

NT 14: What shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Monte F. Shelley, 24 Apr 2011

Quotes

- Procrastinators unite! ... Tomorrow.
- Some days I'm the pigeon; some days I'm the statue.
- It is better to prepare and prevent than it is to repair and repent. (Ezra Taft Benson, TETB 285)
- Get rid of what you don't want, to make room for that which you do want. (Skip Ross)
- **Joseph's key to parables:** What was the question which drew out the answer, or caused Jesus to utter the parable? (TPIS 276)

1. Who is the greatest in the kingdom? (Mt 18; Lk 9)

Question of the disciples: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (18:1) or "which of them should be greatest?" (Lk 9:46)

² Jesus called a little child unto him, ... ³ And said, ... Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whosoever ... shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

What does the phrase "ye be converted" mean here?

What are the characteristics of children we are to emulate?

2. Woe to those who offend (Mt 18)

⁵ Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. ⁶ But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea. ...

What does offend and offences mean?

What are some ways people "offend ... little ones" today?

What will happen to those who "offend ... little ones"?

⁷ It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! ⁸ Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. ⁹ And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. ^a

How does a hand, foot or eye offend? How do we remove it?

3. Reproving a brother (Mt 18)

¹⁵ If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷ And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

What does "trespass against thee" mean?

How are church members to respond to trespasses?

¹⁸ ... Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

¹⁹ ... If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

4. Parable of the unmerciful servant (Mt 18)

²¹ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? ²²

Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

²³ Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would <settle accounts with> his servants. ²⁴ ... One was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

²⁷ Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

²⁸ But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he ... took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. ²⁹ And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and <begged> him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. ³⁰ And he would not: but ... cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. ³¹ So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very <distressed>, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

³² Then his lord ... said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: ³³ Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had [compassion] on thee? ³⁴ And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

³⁵ So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

5. Question about divorce (Mt 19)

³ The Pharisees also came <to test> him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to <divorce> his wife for every cause?

⁴ And he ... said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? ⁶ Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man <separate>.

⁷ They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

⁸ He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹ And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

6. Jesus send missionaries to Samaria (Lk 9)

⁵² [Jesus] sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. ⁵³ And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

⁵⁴ And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? ⁵⁵ But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. ⁵⁶ For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

7. Calling and mission of the Seventy (Lk 10)

¹ The Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. ... ⁴ Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes. ...

Why were they not to take money, supplies, or extra shoes?

⁸ And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: ⁹ And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

¹⁰ [If they do not receive you, shake of the dust of your feet.] ¹² ... It shall be more tolerable ... for Sodom, than for that city.

8. Seventy return (Lk 10)

¹⁷ And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. ¹⁸ And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. ¹⁹ Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. ²⁰ Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

9. Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10)

Question 1: What shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Question 2: What is written in the law?

Answer to Q2: Love God and neighbor.

Answer to Q1: Do this and live.

²⁵ <On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”>

²⁶ He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

²⁷ And he ... said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind (Dt 6:5); and thy neighbour as thyself (Lev 19:18).

Jesus placed ‘love God’ before ‘love neighbor’ (Mt 12:37–40).

“Experience dictates that it is very hard to love the unlovely neighbor until the disciple’s heart is filled with the love of God, which provides the energy and motivation necessary for the arduous task of loving the neighbor. ... If the one who serves is hoping to be sustained by the responses received, and if the expected responses are not forthcoming, that person may well give up in frustration and disappointment. But if costly acts of love are extended to others out of gratitude for the love of God, then the believer is sustained by the unwavering love of God toward him or her.” (MEE 287)

If the forgiven debtor had been filled with gratitude for God’s forgiveness, he would have forgiven the small debt owed him.

²⁸ And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

Question 1: Who is my neighbor? (follow up question)

Question 2: “A certain man went down ...”

Which of these three was a neighbor?

Answer to Q2: He who showed mercy.

Answer to Q1: Go and do likewise.

²⁹ But he, <wanting> to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

He expects a manageable list that includes fellow Jews who keep the law precisely according to the traditions. Gentiles are not neighbors and everyone knows God hates the Samaritans. The Law forbids vengeance and bearing grudges only against “the children of thy people” (Lev 19:18). And David said “I hate

them [that hate thee, O LORD,] with a perfect hatred” (Ps 139:21–22). The lawyer expected “fellow Jews” and possibly “the stranger who dwells among you” (Lev 19:33–4). (MEE 288–9)

Bruce R. McConkie: Traditionally they had loved their neighboring kindred in Israel and hated the pagan Gentiles, with whom they also frequently found themselves engaged in armed conflicts. Foreigners and Samaritans were not neighbors according to rabbinical teachings. “The rabbis said: ‘He excepts all Gentiles when he saith His neighbour’ ... We are not to contrive the death of the Gentiles, but if they are in any danger of death we are not bound to deliver them, e.g. if any of them fall into the sea you need not take him out, for such a one is not thy neighbour.” (DNCT 1:471)

A. Robbers steal and injure

B. Priest sees and does nothing.

C. Levite sees and does nothing

D. Samaritan sees and shows compassion

C. Treats wounds

B. Transports the man

A. Spends money on him

Babylonian Jews tell a story like the Good Samaritan that is related to 2 Kgs 17:24–38. After Samaritans were taught the ways of the Lord, they returned to their own ways. A Jew traveling to Jericho was robbed and beaten by enemies of Israel who wanted blood vengeance. After a priest and Levite fleeing wicked Samaria passed by, a Babylonian guard/police of Samaria helped the man. (MEE 289)

³⁰ And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among <robbers>, which stripped him of his <clothes>, and wounded <or beat> him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

The road is about eighteen miles long and often quite steep; it drops some 3,500 feet, ending in one of the lowest areas on earth. It is a barren, desert area. In biblical times it was called “the path of blood,” or the “bloody way,” probably because of the bandits and robbers that lay in wait in its many hiding places in the limestone hills. (P-UP ch 13)

Robbers in the ME beat only victims who resist. (MEE 291)

Jericho at 825’ below sea level is the lowest city on earth. Its mild winter climate made it a hedonistic resort area where Herod had built a sumptuous vacation palace. (Welch)

³¹ And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

The temple was served by three classes of people: (1) priests, (2) Levites, and (3) laymen who helped. Many priests of that time lived in Jericho and would go up to Jerusalem twice a year for a 2 week assignment and then return. A ME would assume the priest had means and was riding not walking, and could have transported the man to help. If the victim was a fellow Jew, especially a law-abiding Jew, the priest would have been obligated to help. However, priest couldn’t know based on language, dress, or accent because the man was without clothes and couldn’t speak. If the man was dead, the priest would become ritually unclean and have to undergo a week-long purification process. Meanwhile, he and his family could not eat from the tithes or help the poor with the tithes. If the victim was not a Jew, the priest was not responsible under the law to help. If the victim touched him and later died, the priest would have to rend his robes, and in so doing would have broken laws against destroying valuable property. (MEE 292–293)

³² And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side {*of the way; for they desired in their hearts that it might not be known that they had seen him.*} (JST)

Levites were assistants to the priests in the temple. The Levite probably knew a priest was ahead of him. Since the priest had set the precedence of leaving the man, the Levite could do the same. He likely was walking, but could have treated the wounds. If he helped the victim, it would be an insult to the priest! (MEE 293)

³³ But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

Jewish listeners would have expected the third man to be a Jewish layman, not a hated outsider. In the old West, cowboys often said, “the only good Indian is a dead one.” They would not have told stories about “the good Indian.” (MEE 294)

Samaritan was a term of derision like moron. In the eyes of the Jews at that time, there was no such thing as a *good Samaritan!* Jews looked down on Samaritans because (1) intermarriage between Israelites and Gentiles resulted in a mixture of religion, customs, and race [half-breeds, muggles], and (2) Samaritans accepted Jews who could not live the Law of Moses, i.e., sinners. (Sense 144) They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament and built their own temple in Samaria. Jews usually traveled a longer but safer way to avoid Samaria. (*P-UP*) The animosity between Jews and Samaritans was like that between Jews and Arabs or Muslims today.

³⁴ And went to *him*, and bound up <or *bandaged*> his wounds, pouring in <or *on*> oil and wine,

First aid must be given before moving the man. The oil could clean a wound, the wine would disinfect it, and the bandage would stop the bleeding and protect the wound. The Samaritan used his resources to help. ‘Love that fails to give money as charity or as alms is common . . . , but heartfelt love that is free from the seeking of praise or honor and which is willing to endure distress, suffering and loss, in the path of good works, as is set forth in this parable, is extraordinarily rare.’ (MEE 294–5)

and set him on his own beast <or *donkey*>, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

After giving first aid, the Samaritan risks his own life by transporting the man within Jewish territory to an inn in Jericho. The Samaritan is expected to unload the wounded man at the edge of Jericho and disappear. A Samaritan would not be safe in a Jewish town with a wounded Jew over the back of his riding animal. It would be like an Indian finding a cowboy with two arrows in his back, placing him on his horse, riding into Dodge City, checking into a room above the saloon, and spending the night taking care of the cowboy. Community vengeance may be enacted against the Samaritan, even if he saved the life of the Jew. (MEE 295)

³⁵ And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two <sliver coins or denarii>, and gave *them* to the <innkeeper>, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

A lodger in an inn who could not pay his bill could be sold as a slave by the innkeeper. Since the victim had nothing, the Samaritan had to pay an initial amount and pledge the rest so his rescue was not in vain. Two denarii would have covered

food and lodging for a week or two. After the Samaritan paid his bill, he had to escape town. Was there a crowd waiting for him outside? Was he beaten or killed? (MEE 296)

³⁶ Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the <robbers>?

The initial question was “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus asks, “To whom must I become a neighbor?” The neighbor is the Samaritan, not the wounded man. The lawyer referred to him indirectly. The lawyer cannot justify himself (earn eternal life) because what he is challenged to do is beyond his capacity. To whom must I become a neighbor? Anyone in need, regardless of language, religion, or ethnicity. The story attacks traditional religious and racial attitudes against Samaritans. (MEE 296–297)

³⁷ And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Luke 10:30–37	Plan of Salvation (Welch)
A man (=Adam / 'ish)	All mankind
Went down	Left intentionally, knowing risks
From Jerusalem	God’s presence; paradise; garden of Eden
To Jericho	To (telestial) world;
Fell	Fallen mortal state; Adam fell
Among robbers	Satan, trials; organized outlaw band
Stripped of clothes	Temple garment of immortality; Joseph
Wounded or beat him	Mortal pains, trials, afflictions, sins
Departed	Commanded to depart; not allowed to kill
Left half dead	1 st death, becoming mortal; not 2 nd death
By chance	Not searching
Priest & Levite passed	Law of Moses & prophets
Saw him	Unable, unwilling, or unprepared to help
Passed on other side	Stayed on Law of Moses course
Samaritan *	Jesus; both outcasts, rejected by Jews
As he journeyed	Looking for needy, prepared to help
Had compassion	Pure love of Christ
Went to him	Christ comes to those in need
Bound his wounds	Bound with covenants; love, faith, hope
Poured in oil	Anoint: ordinances, Holy Ghost
And wine	Atoning blood of Christ cleanses, heals
Set him on his beast	Christ & helper bear sin, sorrow, burden
Took him to the inn	Church; aid to help travelers reach home
Took care of him	Cared for personally during dark hours
On morrow, he left	Christ died, resurrected; victim born again
Two denarii (pence)	Cost of restoring spiritual health
Innkeeper cares for	Church leaders care for rescued souls
When I come again	Second Coming
Repay or reward	Cover all costs, reward well

* Samaritan is from *shamar* : *to keep, watch, preserve, support, aid, or tend.* (BDB) or one who does this, e.g., guardian, watchman, keeper, shepherd (1 Sam 17:20)

In His parables, Jesus taught the essentials of the Father’s plan of salvation. As a type and shadow of this plan, the good Samaritan places our deeds of neighborly kindness here in mortality within the eternal context of where we have come down from, how we have fallen into our present plight, and how the binding ordinances and healing love of the . . . Redeemer and the nurture of His Church can rescue us from our present situation, as we serve and live worthy of reward at His Second Coming. . . .

[**Parable of Good Samaritan**] People can see themselves as the good Samaritan, acting as physical rescuers and as saviors on Mount Zion, aiding in ... of rescuing lost souls. Jesus told the Pharisee, "Go, and do thou likewise." By doing as the Samaritan, we join with Him in helping to bring to pass the salvation and eternal life of mankind.

[**Parable of Loyal Innkeeper**] Disciples ... [can see themselves] as innkeepers ... commissioned by Jesus Christ to facilitate the long-term spiritual recovery of injured travelers.

[**Parable of the Distressed Traveler:**] Readers may see themselves as ... the lone and weary traveler. We all need to be saved. As the story ends, all travelers can feel safe, having learned that, ... He who "was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves" is none other than the merciful Christ. He is the most exemplary Neighbor. This realization answers the lawyer's second question, "And who is my neighbour?" At the same time, it also answers the first, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Eternal life comes by loving God "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind" and by loving His Son (thy neighbor) as thyself. And that is done by going and doing as the Savior did, in loving our fellow beings, for when we serve them we are only in the service of our God. (Welch)

10. Mary and Martha (Lk 10)

³⁸ [Jesus] entered into a certain village: and ... Martha received him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. ⁴⁰ But Martha was <distracted by all the preparations that had to be made>, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. ⁴¹ And Jesus ... said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art <worried> and <upset> about many things: ⁴² But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Careful → GR worried; *SOED* full of care, anxious, concerned

11. Golden Rule Stories

The parable of the Good Samaritan is a commentary on the Golden Rule. Each day we can choose to cause pain, to ignore it, or to do our best to relieve it. How do we want to be treated? If we are wounded, will we let Christ pay for our full recovery or will we demand payment from those responsible?

In life, "...many of us have been wounded. Some have received wounds... from the very people they should have been able to trust for help. This is a terrible but common paradox. By the abundance of wounds around us, it would seem that a major function of this earth life is to teach us what to do about wounds." (M. Catherine Thomas, *Spiritual Lightning*, 117)

A young husband searches for the local doctor to help his wife deliver their first child, but while the doctor assists in the delivery, he fatally infects the new mother with the disease he had treated earlier in the day. He became bitter and sought vengeance until he was counseled to leave it alone. (Packer, *Ensign*, May 2011). (BTW)

An Amish community is devastated by the murder of several teenage girls by a local milkman, but the Amish reach out immediately with love and forgiveness to the perpetrator's family (Faust, *Ensign*, May 2007). (BTW #9)

A victim of a Nazi concentration camp survives to tell her story in many churches, but after preaching to a particular group, she is approached by one of the former guards who asks for her forgiveness (Patricia Holland, *Ensign*, Jun 1984). (BTW #9)

"Some years ago, I saw an interview with a young lady in her early twenties who had been on her way to pick up her son from a

daycare center. When she stopped at a red light, a man pulled up next to her and shot her in the face. They caught the man and he admitted that she had done nothing to him. He was just angry and wanted to hurt someone. The young lady was blinded. Her husband couldn't cope with a handicapped wife and divorced her. The parents of this newly handicapped, divorced, single mother wanted her to come back home where they could take care of her. However, she wanted to be independent.

"The interviewer said, 'You must really hate this man.' When she didn't respond, the interviewer said 'Come on, you need to get this out in the open. It will do you good.'

"She said, 'This man intruded into my life absolutely uninvited, and exerted a great amount of control over me for one brief instant. If I hate him, resent him, or do anything but forgive him, he continues to exert control over me that he was never welcome to in the first place.'" (Don Fossum, "Dear Reader," *BYU Bookstore News*, Winter 2004)

Quotes

Thomas S. Monson: Each of us, in the journey through mortality, will travel his own Jericho Road. What will be your experience? What will be mine? Will I fail to notice him who has fallen among thieves and requires my help? Will you? Will I be one who sees the injured and hears his plea, yet crosses to the other side? Will you? Or will I be one who sees, who hears, who pauses, and who helps? Will you?

Jesus provided our watchword: 'Go, and do thou likewise.' When we obey that declaration, there opens to our view a vista of joy seldom equaled and never surpassed.

Now the Jericho Road may not be clearly marked. Neither may the injured cry out, that we may hear. But when we walk in the steps of that good Samaritan, we walk the pathway that leads to perfection." ("Your Jericho Road," *Ensign*, Feb 1989, 2, 4)

Spencer W. Kimball: Our vision is completely obscured when we have no mirror to hold up to our own faults and look only for the foibles of others. When we follow the instructions of the Lord, we are kept so busy perfecting ourselves that we come to realize that the faults of others are small in comparison. We should establish the delightful habit, then, of minimizing the weaknesses of others and thus increase our own virtues. He who will not forgive others breaks down the bridge over which he himself must travel. (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, 261)

Howard W. Hunter: [Christ] will measure our devotion to him by how we love and serve our fellowmen. ... The Samaritan gave us an example of pure Christian love. ... Though we make our friends, God has made our neighbors—everywhere. Love should have no boundary; we should have no narrow loyalties. Christ said, 'For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?' (Mt. 5:46) (*Ensign*, Nov 1986.)

Dallin H. Oaks: Before Latter-day Saints initiate litigation they have a duty to pursue the settlement of grievances personally or with the aid of a mediator. ... Why should Saints seek to avoid litigation by prior settlement or even by suffering injury without recompense? ... 'Contention leads to bitterness and smallness of soul; persons who contend with each other shrivel up spiritually and are in danger of losing their salvation.' (*The Lord's Way*, 175-6.)

Joseph Fielding Smith: If you have friends or associates who endeavor to entice you to commit sin, cut them off. Withdraw from their association lest they drag you down to the committing of some sin or transgression against divine will." (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5:79)