

Monday 21 March 2022- Human Rights Day/UN Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Luke 10: 25 - 37

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 'What is written in the Law?' he replied. 'How do you read it?'

27 He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, "Love your neighbour as yourself."

28 'You have answered correctly,' Jesus replied. 'Do this and you will live.'

29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?'

30 In reply Jesus said: 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half-dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said, "and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have."

36 'Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?'

37 The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.'

Jesus told him, 'Go and do likewise.'

In South Africa we celebrate Human Rights Day while the rest of the world today celebrates UN Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Even in Jesus' day discrimination was rife amongst the people. The Jews would not even use a utensil that a Samaritan had used, even if it had been washed a hundred times. Jesus tells this parable to the Jews to make them think differently, to challenge their preconceptions and prejudices.

While most people do not overtly discriminate there are subtle ways that we treat each other differently. There are certain suspicions that we have of others based on past experiences or what we have been told or group mentality. Sometimes we see our group as the one that is being threatened and in our surge to protect our own, we discriminate against others (as we saw with the refugees at the Ukrainian border posts and with the recent Xenophobic attacks in South Africa). Sometimes we have had a bad experience with someone of a different race or culture and we then treat everyone of that same race or culture as aggressors. (Many people were really upset with the Ukrainians for how they treated foreigners and condemned their actions but more reports have come from other foreigners who have told stories of being protected, helped and cared for by Ukrainians – we so easily paint everyone