

The Good Samaritan

There was once a man who decided to go on a journey. He decided to travel from his home in Jerusalem to visit his friend who lived in Jericho. Now in those days there were no buses or trains or cars. If you were rich you had a donkey but if you were poor, just like this man, you had to walk everywhere, no matter how far it was!

So the man set out to walk to Jericho. He knew that he would have to walk all day if he was going to get there before night fall. But the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was a very dangerous place. All the way there were rocks and caves, and bandits and robbers used to hide by the roadside and jump on unsuspecting travellers. They would steal all their money and often all their clothes as well, leaving them naked and bleeding, if not dead, by the side of the road.

The man walked quickly, hoping desperately that nothing would happen. But about halfway, to his horror, a large group of very fierce looking men jumped out in front of him. He tried to run away, but they grabbed hold of him, stole all his money and his clothes and then beat him really badly until he was nearly dead.

While he was lying there on the roadside another man came hurrying along. He was a man who had a lot to do in the Churches that they had then. He was in a hurry to get to a meeting at his church. When he saw the man looking nearly dead, he thought to himself: "Oh dear, poor man! But I'm in such a hurry. If I stop I'll be late, and there might be some more robbers around anyway." So he hurried past and didn't even try and help the man. He just left him bleeding on the ground.

A little later another man came along. He was a religious teacher. His job was to teach the people about God. He was going to the same church meeting as the first man. When he saw the man lying on the ground, he thought to himself: "O dear, poor man! He needs some help. But I can't help him, it would be such a bother, and if I did I'd be late for my meeting. Well he looks nearly dead anyway. There's probably nothing I could do to help him." So he also hurried past on the other side of the road, leaving the man lying on the ground bleeding to death.

Then along came another man. This time a rich man riding on a donkey. He was a man who came from a country called Samaria. People from Samaria were not supposed to like the people who came from Jerusalem. In fact they were sworn enemies and always kept apart from each other. He was in a hurry as well. He had a very important business meeting to go to where he knew he was going to make even more money.

Now you would probably expect him to hurry past on the other side of the road as well, wouldn't you? But he didn't! No. When he saw the man lying on the

ground he felt very sorry for him. "Gosh!" he said. "That could have been me if I'd come along this road a bit earlier. If I'd been unlucky enough to fall into the hands of this band of robbers. I'll have to help him because I really hope that someone would come along and help me if I were attacked and left to die like that."

So he got off his Donkey and knelt down beside the man. He washed the man's cuts and bruises and bandaged them up as best he could. Then he pulled the man onto his donkey and walked alongside all the way to the next village.

At the village he stopped at an Inn and looked after the man all night. In the morning he could see that the man was going to be alright, so he gave the Inn keeper some money and told him to look after the man. To give him plenty of food until he was strong again. And then the kind man continued on his journey.

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