

# Unexpected Roads – The Road to Compassion

## Message preached on Sun 22 Jan 23

If you did not hear the sermon, here is the link:

<https://vimeo.com/791541532>

**Choose the most relevant questions for your group, and feel free to change the order.**

### **Warm-up.**

1. What are some of your typical responses to unexpected roads of challenge, adversity, or suffering?
2. Describe one unexpected road of adversity that contributed to you either:
  - Receiving a revelation of Jesus, or
  - Being transformed by Jesus, or
  - Being a channel of God's compassion.
3. 'Loving our neighbours as we love ourselves.'  
Give a score between 1 to 10:  
For yourself  
For us, as CBC  
What criteria did you use?  
How can we all grow in loving our neighbours as we love ourselves?

### **Discussion and Application.**

Read Luke 10: 25-37 while engaging your imagination and being alert to:

- Characters – expert in religious laws, Jesus, the Jewish crowd; a traveller, robbers, priest, Levite – temple assistants, a Samaritan.
- Questions from the expert in religious laws and Jesus' counter-questions
- The unexpected or surprising elements for the religious expert, crowd, and us

#### **1. Minimalist, simplistic and legalistic or expansive, integrated, inside-out and radical loving?**

What is the difference between the religious expert's question, 'Who is my neighbour?' with Jesus' question, 'Which of these three ... was a neighbour?'

How will you practice Jesus' principle instead of the religious expert's minimal approach?

#### **2. Barriers to being God's channel of compassion.**

In V. 31, 32, we read that both the priest and temple assistant failed to stop to assist. Why?

How might our fear or commitment to religious traditions or doctrinal purity hinder us from being channels of God's compassion?

### **3. Discovering our blind spots to loving our neighbours as we love ourselves.**

**Read Luke 18:9-14**

What were the Pharisee's blind spots that prevented him from connecting with God and receiving His forgiveness and grace?

Every person and church has blind spots.

What might be ours – personal and CBC?

How can we exercise humility and listen to and learn from other communities of faith (different gender, ages, denominations, cultures, and economic and social status) to discover our blind spots?

What might our economically poor sisters and brothers in other countries point out as possible blind spots?

### **4. Connecting with the real Jesus of the Bible**

**Bishop N T Wright:**

*The longer you look at Jesus, the more you will want to serve Him in His world.*

*That is, of course, if it's the real Jesus you're looking at.*

*Plenty of people in the church and outside it have made up a 'Jesus' for themselves, and have found that this invented character makes few real demands of them.*

*He makes them feel happy from time to time, but doesn't challenge them, doesn't suggest they get up and do something about the plight of the world.*

*Which is, of course, what the real Jesus had an uncomfortable habit of doing.*

Where might middle-class values, e.g. individualism, consumerism and pleasure-seeking, influence your image of Jesus more than the real Jesus portrayed in the gospels?

### **5. Integrating loving God and loving our neighbours**

**Read Luke 18: 18-27**

The religious leader was confident in his righteousness but blind to his love for possessions and comfortable lifestyle.

In loving his possessions and failing to love the poor, how did he fail to love God?

Jesus taught that it is humanly impossible to Love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. (v. 27)

How can we continually access God's rescue and grace and be channels of His love?  
How can we focus more on our 'Standard of Loving' than our 'Standard of Living' and cap our lifestyle to love God and neighbours as we love ourselves?

**6. Be Proactive to go and love our neighbours as we love ourselves.**

The temptation is to limit our love for people in our comfort zone.

Jesus commands us to be proactive and intentional and GO and BE a neighbour to:

- The 'least of these' – the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, imprisoned Mat. 25: 31-46
- Our 'enemies' Mat. 5: 43-48
- The least-reached by the gospel Mat 28: 18-20

**7. Be channels and not the source**

Read John 20: 21, 22; Acts 1: 6-8; John 7: 37-39

When we forget we are not the source, we can suffer from loving, giving, and donor fatigue, get overwhelmed and spiral into burnout.

How can we resist forgetting?

How can we acknowledge our thirst and keep drinking from Jesus?

Consider praying:

- one hand raised to heaven – to drink from Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit.
- the other hand extended to people in need – a reminder that God is the source (not us) and we are his channels