

## From the Pastor

Friends,

On this first Sunday of Lent, I pray that you know Christ's invitation to journey with him. As we mentioned as part of our service last week, we are using this season as one to listen, both individually and collectively. We're doing this in two key ways. The first of which is through our Sunday worship where we will be focussing on Christ's own journey; a journey which of course culminates in Jerusalem, on the cross. Along the way, Jesus encounters many individuals and stops often to teach and invite others to join. What can we learn from these "Encounters on the Road to the Cross?"

The second way I want to encourage us to listen is through prayer. So often we can miss the importance of listening in prayer. A.W. Tozer, famous pastor and author, once said, "if we do all the talking in prayer, how will we ever hear God's answers?" And so, through Lent we'll be participating in 3 prayer exercises that will help us to listen better. I'll introduce one every two weeks. We'll also provide some opportunities for us to share what we might be hearing God saying in these times of prayer, both to us individually, and as a church.

The first prayer exercise I want to encourage us to participate in is a prayer walk around your own local neighbourhood or the neighbourhood local to the church. You might begin simply by asking God to speak to you; that the Holy Spirit might accompany you while you walk. And as you walk, try to be alert to what God might be showing you, saying



to you, revealing to you.

These are some questions that I use when I prayer walk around the neighbourhood of the Church: "Where is God already at work in this neighbourhood/community and how can I/we join him there?" "What breaks God's heart about this neighbourhood/community?" "How can I/we best represent the Kingdom of God in this place?" "Who are the poor, marginalised and outsiders in this community and how can I/we go about welcoming them in?"

We'll need to do this separately, individually for now but I'll say more next week about how we can come together to share our experiences and what we might think God is saying to us in this season.

This Sunday marks Katie and Scott Cameron's final week with us as a church as they are moving back to Norfolk. Katie came to us as student from NTC, did her placement with us, joined as a church member and we have been so blessed by her ministry of preaching and her and Scott's being a part of our church family. They do have exciting plans for their return home which Katie will share with us during the church service today. We'll miss them but we'll continue to pray for them and remain connected to them in this next stage of their lives.

Peace in Christ,

Mick

### Inside this issue:

From the Pastor	1
Reading guide	2
Prayer guide	2
Sermon notes	3
Church details	4



## Daily Reading and Prayer Guide

Date	Reading	Pray for
Monday 22 Feb	Mark chapter 2	Julie, Hayley and family
Tuesday 23 Feb	Mark 3:1 to 21	Jean and Dave Walker and family
Wednesday 24 Feb	Mark 3:22 to Mark 4:9	Carol Wray and family
Thursday 25 Feb	Mark 4:10 to 41	Norma Whyte and family
Friday 26 Feb	Mark 5:1 to 20	Jean Stockton and family
Saturday 27 Feb	Catch up	Nikki, Mathew, Antony and Jessica Armett
Sunday 28 Feb	Mark 5:21 to Mark 6:6	Maud Batchelor

## Special Prayer Requests

- \* We continue to remember Keith and Brenda at this time. Keith is ill in hospital, and Brenda is at his side. Pray that Keith will be at peace, and pain free, and for strength for Brenda to care for and support him.
- \* Pray for Isobel, who is having further hospital tests this week. We ask for healing, and pray that the scan results will be good.
- \* Remember Katie and Scott, and thank the Lord for blessing us with their presence. We ask that God will guide them in their future together.
- \* Continue to pray for Jon F, and remember John and Ann B.

"FEAR NOT, FOR I AM WITH YOU; BE NOT DISMAYED, FOR I AM YOUR GOD. I WILL STRENGTHEN YOU, YES, I WILL HELP YOU, I WILL UPHOLD YOU WITH MY RIGHTEOUS RIGHT HAND." —

ISAIAH 41:10

# Sermon Notes

## Series: “Encounters on the Road to the Cross”

### Luke 10:25-37

In Luke 9 verse 51, “Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.” This is a turning point in the Gospel which marks the beginning of Jesus journey to the cross for the salvation of the world. It’s a **journey marked by encounters and teaching along the way**. It’s a journey that we will be taking together these next few Sundays leading up to Easter.

Luke’s Gospel can actually be split in two halves separated by this single verse. Up until this point, Luke is presenting his case for who he believes Jesus is. **He is the Son of God, the saviour of the world, the messiah promised in the Scriptures who fulfils God’s promises to his creation. And he comes with a message of Good News which proclaims that those on the outside are now to be welcomed in!**

The second half of the Gospel focuses on this journey we have previously mentioned with teaching and encounters along the way. If the first half of the Gospel is about who Jesus is then the second is what it looks like to follow him. **Luke is showing us how the truth of who Jesus is and the message he proclaims are to be lived out on life’s journey along the way.**

**Question:** What do we believe to true of Jesus? And how does this affect the way we live?

One of these encounters and teaching moments occurs in today’s passage when a lawyer (read, ‘expert in the Scriptures’) asks Jesus a question: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” It’s a good question. A key question. Probably a question we have all wrestled with at one point if we’re being truly honest. But Jesus, in his response doesn’t give a direct answer, he does what all good teachers do, he puts the question back to the lawyer: “What do you think?” (Words to that effect).

**Question:** How would you answer this question? Does it line up with how the rest of this passage unfolds?

The lawyer responds correctly. The answer can be found in the Scriptures and the Scriptures can be summed up as follows: “Love God with all your being,

and, Love you neighbour as yourself.” Jesus affirms his response, “Do this and you will live.”

So there we have it. Case closed. End of discussion. A straightforward answer to a question that everyone wants to know.

Except it isn’t...

Because the lawyer has a follow-up question: “who is my neighbour?” It’s another way of asking, “who is in, and who is out” because surely there can’t be enough love to go around for everyone, right?

And that’s when Jesus tells this famous story with an unlikely hero – a Samaritan. Not a priest. Not a Levite. Both of these were religious leaders who in the context of the story were likely returning from participating in worship (think, on their way back from church). The hero of this story is a Samaritan. Samaritans were outsiders. Considered unclean and impure due to their diluted cultural and religious practices. Samaritans were not commonly the heroes in the Israelite stories. But remember that **Jesus’ message is one that proclaims that those on the outside are to be welcomed in**. And when an example is needed of what it looks like to be a good neighbour and how far that love should stretch Jesus points to a Samaritan: “be like this.”

**Question:** Who are the outsiders in our world/society? Who are the people that we have crossed the road to avoid in the past? What does it look like for us to welcome them in? How might our attitudes be changed if we saw people as God sees the?

It’s hard calling, no doubt. But in the context of this passage the truth is strikingly clear. What must we do to inherit eternal life? **Love God with all our being AND love our neighbours, all of them, particularly those on the edges and the outside** – immigrants, addicts, those different to us...

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At Brooklands, we are big enough to be part of a world-wide denomination, yet small enough to invite you to make our church your home. Please visit our website and contact us if you would like to get in touch or need more information on any of our events.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, we are holding weekly services on our YouTube channel, starting at 10:30 am each Sunday.

We look forward to welcoming you to our fellowship!

Manchester Brooklands Church of the Nazarene, Registered Charity No: 1159881

### *Sermon notes continued...*

There are two truths that often help me in striving to this standard of neighbourly love. The first is a simple but powerful truth. **We love those on the edges and the outside because God loves them.** The same love that we have experienced that has transformed us, comforted us, picked us up, sent us out, is the SAME LOVE that God has for all of his creation. Including (especially) those on the edges and the outside.

The second truth of this passage that helps me in striving towards neighbourly love is understanding where I am to be found in this famous parable. You see I, and I think most of us, when we read this story find ourselves living in the tension between religious leaders and the Good Samaritan. Be less Priest and Levite and more Samaritan. That does sound like the basic lesson, doesn't it? But what if as our starting point in this story we are neither religious leader nor Good Samaritan but the other character? Did you forget about that person? **What if we are actually the person lying stripped, beaten and dying? What if we are actually the person who has received a rescue that we did not deserve by a person that we might least expect.**

Because that's true isn't it? Each and every single one of us at one point in our life were on a path to death before we received a rescue. And that rescue the Scriptures tells us came from a place we least deserved:

"While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" – Romans 5:8

You see, that's what grace is. We have all received this undeserving love and hospitality from God at a time when we were beaten left to die. That's the image Scripture paints for us. **We are person lying by the side of the Road and Christ picked us up, tended our wounds and paid for our healing.** Just sit in that truth for a second.

So how can we be expected to have a love for neighbour that seems boundless? How can we be expected to love even those on the edges, and those on the outside, even those we see as enemies? **Because we are they, and they are we.**

"Go and do likewise."