

I had, of course, heard the story of the good Samaritan¹ from the Teacher many times. But one day I met the man who had been rescued. His first-person account added a bit more information that was very interesting to me.

He told it to me this way:

I was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when I was attacked by robbers. They stripped me of my clothes, stole what else I had, then they beat me severely and went away. I was left half dead, and could only lie there going in and out of consciousness.

I was barely aware of a couple of people who passed by me. There was a priest, in his official robes, who came by first. He made an awful face and crossed the road so that he could stay as far away from me as he could. I was too weak to cry out, and he likely thought that I could not see him. Perhaps he thought I was dead and thus unclean.

Later, a Levite also passed on the other side when he saw me. He avoided looking at me as he went by. Again, I was too weak to ask for help. I began to give up hope with the question in my mind that if these two “religious” men would not help me, who would?

When I saw a Samaritan man with a loaded donkey approach, I just closed my eyes and waited for him to pass as well. But then I heard the man cry out with compassion, and he ran over to me, taking pity on me. He poured oil and wine on my wounds to clean and protect them and then bandaged them as best he could. He also found some clothes to cover my nakedness².

Then he removed his possessions, which looked to be trade goods, from his donkey and lifted me up to put me on it. He left everything by the side of the road at great risk, as robbers obviously roamed this area, and led the donkey as it carried me along.

He took me to an inn so that I had a place to heal and regain my strength. The next day he gave the innkeeper money to pay for my stay. He arranged to have the innkeeper look after me for a while and promised to reimburse him for any extra expenses incurred during his absence.

My gratitude to this person, whom I had been taught to consider a “foreigner,” knew no bounds. When he came back to check on me some time later, I learned that he had been able to retrieve his supplies without sustaining any loss³. I was very glad, because I was so touched by the care of this man I thought to be so hostile to myself and my people.

I thought about his story later, and realized a great parallel to the actions of our Savior. One of my favorite recitations speaks of Christ “emptying” Himself⁴ so that He could come to us and save us from the danger we are in due to sin. His salvation of us also has long-term implications.

I previously had only thought of Christ as emptying Himself of His transcendent power and glory. Now I thought about him emptying Himself so that He could make room for us and fill Himself up with us! This was so meaningful to me because I know that we live in Christ⁵. We might further find a parallel to when Noah carried his people and many animals to salvation in the ark⁶: we are carried in a similar sense to safety in Christ through His death, burial, and resurrection⁷.

1. Luke 10:30-35
2. Note that Christ, as a substitution for us, was also beaten and stripped [John 19:23] but ultimately was clothed in a glorious robe [Revelation 19:13,16]; also, we will be clothed in the resurrection [2 Corinthians 5:2-4] in robes of righteousness [Isiah 61:10]
3. Christ emptied Himself, but then regained His Glory [see Ephesians 4:10 and 1 Timothy 3:16]
4. Philippians 2:5-11 (kenosis)
5. Romans 8:2, 1 Corinthians 1:30, 1 Corinthians 15:22, 2 Timothy 1:1, 1 John 5:11
6. 1 Peter 3:20
7. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

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