ died for the ungodly god commended his love towards us that while we were yet sinners christ died for us when we were still on the road to jericho when we were still lying broken and bleeding he came to us he picked us up he sorted us then much more than being now justified with his by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him but if when we were enemies we were reconciled to god by the death of his son much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life this is what god has done but if this

[38 : 26] innkeeper cater looker after day by day helper strengthener if this is your job if this is your calling it is vital it is noteworthy it may seem anonymous that you must do it or people will perish you must do it as unto the lord or people will die you must do it as for yourself or you will perish in your soul and you must do it that others may see that the love of the lord is alive and at work in your life and in your heart this is what jesus said go and do thou likewise he meant like the good samaritan may i suggest to you he also means like the innkeeper care for those in your charge do it and do it faithfully do it quietly do it daily do it unto the lord do unto others as you would have them do unto you go and do likewise do it you do9 do you