

## A World of One

*"Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" "The one who showed mercy to him," he said. Then Jesus told him, "Go and do the same."* - Luke 10:36-37 HCSB

God began with a man named Abram. The Lord told him to leave his homeland and to follow Him to a promised land. If Abram did, the Lord promised, *"I will bless those who bless you, I will curse those who treat you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*<sup>1</sup> The world pretty much revolved around this one man and he needed only to care for himself and his family. Loving his neighbor meant to love whoever loved him and his family.

But Abram was renamed Abraham and his family became the great nation Israel. Israel was given a new set of commands in Deuteronomy. Loving your neighbor now meant loving those who lived next to you, especially fellow Jews. If a Gentile decided to live among the people of Israel and adopt their ways, then that love might possibly be grudgingly extended to him. Still, it was basically love those who are like you.

But now the Master, through the parable of the Good Samaritan, taught that loving our neighbor was to be stretched even more. Our love no longer should be directed merely to ourselves, or to our family, or to our race, or to those who are like us...but to anyone in need.<sup>2</sup> He taught that we are to even love those who hate us!<sup>3</sup>

Then in His last command He directed us to spread the good news of God's love to the whole world! *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*<sup>4</sup>

Paul was the first Christian to really grasp what God was telling them. He told the Galatians, *"There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*<sup>5</sup>

Over a span of millennia God has gradually been stretching us, expanding our vision to include more and more people in our love. In that process He has been trying to make us more like Him. But some of us are living in a world that is so small that there is little room for men and no room at all for the glory of God. We are so busy taking care of ourselves and concentrating our attention on ourselves, devoting all our energies to ministering to ourselves that we haven't any time, money or energy left over to try to take care of anyone else. When that is so, we live in the smallest world possible. We live in a world of one.

---

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 12:3

<sup>2</sup> Luke 10:37

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 5:44

<sup>4</sup> Acts 1:8

<sup>5</sup> Galatians 3:28