

Germany: Learning what made the Samaritan good

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When I read the parable of the Good Samaritan, I often have thought of it as a nice story, hoped I would stop in that situation and then would go on with my life. My time in Germany has made me think about what makes the Good Samaritan good.

Luke 10:33 says, “But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was and when he saw him, he took pity on him.” Three very important words are “as he traveled.” He did not set out to help someone. He did not set one day, one week or even one month aside to help his fellow man or to go on a mission project. He did not seek him out; he found this man as he traveled—a man who needed his help desperately.

The verse says he “came where the man was.” He found a man bloody and beaten. The injured man was not walking into the church in his Sunday best; he was in so desperate a situation that the two other men decided not only to pass by, but that they needed to pass on the other side of the street.

The Samaritan had compassion for this man. Not only did he help this man because it was the right thing to do, but also because he began to feel for him and emphasize with him. He saw the injured man as God sees him.

The Samaritan came to the injured man in his brokenness, and he tried to help him. He probably was not a doctor; he had no special training about how to take care of the injuries. He met the needs in the best way he could with what resources he had.

Finally, the Samaritan sacrificed his own comfort to bring this man to a place of safety where he could heal. We are not promised comfort. Most of

the time, we need to move out of our comfort zones to reach the people around us. The Samaritan moved out of his own comfort zone to bring the injured man out of the place of his brokenness and hurt, and took him somewhere better.

The Samaritan was in it for the long run. He did not just meet a need and move on to the next person. The Good Samaritan committed to continue the work he started. He committed to continue to give sacrificially out of his own resources. He committed to making sure this man came out healthier at the end of their time together.



Wiesbaden Marktkirche One of the churches I have been working with in Germany is very organic, and many of the opportunities in ministry have come about because they saw a problem as they traveled, came to where the people are and met a need. They saw women in the red-light district, living without knowing the true love of God. So, women from the church began taking baked goods, which allow them to start conversations with these women in the red-light district. They come to where these women are in their brokenness to tell them God loves them. Our friends continue this ministry every few weeks, continuing to give of their time and resources to build a relationship with these women. They are in it for the long run.

Seeing this, I began to wonder, how often do I cross the street? How often do I choose who needs to hear the gospel? God's heart is for everyone, not just some, but is my heart for everyone, or just the ones that are convenient to share with? By myself, I am not equipped to do much. Just like the Samaritan, I usually am doing something or are on the way somewhere when I see a need. And the need is not always one I think I can meet.

How often do I decide out of fear that the ministry in front of me is something I cannot do? Why am I reluctant to let the mighty Creator of the universe do what he wants to do through me?

This summer, God has reminded me he is bigger than all my fears. He is bigger than everything that opposes me. He is bigger than my brokenness and failures—bigger than the brokenness and failures of every single person around me. I need not only to dream and think big, but also pray big! God's plans are always going to be bigger and better than mine. Every big movement begins with big prayer. This is not only for me to ask God for the things that I want to see, but so I can begin to discover the things God wants to see and do through me.

As we travel, as we go through life, we need to go to where people are and take pity. Then we meet short-term needs and prepare for the long run. We are not called to make church members, but we are called to make disciples. When God opens the door, and shows us the need, say "yes" and do the best you can. We are shown the need—we are shown the people—for a reason. Then we do the best we can. That is how we can be good like the Good Samaritan.

Alexandria Butts, a student at the University of Texas in Austin, is serving in Germany with Go Now Missions.