Parables are simply stories that are told to show religious, moral or philosophical principles. They provide simple comparisons of things that naturally occur. The use of parables by Jesus are the keys to life, righteousness, holiness, balance and ultimately the keys to the Kingdom. The people, places, things, and situations reveal a temporal truth…but more than that they represent an eternal spiritual reality.

PARABLE	MATTHE	MARK	LUKE	John
Lamp Under a Basket	**5:14-16**	**4:21,22**	**8:16,17**	
.	**.**	**.**	**11:33-36**	
Bread of life				**6:31-38**
A Wise Man Builds on Rock	**7:24-27**	**.**	**6:47-49**	
and a Fool on Sand	**.**	**.**	**.**	
New Cloth on and Old	**9:16**	**2:21**	**5:36**	
New Wine in Old Wineskins	**9:17**	**2:22**	**5:37,38**	
The Sower	**13:3-23**	**4:2-20**	**8:4-15**	
The Tares (Weeds)	**13:24-30**	**.**	**.**	
The Mustard Seed	**13:31,32**	**4:30-32**	**13:18,19**	
The Leaven	**13:33**	**.**	**13:20,21**	
The Hidden Treasure	**13:44**	**.**	**.**	
The Pearl of Great Price	**13:45,46**	**.**	**.**	
The Dragnet	**13:47-50**	**.**	**.**	
The Good shepherd				**10:1-18**
The Householder	**13:52**	**.**	**.**	
The Lost Sheep	**18:12-14**	**.**	**15:3-7**	
The Unforgiving Servant	**18:23-35**	**.**	**.**	
The Workers in the Vineyard	**20:1-16**	**.**	**.**	
The Two Sons	**21:28-32**	**.**	**.**	
The Wicked Tenants	**21:33-45**	**12:1-12**	**20:9-19**	
The Wedding Feast	**22:2-14**	**.**	**14:16-24**	

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The Fig Tree	**24:32-44**	**13:28-32**	**21:29-33**	
The Ten Virgins	**25:1-13**	**.**	**.**	
The Talents / The Minas (Pounds)	**25:14-30**	**.**	**19:11-27**	
The Growing Seed	**.**	**4:26-29**	**.**	
The Watchful Porter	**.**	**13:33-37**	**.**	
The Creditor and Two Debtors	**.**		**7:41-43**	
The Good Samaritan	**.**		**10:30-37**	
A Friend in Need	**.**		**11:5-13**	
The Rich Fool	**.**		**12:16-21**	
The Faithful and Wise Servant	**.**		**12:35-40**	
Faithful and Wicked Steward	**24:45-51**		**12:42-48**	
The Barren Fig Tree			**13:6-9**	
The Lowest Seat			**14:7-11**	
Building a Tower and Making War			**14:25-35**	
The Lost Coin			**15:8-10**	
The Lost Son			**15:11-32**	
The Shrewd Manager			**16:1-13**	
The Rich Man and Lazarus			**16:19-31**	
Unprofitable Servants			**17:7-10**	
The Persistent Widow			**18:1-8**	
The Pharisee and the Tax Collector			**18:9-14**	
Vine and branches				**15:1-17**

Luke 10:30-37 " In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw

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him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins 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.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

What does is mean to be a good neighbor, what does it take a actually show the Lord that you, love him, love yourself and love your neighbor. A lawyer—well-versed in the Law of Moses—stood to test Jesus, to measure whether faith could withstand the glare of logic. He asked a question that sounded simple: What must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus answered by turning the test back on the Law itself, reminding us that love—God and neighbor—was the seam that held the whole garment of commandments together. The lawyer, not yet satisfied, pressed further, seeking to justify himself. Who is my neighbor? In that moment, the road between Jerusalem and Jericho became a living classroom, and I found myself listening in as if to hear the rustle of desert sands and the quiet urging of mercy.

The journey down that road, a distance of about twenty miles, carried more than feet and dust. It carried risk. The Way of Blood, as travelers called it, was notorious for ambush and harm. A man traveling alone was stripped, beaten, left half dead, a body vulnerable to the changing light and even more vulnerable to the cold indifference of those who passed by. The first two passers-by were not strangers in the world but priests and Levites, men who moved in the circles of sacred service. They saw the wounded man and chose distance—on the other side of the road. They carried the weight of ritual purity, of schedules and duties, and in that moment those obligations eclipsed a single, undeniable command: to love your neighbor as yourself. The parable's punch lies not in silence, but in the silence of those who should have offered mercy and did not.

Then a Samaritan appeared, a figure who would have provoked universal scorn from the Jewish traveler. Samaritans and Jews, enemies by history and custom, shared little in common except the common need of human kindness. Yet when the Samaritan found the man, he did not hesitate to cross the barrier of enmity and convenience. He knelt, binding wounds with oil and wine—the first aid of his day. He lifted the man onto his own donkey, transporting him to an inn where mercy would continue its work. He paid the innkeeper two denarii, promising to cover any extra expense on his return. Here was hospitality in its fullest form: not mere tolerance, but costly mercy given across borders of race, religion, and reputation.

Jesus then asked: Which of these three proved to be a neighbor? The lawyer's answer was inevitable, though humble: the one who showed mercy. And Jesus pressed the point further, reframing the question from "Who is my neighbor?" to "Who was neighbor to the one in

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need?" In that reframing, the parable becomes a mirror for the heart. The neighbor, Jesus implies, is whoever stands in the space where mercy can be shown—the person in need whom we can help, regardless of origin or status.

From this tale, several lessons emerge with the force of a waking dawn.
First, a neighbor is defined by a need we can meet. The Samaritan's humanity transcended boundaries of race and religion. He did not ask for shared identity before acting; he answered the cry of distress with hands that worked, without fanfare, without calculation. In Romans and Galatians, Paul would call Christians to hospitality and to love of the stranger; here the Gospel itself models neighborliness as a universal possibility, not a bounded category. The wounded man's need created the space for love to move. So our neighbors are those in need whom we have the capacity to help, even when it costs us time, comfort, or resources.

Second, true neighborliness cannot be divorced from religious life. The priest and the Levite moved within the framework of the Law and yet failed to enact its deepest intention. Their passing by shows what happens when worship remains theoretical and does not become practice. The parable cautions us against a religion that is pure in doctrine but hollow in action. A faith that merely professes without showing mercy falls short of the standard Jesus affirms.
Third, compassion comes at a cost. The Samaritan's aid demanded crossing social and religious lines, risking danger on the road, diverting from his own path, and allocating his own resources to care for a stranger. The parable mirrors Jesus' broader teaching about generosity and sacrifice: love that costs us something is love that truly resembles God's love. The road teaches us the rhythm of giving—sometimes the first mile of mercy will be easy, the second mile a deliberate choice of generosity, and the ongoing care a commitment that requires ongoing sacrifice.

In the end, the parable challenges us toward a higher righteousness. If Jesus' listeners were to measure their own fidelity by the standards of the scribes and Pharisees, they would miss the living heart of the Law. The road's verdict is clear: righteousness that merely adheres to rules without touching the vulnerable falls short of the Kingdom. The call remains, as it was for the lawyer: Go and do likewise.

Counting the cost, I ask myself: What does this look like in Norfolk, Virginia, in today's world? It looks like paying attention to the needs of strangers and neighbors alike, crossing social and spiritual boundaries to offer practical care, and cultivating a posture of mercy that can outlast the moment of crisis. It means recognizing that my neighbor is not limited to those who resemble me, but includes the person I might overlook on a busy street, a person of a different faith or background, or a fellow traveler in need.

As I close the pages of this meditation, I hear the invitation with renewed clarity: not simply to identify who is my neighbor, but to become a neighbor to others. The parable ends not with a verdict, but with a commandment spoken by Jesus to the lawyer and echoed for all who would listen: **Go and do likewise!**

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