

# WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?



We love the parable of the Good Samaritan.

We love to BE the Good Samaritan.

We are “Good Samaritans” many times.

We are quite certain that we have aced the “Good Samaritan Test”.

We didn’t “pass by on the other side.”

We have come to the rescue many times.

**But do we actually know who our neighbors are?**

That expert in the law never thought of Samaritans as neighbors.

So Jesus put his finger on the problem.

Like that expert on the law, we too have narrowed our definition of “neighbor” more than we realize.

When it comes down to the way we actually live....

“Neighbor” is one who shares our values.

“Neighbor” is one who understands our politics.

“Neighbor” is one who looks like we do.

“Neighbor” is one who thinks like we do.

Our “neighbor” matches our standard of living.

Our “neighbor” is a natural-born citizen.

It turns out that we are as hard on our “Samaritans” as those ancient Jews were on theirs.

Because those folks are not really our neighbors, it is easy to “pass by on the other side.”

When they're ugly.

When they're obnoxious.

When they're scary.

When they “don't belong here”.



***And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" 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." And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live."***

***But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"***

“And who is my neighbor?”

We answer that question with our lives every day.

And how we answer it determines our eternal destiny.



*Prayer: Lord, help us to answer this question “who is my neighbor?” with true compassion and mercy. Forgive us for preferring to help only those who we are comfortable with, who we deem worthy. Help us not to pass by people who make us uncomfortable, who push our boundaries, who we disagree with, or who we condemn as unforgivable. And Lord may we do this with the love for our neighbors that you call us to have...loving them as much as we love ourselves, as much as we love our own comfort and our own way of life. Help us to love them more than we love our own opinions, beliefs, and standards. Amen.*

*Maranatha Mirror*

