

THE REAL LIFE SAMARITAN Carl McMurray

Luke 10:30-37 has long been noted as a passage defining who our neighbor is and our responsibility toward one in need. The message is so plain and clear that even among those not professing to be Christians the illustration of the Good Samaritan is well understood. While we accept the teaching however, and recognize the responsibility, we may not be fully considering what is involved in carrying out our Lord's instructions. Like everything else He asks of us, His wishes here are also more than just talk and well wishing. It may cost you many things, but it certainly will cost you three.

It's going to cost you effort. It cost the Samaritan effort to stop and bind up the man's wounds. It troubled him to walk instead of riding as he had been. And it cost him the trouble of bedding the injured man down. If you suppose that you will go on down the road of your life, serving Christ, and heading toward Heaven without being troubled in some way, you're not understanding this lesson. Be prepared to grin and not complain, because you knew ahead of time it was going to cost you some effort.

It's going to cost you time. This is probably what we have in shorter supply than anything else today, but don't think you can hoard it up or save it. Like the Samaritan had to take time to do this good work, you will too. Again, no use grumbling. Because of this account, we would all be a little wiser to simply schedule in some free time so that we are ready and able to help others. One problem we have today is that we schedule our lives so closely and so full that we simply "can't" make room for anyone else. We regretfully say we wish we could, but then we actually end up spending all our time on self and our personal pursuits. To serve the Lord will cost you time.

Lastly, it will cost you money. It cost the Samaritan money for a man he didn't know, and had no reason to expect repayment from. Last time I checked, the gospel wasn't in the "free" line at the grocery store either. Everything costs, from shingles on the roof to pens in the workroom. If we advertise, it costs. If we take the gospel overseas, it costs. If we train preachers, stock a library, make a CD, or teach a class, it costs. And things don't just cost, they cost money. When it really gets embarrassing however, is when we try to "cheap" by with the Lord while sparing almost no expense for personal desires. We will unload on grandchildren's entertainment or vacations and then count nickels and dimes for the gospel. We've missed the lesson of the Samaritan.

To do what is right and acceptable is not just to admire those who act this way (the Samaritan) or learn where to read about it. To do what is right means paying the cost in effort, time, and money. And, to pay it gladly without complaint.

