



# Merciful Care

## Leader Guide

*(Leaders and participants are encouraged to look up Bible passages for most effective study. Passages are printed below for ease in presentation.)*

Discuss with a partner or your small group how you define the word “neighbor.” Be specific. **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Make it clear that everything confided within the group stays within the group. The leader should start to begin discussion. Answers could include: nearby resident, acquaintance, friend, bystander, brother, fellowman, contact, or beside.**

**Opening Prayer:** Dear Lord, We adore You and thank You for sending Jesus to live a perfect life, suffer, and die to cancel the debt of our sin. We praise You that, because He rose again to life, we might live eternally in heaven with Him. Continue to help us grow in faith and love and mercy for our neighbors by the power of Your Spirit. Be with us as we study Your Word. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Read the “Parable of the Good Samaritan” in **Luke 10:25–37**.

**Luke 10:25-37** <sup>25</sup> And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>26</sup> He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” <sup>27</sup> And he answered, “You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” <sup>29</sup> But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” <sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ <sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” <sup>37</sup> He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

Jesus teaches this parable in answer to the question, “*And who is my neighbor?*” Samaritans and Jews were enemies of one another, so for this Samaritan to rescue the injured Jew was quite remarkable. Identify the specific steps taken by the Samaritan in his rescue mission in the following verses:

- (33) Had compassion on his enemy; showed mercy**
- (34a) Bound up his wounds**
- (34b) Took care of him**
- (35) Paid the price for the man’s further care**

How does this parable describe Jesus’ (our Good Samaritan’s) rescue mission on earth?

**Psalm 103:8; Luke 7:13** **God’s compassion, mercy, love**

**Psalm 103:8:** <sup>8</sup> The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
**Luke 7:13:** And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” (*The Lutheran Study Bible, page 1722, notes on Luke 7:13 — Greek: splanchnizomai; literally, “his gut moved.” Jesus experienced the same gut reaction that we sometimes do in troubling or sad situations.*)

**Isaiah 53:4–5; 1 Peter 2:24** **Bound up our wounds of sin by taking our sin as His own and dying on the cross; paid the price, paid our debt of sin**

**Isaiah 53:4-5:** <sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.

**1 Peter 2:24:** <sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

**Romans 5:8** **Loved us to death while we were still sinners and His enemies**

**Romans 5:8:** <sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**1 Peter 5:7** **He cares for us**

**1 Peter 5:7:** <sup>7</sup> casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

**Colossians 2:13–15, Titus 3:4–7 Promises us full restoration and eternal life**

Colossians 2:13-15: <sup>13</sup> And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup> by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.  
Titus 3:4-7: <sup>4</sup> But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Jesus says in Luke 6:36: *Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.* See **Romans 12:1–2**. Discuss why and how a believer in Jesus is able to show mercy and care to those in need. **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. We are motivated and transformed by the Gospel to become “living sacrifices” blessed by the Spirit to serve, care for, and share with one another.**

**Romans 12:1-2:** <sup>1</sup> I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

How does this parable prescribe a Christian’s actions to and for a neighbor, especially one in need? **Jesus teaches through this parable that, as Christians who have been redeemed by our Good Samaritan, we strive to follow Him by the power of the Spirit; He shows how compassion and mercy translate into action even for our enemies; we want others to see Jesus through us as we respond to our neighbors in need or in trouble with love and mercy**

**Colossians 3:12–17 Compassion, kindness, patience, forgiveness, and more**

Colossians 3:12-17: <sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

**Romans 15:2, Galatians 5:13–14 Bind up wounds; build up neighbor; through love, serve**

**Romans 15:2:** <sup>2</sup> Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.  
**Galatians 5:13-14:** <sup>13</sup> For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup> For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

**1 Corinthians 12:25–26 Take care of him**

**1 Corinthians 12:25-26:** <sup>25</sup> that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

**Philippians 4:14–18 Pay the price**

**Philippians 4:14–18:** <sup>14</sup> Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. <sup>15</sup> And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. <sup>16</sup> Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. <sup>17</sup> Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. <sup>18</sup> I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

**1 John 4:7 Love one another**

**1 John 4:7:** <sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

**Faith Talk:** Of what are we assured in **Lamentations 3:21–23**? **The love of our Lord is steadfast; His mercies never cease; God is faithful in mercy; He faithfully keeps His promises in Christ Jesus**

How can this passage uplift our lives each day? **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share.**

**Lamentations 3:21-23:** <sup>21</sup> But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: <sup>22</sup> The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; <sup>23</sup> they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

The Samaritan in Jesus' parable took several risks in his act of mercy and compassion. He knew nothing about the injured man or if he had any contagious disease(s). His act of mercy might have been resented by both Samaritans and Jews alike. Besides the personal risks, the Samaritan gave a great deal of his time and money (the equivalent of two day's wages) for the care of the injured man.

***Faith Talk:*** How much did God's love, mercy, and grace for us cost Him? **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. It cost Him all – His Son's death on the cross.**

Acts of mercy may also cost us time, money, and inconvenience. In response to God's grace and mercy, are we always ready to make these sacrifices and take these risks? **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. The key word here might be "always." As sinners, we hesitate to help or give our time and money to relieve our neighbor's troubles.**

Who gives us the power to follow in Christ's footsteps? Read **Galatians 5:25. Holy Spirit Galatians 5:25: <sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.**

How does the Spirit keep us believing in Jesus our Savior and help us to grow in faith? See **Mark 14:22–24, Romans 1:16, and Romans 6:3–4. God's Word and Sacraments (Baptism and Lord's Supper)**  
**Mark 14:22-24: <sup>22</sup> And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body."<sup>23</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. <sup>24</sup> And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.**  
**Romans 1:16: <sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**  
**Romans 6:3-4: <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.**

***Faith Talk:*** What is Jesus' answer through the parable to the question, "And who is my neighbor?" **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Someone who is nearby or close, is in need, and needs our help. See quote below.**

**(The Lutheran Study Bible, page 1735, notes on Luke 10:37. Luther: "Our neighbor is any human being, especially one who needs our help, as Christ interprets it in Luke 10:30-37. Even one who has done me some sort of injury or harm ... does not stop being my neighbor." [AE 27:58])\***

**\*Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works*. American Edition. General editors Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann. 56 volumes. St. Louis: Concordia, and Philadelphia: Muhlenberg and Fortress, 1955-86.**

***Faith Walk:*** Memorize **Lamentations 3:21–23** and/or print it on a card to be placed where you can see it every day.

***Faith Walk:*** Identify a neighbor in your life who is need or in trouble. Look for ways to help relieve your neighbor's physical needs, and, at the same time, share with her/him the Good News about salvation in Jesus.

***Closing:*** Pray, sing, or listen to "O God of Mercy, God of Might" (*LSB* 852).

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