

Week 1: Caring (Full Sermon)

Title: **Who Cares?**

Key Scripture: **The Good Samaritan – Luke 10:25–37** (NKJV used, unless otherwise marked)

Daily Guide corresponding pages: **pp12–15**

Three points: **We're on the journey called 'life'. We need to *develop* the core value of care. We need to *face* our core value of self-protection.**

PowerPoint pointers are marked in this colour.

Introduction

An impudent lawyer came to Jesus and asked: ***Teacher ... what must I do to inherit eternal life?*** Jesus replied, ***'What is written in the Law?'*** and the lawyer answered, ***'Love the Lord your God with all your heart ... and, "Love your neighbour as yourself."*** Jesus confirmed his answer and then said, ***'Do this and you will live.'*** But wanting to justify his way of life, the lawyer asked, ***'And who is my neighbour?'*** (Luke 10:25–29, NIV) To this, Jesus responds with a story about a man travelling on the Jericho Road. It is an allegory for ...

The journey called 'life'

It is a road we all travel. And on this road, as the travelling man experienced, people and life circumstances can ambush, beat, bruise and wound us. A question that often arises in these times is: **'Who Cares?'** And you could say this was the unspoken question of this battered and bruised man by the side of the road.

Then, Jesus continued, ***'a ... priest came down that road ... Likewise a Levite ... arrived at the place'*** (Luke 10:31–32). These men were church goers, in fact, they may have been on their way either to or from the Temple when they came across this man. Perhaps they were too busy or preoccupied with church life because, when they saw his need, they ***'passed by on the other side'*** (Luke 10:31).

Then a Samaritan came by. Jesus said, ***'as he journeyed ... he saw him ... So he went to him'*** (Luke 10:33–34). He was willing to engage his journey with the stricken traveller.

When Jesus introduces the Samaritan here, it's as if He throws a grenade into the story. After all, ***'Jews had no dealings with Samaritans'*** (John 4:9). Jesus knew that the Jews did not consider the Samaritans to be their neighbours. In fact, Samaria is where the West Bank

is today. It was like saying a member of the PLO or Hamas came by. It was so explosive because this Samaritan man, who was despised, rejected and scorned by the Jews, was the one who reached out. Why? Because the priest and the Levite would not. Instead, they were ...

Indifferent and detached (vv31–32) [Fill in *Daily Guide*]

When they **'saw him, [they] passed by on the other side'** (Luke 10:31). And so they both walked by the hurting man.

But then this Samaritan comes by and his reaction was different. He not only tended to the man but journeyed alongside him to the inn. He showed ...

Compassion and concern (vv33–34) [Fill in *Daily Guide*]

To the question, **'Who cares?'** his response was, **'I do'**.

When the Samaritan **'saw him, he had compassion'** (Luke 10:33). Something inside him motivated him to stop and engage with this man in need. He felt something stronger than the fear of rejection and unacceptance of being a Samaritan. He **came alongside** to help, then **journeyed together** with him, helping him to an inn where he would receive more care.

John McArthur of Grace Community Church says in his commentary on Philippians, **'It is precisely the kind of assistance exemplified by the Good Samaritan, who after doing everything he could for the robbed, beaten stranger, journeyed with him and took care of him at the inn promising to repay the cost, that is described by NT Greek word – "Paraklesis"'**¹ [par-ak-lay-sis].

You are probably asking, 'What is **paraklesis**?' It is a word found 142 times throughout the New Testament and appears in various forms such as **paraklesis, parakaleo, parakletos and paraklete**.

It comes from two Greek words:

Para: to be with, alongside

Kaleo: to call, to come

Parakaleo: to come alongside

This is exactly what the Samaritan did (and the priest and Levite failed to do). He came alongside the hurting man, took care of him and journeyed together with him.

Listen to these verses from **2 Corinthians 1:3–4 (The Message)** [they are on p12 of your *Daily Guide*]:

'All praise to the God and Father of our Master, Jesus the Messiah! Father of all mercy! God of all healing counsel [**paraklesis**]! He comes alongside us [**parakaleo**] when we go through hard times, and before you know it, He brings us alongside [**parakaleo**] someone else who is going through hard times, so that we can be there for that person [**paraklesis**] just as God was there for us [**parakaleo**].'

In these verses the word **paraklesis**, is found five times in its various forms. In the following three verses it is found another five times. This repetition is no accident. It is described in the New Testament as the '**one another**' ministry. And this forms the foundation of this entire **Paraclesis** initiative. **Paraclesis** is the anglicised transliteration of the Greek word from Latin and French, and we can define it as ...

PARACLESIS: Coming alongside and being there for someone, to give help, aid, assistance, support and care.

Traditionally, pastoral support and care in the Church is seen as the role of the leaders, pastors and elders. But the New Testament teaches that **paraclesis** is a ministry for all. We are all part of '**one another**' – it is what the Body of Christ is all about. God calls us to journey together in life. We need to understand this process so we can reach out and come alongside '**one another**' in a world full of need. And it is important to realise that **the Church is uniquely designed to care**. **Ephesians 4:25** says: '**In Christ's body we're all connected to each other**' (*The Message*). To fulfil this design we need to start (or continue in) ...

Developing the core value of care

It's interesting to note that Jesus doesn't call the Samaritan man 'the Good Samaritan', rather, we have given him that name.

His act of **paraclesis** seems so good that we think it was exceptional, but the Bible doesn't say that. He was an ordinary, regular Samaritan man. And **paraclesis** is ordinary people coming alongside other ordinary people to be a supportive helping presence. For the Samaritan, caring for others in this way was a core value.

In **1 Corinthians 12:25** it says: '**there should be no division in the body ... its parts should have equal concern for each other**' (NIV).

The antithesis of **paraclesis** is ...

Self-focused living [Fill in *Daily Guide*]

Very often, perhaps, we don't get involved in the lives of others because we are so focused on our own (like the priest and Levite).

When you see a family or group photograph, who do you look for first? We are naturally self-centred. We are born that way. As children we learn to be the centre of our own universe and when we become adults we continue the same way. We are all instinctively naturally self-focused.

But in **1 Corinthians 10:24** it says: ***'None of you should be looking out for your own interests, but for the interests of others'*** (GNT).

And so **paracletis** is ...

Other-centred living [Fill in *Daily Guide*]

Galatians 5:14 says: ***'For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself'*** (The Message).

Somehow the priest and Levite missed this. For Jesus, love for God is expressed through loving our neighbour. We read in **1 John 3:16–18** (The Message):

'This is how we've come to understand and experience love: Christ sacrificed his life for us. This is why we ought to live sacrificially for our fellow believers, and not just be out for ourselves. If you see some brother or sister in need and have the means to do something about it but turn a cold shoulder and do nothing, what happens to God's love? It disappears. And you made it disappear ... let's not just talk about love; let's practice real love. This is the only way we'll know we're living truly, living in God's reality.'

Like the Samaritan, we need to develop a core value of care. This means having the same concern for others as we have for ourselves.

To ***'Love your neighbour as yourself'*** (Luke 10:27, NIV) means to come alongside others with that same level of care as you care for yourself.

1 Corinthians 13:4 says: ***'Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self'*** (The Message). That means ...

Developing awareness of other people's needs [Fill in *Daily Guide*]

It doesn't come naturally. We need to learn to read the signs and signals that other people send out. Their tone of voice, body language and facial expressions can be like puffs of smoke, hinting towards the smouldering volcano underneath. When you ask someone how they are and they reply that they are OK, it usually means they are not really OK. Explore it.

In his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*² Stephen Covey tells a story of when he was travelling on the New York subway. Some noisy, unruly kids got on and their father

followed and sat down next to Covey. Despite their inappropriate and rude behaviour, and the painfully uncomfortable atmosphere, the father sat there unresponsive, with his eyes closed. Finally, Covey confronted the man who opened his eyes, evaluated the situation as if unaware of it, and responded, 'You're right, I guess I should do something about it. I've just come from the hospital, where their mother died about an hour ago. I don't know what to think, I guess they don't know how to handle it either.'

This is an example of how our perceptions of people can be completely wrong. We need to reach out and engage with others in order to really understand their needs.

Recognising people struggle more than we realise [Fill in *Daily Guide*]

Today we may shake hands with people who are falling apart at the seams and we may never know it. Regularly we meet people burdened by struggles.

Someone was once asked how they were and answered, 'Not too bad.' On asking further, 'Does that mean not too good?' they broke down in tears because they were struggling with the death of a close family member.

Will Smith said, '**never underestimate the pain of a person because, in all honesty, everyone is struggling. Some people are better at hiding it than others.**'³

Parakaleo is an interesting word. It is like a diamond. When you turn it and shine a light on it, you see different facets reflected in the light. The New Testament uses six different words for this one word. There is not a word big enough to translate it directly into English.

We now know the primary meaning is 'to come alongside' but there are many others to explore, and we will look at these over these six weeks.

Let's look at the first now:

Parakaleo: To encourage

'encourage [parakaleo] one another daily, as long as it is called "Today"' (Heb. 3:13, NIV).

Paraclesis starts at the point of ...

ENCOURAGEMENT: The expression of affirmation, verbally, non-verbally or practically, giving support and inspiration to someone on their journey, lifting them up, helping them to overcome a difficult time.

It is something we can all do. Every Sunday we need to be aware that people struggle more than we realise, and get alongside them, to encourage and support them.

Have you ever watched a marathon when runners come to the end of the race? Their friends and family line up along the street, coming alongside the barriers to shout and cheer them on to the finish. Imagine if they shouted, 'Give up, you'll never make it,' or 'Look at you, you're exhausted, quit now before you collapse!'

The church should be a place where we cheer each other on and cheer each other up.

'we ... sent Timothy to get you up and about, cheering you on [parakaleo] so you wouldn't be discouraged by these hard times.' (1 Thess. 3:2, *The Message*).

There is a longing in the human heart to be affirmed and encouraged. Why? Because God made us that way, and He has called us, in the community of faith, to be encouragers. George Adams said, **'We should seize every opportunity to give encouragement. Encouragement is oxygen for the soul.'**⁴

But sometimes Church can be a discouraging place. One person said the biggest discouragements came from Christian friends. We have to ask ourselves, 'Is our church encouraging? Am I personally contributing to the church with encouragement?#

1 Thessalonians 5:11 says: **'So encourage [parakaleo] each other to build each other up'** (TLB).

Something happens when we are encouraged. The word literally means to pour in courage.

To encourage, means being willing to:

- **Move out of your comfort zone [Fill in *Daily Guide*]**
The priest and Levite were comfortable with church, but not comfortable with the man on the street. The Samaritan was willing to step out of his comfort zone. **Parakaleo** is a verb, it's an action. Over these six weeks, let this series help you move out of your comfort zone.
- **Become a giver not a getter [Fill in *Daily Guide*]**
We can't truly love unless we are prepared to give and serve, while expecting nothing in return. We start by giving encouragement, not looking for it. **Acts 20:35** says **'It is more blessed to give than to receive'** (NIV).
- **Focus on how much God cares for you [Fill in *Daily Guide*]**
In **1 John 4:10** it says: **'This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us'** (NIV). We need to know how much God loves and cares for us. It is out of this understanding and experience that we are able to care for and encourage others. As we've read today: **'He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us'** (2 Cor. 1:3–5, *The Message*).

- **Be alert for opportunities [Fill in *Daily Guide*]**
Develop sensitivity to the feelings and struggles of others. Encouragement is more an opportunity to be seized, rather than one to be created, by putting others' needs first – ***'not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others'*** (Phil. 2:4, NIV).
- **Learn to be a good listener [Fill in *Daily Guide*]**
Listening is an expression of loving. It is one of the most encouraging things you can do. A burden shared is a burden halved. Many of us are more prone to talk rather than listen, so perhaps we need to become more aware of this in our own lives.
- **Use positive words [Fill in *Daily Guide*]**
Use encouraging words that bless not blister, that heal not hurt, that build up not tear down, that soothe not sear. Use words of affirmation not denigration.
- **Do acts of kindness [Fill in *Daily Guide*]**
Don't miss opportunities to come alongside others and encourage them with acts of kindness. Make a phone call, drop a note, pay a visit, post a card, send some flowers or give a gift. And not just now and again but regularly! **Galatians 6:9–10 (TLB)** says: ***'let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up. That's why whenever we can we should always be kind to everyone, and especially to our Christian brothers.'***

All this is part of developing a core value of care, like that of the Samaritan man. However, there is a hurdle we need to overcome, one that the priest and Levite did not.

In John Powell's book, *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?* he wrote that at the heart of all humanness is an inherent fear of rejection and unacceptability. He came to the conclusion that: **'I am afraid to tell you who I am because if I tell you who I am, you might not like who I am, and that is all I have to give.'**⁵

And this belief is what so often prevents us from reaching out and engaging with others. Afraid that people will reject us for whatever reason, we develop a core value of self-protection. We don't engage because we want to protect ourselves, and unless we get over this hurdle, we will never move into that dimension of **paraclesis** that God has made available to us. So how do we overcome this?

Facing our core value of self-protection

Dr Larry Crabb says that **'love is moving toward others without self-protection'**.⁶

We need to face our core value of self-protection, and replace it with the core value of care.

I wonder if, deep down, you experience feelings of rejection and unacceptability that stop you connecting with others. The Samaritan, who was despised, overcame his feelings of rejection and unacceptability. Instead of protecting himself, he took the risk to come alongside another.

Let me remind you of the cross. Jesus hung there, totally exposed, rejected and humiliated. Rejected by those He came to love. He wept over them because of the unrequited love. Out of those He drew to him and spent three years with – *and gave His life to* – one doubted, one denied, and another betrayed.

If you want to see rejection and unacceptability, come and gaze at the cross. Jesus even cried out: ***‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’*** (Matt. 27:46, NIV). The depths of our rejection and unacceptability were taken on by Jesus Christ. Now we no longer have to live behind barriers and strategies of self-protection. And so the choice is ours ...

Will we be like the priest and the Levite? Remaining detached and indifferent. Hiding in our own agendas, busyness and rituals.

Or will we be like the Samaritan? He could have stayed behind his barrier of being a rejected, unaccepted person, but he didn’t. Refusing to hide, he stepped out of his comfort zone, [reached out, came alongside](#) [Fill in *Daily Guide*] and [journeyed together](#) [Fill in *Daily Guide*] with the man in need, taking care of him and [fulfilling the paraclesis](#) [Fill in *Daily Guide*] ministry.

God calls us to allow Him to bring us to that point of becoming the love and compassion of Christ that reaches beyond the walls of this building and touches the lives of those like this man in need.

In answer to the lawyer’s question, ***‘who is my neighbour?’*** Jesus recounted this **paraclesis** story of the Samaritan and then asked him, ***‘Which of these ... was a neighbour ...?’*** to which the lawyer replied, ***‘The one who had mercy on him’*** (Luke 10:29–37, NIV).

Jesus then issued the challenge, and it is a challenge for us too: ***‘Go and do likewise’*** (Luke 10:37) [Fill in *Daily Guide*].

¹ John McArthur, *Philippians* (Chicago: Moody Press 2001)

² Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013)

³ Dianne Finfrock Farrer, *The Door of the Heart* Author House

⁴ Trina Graves - *Quotes to live by*

⁵ John Powell, *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?* (Illinois: Argus Communications, 1969)

⁶ Dr Larry Crabb, *Inside Out* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1988)

For further reading, see chapters 1 and 2 of *Love with Skin On*, Trevor J. Partridge (Farnham: CWR, 2016).

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