

*Prayer*

*Guide*

## Self Reflection:

### Jericho Road

“A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. We are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's road side, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. Compassion sees that an edifice that produces beggars needs restructuring. A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth.”

Let us pray:

Ever present God, you called us to be in relationship with one another and promised to dwell wherever two or three are gathered. In our community, we are many different people; we come from many different places, have many different cultures. Open our hearts that we may be bold in finding the riches of inclusion and the treasures of diversity among us. We pray in faith.

-Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

## **The Parable of the Good Samaritan**

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

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

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 neighbor as yourself.’”

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

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. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 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. 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.’”

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

## **Prayer for Justice:**

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your world as your love would have it: a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor; a world where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them; a world where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect; a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love. Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. For all those who have fallen victim to hatred and inhumanity, for those loved ones who are left behind to mourn, for the souls of those whose hearts are cold, Lord, hear our prayer. For the children who are being born into this world of conflict and violence, for women and mothers who suffer needlessly, Lord, hear our prayer. For all those who have been forced into unemployment, who long to return to work, for all those who struggle to support their families, Lord, hear our prayer.

For the soldiers who are misguided in thinking that their bullets will bring about peace, for those who feel called to conscientiously object to military orders, Lord, hear our prayer. For the children who cry in their beds at night and wonder "what have I done?" For the mothers and fathers who must try to explain the unexplainable, Lord, hear our prayer. For all the children who have died before their time, for the soldiers who allow their uniform to strip them of their humanity, for the healers who are denied the opportunity to use their gifts, Lord, hear our prayer. For the redemption of souls of both victim and perpetrator, for those who commit themselves to the forgiveness of sins,

Lord, hear our prayer.

## **Prayer for the Hurting:**

Heavenly Father, give your suffering children true friends who seek to lighten their load rather than cause additional heartache. Give friends and family empathy for what the sufferers are going through; help them resist the urge to judge or assume they would handle things differently if put in the same situation. Help friends and loved ones to look for ways to encourage rather than chastising, condemning, or minimizing these overwhelming situations. Hold accountable those who profess to speak for you. Help sufferers to forgive and pray for any who allow the enemy to use them as unjust accusers. Help those afflicted to bless and not curse

We thank you that you alone are our refuge and strong tower. We thank you that no matter what we face, you are still on the throne, you are still in control, and nothing can ever stand against you. Thank you that you hold the victory in this world, and you have promised in your Word that you will be with us through any hardship we may face. We know that only in you do we have the hope to face dark and uncertain times, for our future is held secure through the gift of Christ. We ask for you to extend your hope and compassion to our loved ones right now. In these days when they're struggling, or seem to have lost their way at times, would you please remind them that you are still here. With them. Close. That you are bigger than this storm they're facing, and you promise to hold them secure. Thank you God that you are with us always, that your presence is mighty, and you hear our prayers on behalf of those we love. We ask that you would show yourself strong on their behalf. Remind them that nothing is too difficult for you, and you are leading them through this difficult time, covering them in your care. We know and believe beyond any doubt, that your power and love will never fail. You are always trustworthy. You are all-powerful. You are fully able. You are Lord over every situation no matter how difficult it may seem. You are our healer and will never waste the pain we carry today. You promise to use all things for good in some way, because you are a God of miracles and nothing is too difficult for you.

## **Prayer for First Responders:**

Lord Jesus, we pray for first responders everywhere who have not yet made You their Lord and Savior. Please put Your people in their paths, so that they might learn to seek You first and honor You. It's so important to have godly men and women in these positions of influence for the sake of Your Kingdom. We also pray that You will intervene in the lives of those who once knew You well but have fallen away from You due to the pressures of this world. Reignite their hearts with passion for all that You are, Lord Jesus! Stir people all over our nation to pray fervently that our first responders will be salt and light in dark places and beacons of hope to the hopeless. Help them to minister in a very difficult occupation so that they might be change agents for the sake of Your name!

Lord, put protection around them to keep the safe as they protect us. Every day first responders have to make difficult and complicated decisions. Help them to choose wisely and well in every situation. Give them clarity and help them to stay calm and collected in the most tense moments they face. Help them call out to You whenever they don't know what to do. May they always keep their eyes fixed upon You. Father, please keep our first responders emotionally strong, but spiritually tender when they are confronted by the evil and brokenness around them. Give them Your peace as they deal with the pain and suffering of others—and at times experience injustice. May they have compassion for those whose lives are broken and may they demonstrate kindness to them. Help them to recognize that when others express hate and anger toward them, they can find their security in You.

Amen

## **Contemplative Scriptures:**

John 13:34 “So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.”

Philippians 2:3 “Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves”

Philippians 4:8 “And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.”

Micah 6:8 “No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God”.

1 John 3:18 “Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.”

1 John 4:20 “If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?”