

# Love Your Neighbor as Yourself: Women's Sunday Program

*Beth Larkin*

**PURPOSE:** This lesson is a sermon for a Women's Sunday service.

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 10:25-37

**PREPARATION:** If your Women's Sunday program involves the women taking over the Sunday service, make sure to enlist and prepare the women for roles they will fill, whether they are service attendants or sharing parts of the message that follows. You will also need to choose service music; suggestions follow.

**Suggested Music:** *Hymns of Heritage & Hope:* Call to Worship (419); "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" (1); "At Calvary" (331); "Our God Has Made Us One" (427); Blest Be The Tie That Binds (429)

*Public Domain:* "Beloved, Let Us Love One Another (1 John 4:7+8);" "This Is My Commandment;" "I Bless You in the Name of Jesus, Brother"

*Others:* "They'll Know We are Christians" © 1966 Peter Scholtes; "You Alone Can Rescue" by Matt Redman; "Alive In Us" © 2011 Reuben Morgan; "I Am Loved" ©1978 William J & Gloria Gaither, Gaither Music Co.

## "Love Your Neighbor as Yourself" Women's Sunday Program

**Purpose:** Awareness of human trafficking – a way of loving our neighbors at home and abroad who are being affected by this horrific issue.

**NOTES:** I have tempered the graphic nature of the information that is included in this program, but since it is about such a difficult issue, feel free to adjust some of the content. I don't think there is anything that would be too graphic for children, but you could just let the parents know ahead of time what you will be presenting or provide a children's church type of activity during this part of the service (if your church doesn't already have one).

I suggest that on Women's Sunday, the women take part in the normal opening of the service (greeting, announcements, prayer, singing, offering, etc.) with the consent of the pastor or elders.

## Scripture

We have been studying the parable of the good Samaritan throughout the year in our WHFMS meetings and would like to share a bit about what we have been learning with you this morning.

Scripture reading: Luke 10:25-37 (NIV): 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.”

### **Sharing**

Please feel free to take a few moments now to share about what you, as a group, have learned together from this passage. Focus on what has stood out to you and been impactful.

### **Message**

Most of us are very familiar with this parable where we see an act of mercy played out in how the Samaritan helped the man on the side of the road. It reminds us of the

EXTRAVAGANT mercy God extended to us in the sacrifice of his son, Jesus, on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. Verse 37 in our passage tells us that we, in turn, are to extend mercy to others. In the Beatitudes, Jesus taught, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy” (Matthew 5:7). Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, we are reconciled to the Father and have a responsibility to demonstrate God’s mercy and love to others.

As individuals and as members of a church body, we offer this mercy and grace to each other, our families, friends and others that God places in our paths as we walk through life. As a denomination, we work together to do this more corporately, in several ways, to make a larger impact. One such way is through the Department of Women’s Ministries, as we strive to create awareness of the issue of human trafficking. It is a massive issue, involving millions of people all around the world that will take many people and organizations working together to create an impact.

One of the best ways to do this is to be aware of it. The more people know about this issue, the harder it will be for traffickers to hide what they are doing. So, what is human trafficking? The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime defines human trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit.” There are an estimated 50 million people trapped in slavery around the world.

In 2021, 10,359 situations of human trafficking were reported to the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline involving 16,554 individual victims. Shocking as these numbers are, they are likely only a fraction of the actual problem.

In their 2022 Trafficking in Persons report, the U.S. Department of State wrote, “Everyone should be free. And yet, through force, fraud, and coercion, human traffickers violate this most basic right. Traffickers’ exploitative practices affect every country in the world, including the United States, by diminishing and destroying our communities, sense of security, and the global economy.”

We have a video to show you this morning. It is titled, “5 Signs of a Human Trafficker.” Knowing the signs will help you to be aware of situations that you, or someone you know, might encounter that should raise a red flag. It will also help you to understand how someone might get involved with a trafficker in the first place and how hard it might be for them to find a way out.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivM8HSZzusc> (11 minutes long)

If you would like more information on this issue, resource guides are available. Please see me after the service.

Proverbs 31:8-9 (NIV) says, “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

Let’s close in prayer.

**OPTION:** Here is a link to another video about the signs of human trafficking that you can use if you’d prefer. It is about two minutes long and you would just need to adjust the intro paragraph a bit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQFQqU3O9GM>

**Shared by:** Beth Larkin is the Coordinator of Women’s Ministries for Advent Christian General Conference. She loves assisting churches with ministry to women and strives to offer support to pastors’ wives throughout the denomination. Beth is a strong advocate for human trafficking awareness and coordinates with churches and ministries to offer awareness events in their area. Beth and her husband, Matt, live in Maine and enjoy attending their daughter Mallory’s soccer games and cheering on the University of Maine’s men’s hockey team as season ticket holders.