

The Golden Rule

Love is the Answer



Class Section 1: The Greatest Commandment

Let's turn to Matthew 22. The religious leaders questioned Jesus:

Matthew 22:36—Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?

Of the hundreds of commandments in the Mosaic law, this is what Jesus picked:

Matthew 22:37-39—Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."



Jesus proceeded to shock these Pharisees by telling them that if you love, you are fulfilling all the laws of God! He proclaimed,

Matthew 22:40—On these two commandments [to love God and your neighbor] hang all the Law and the Prophets.

A lawyer Jesus was speaking to then asked Him, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered,

Luke 10:30-37 - "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

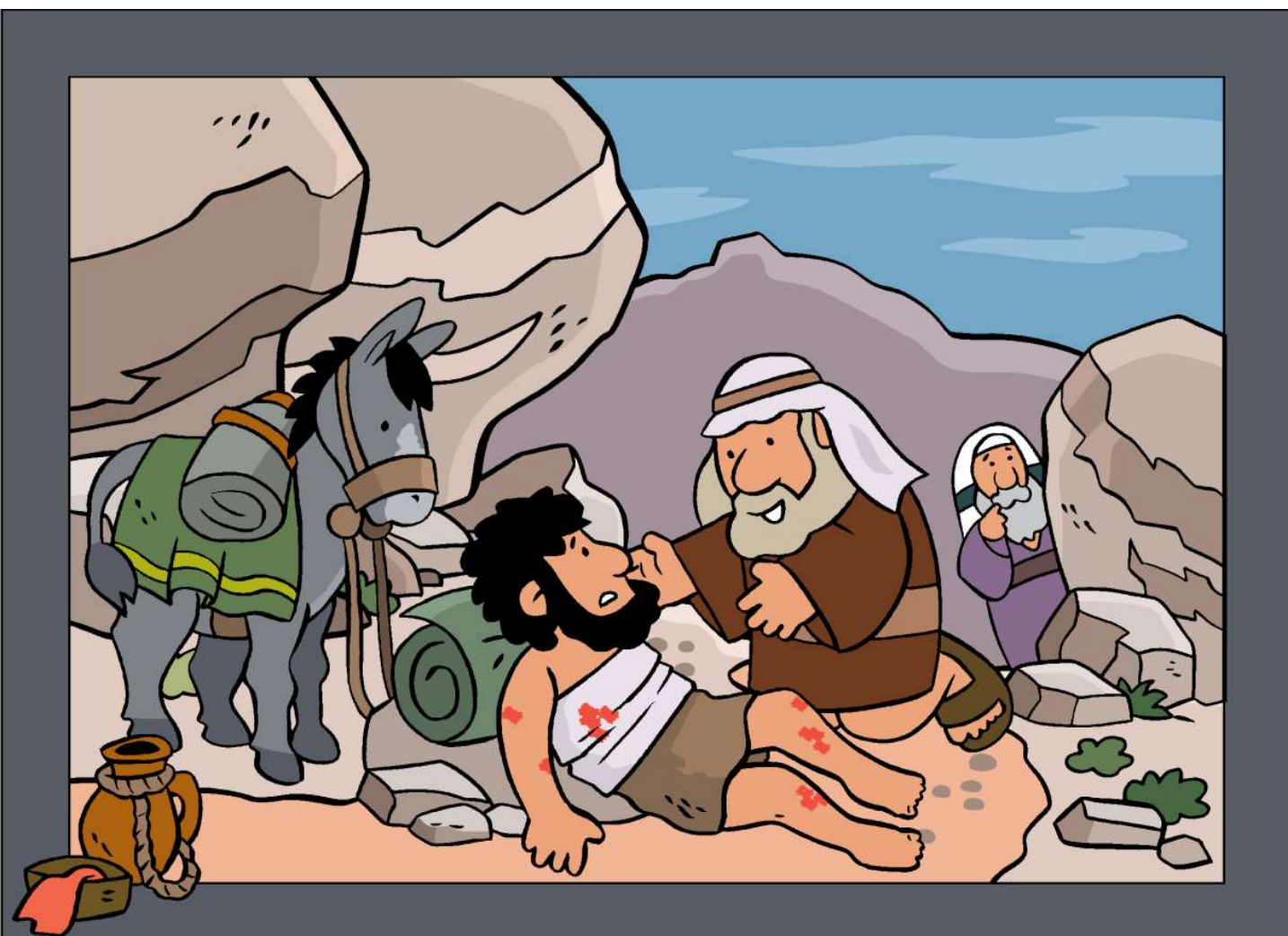


“Then a Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, ‘Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.’”

“Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked.

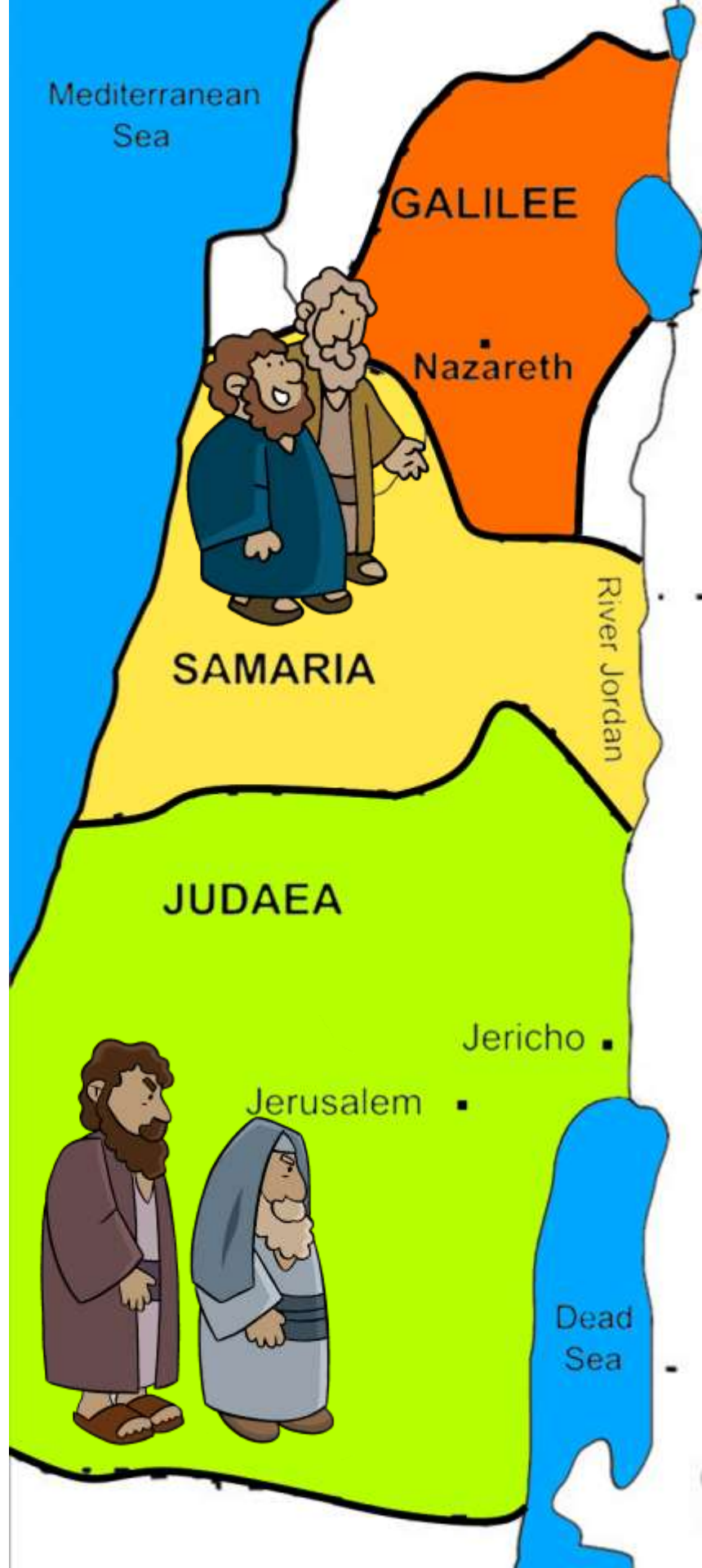
The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.”

Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”



The Samaritans were a people whom the Jews hated and despised. If they even touched a Samaritan they'd have to wash afterwards! They would avoid traveling through Samaria. Rather than taking the shortest route to Galilee that went through Samaria, they would go clear across the Jordan River and around it just to keep from going near the Samaritans!

Jesus was as good as telling the Jews, "Listen, you know who your neighbors are. Those Samaritans up there in Samaria, the ones you hate and you won't even touch and you won't even go near and have nothing to do with, they're your neighbors. You'd better get busy and love them!"



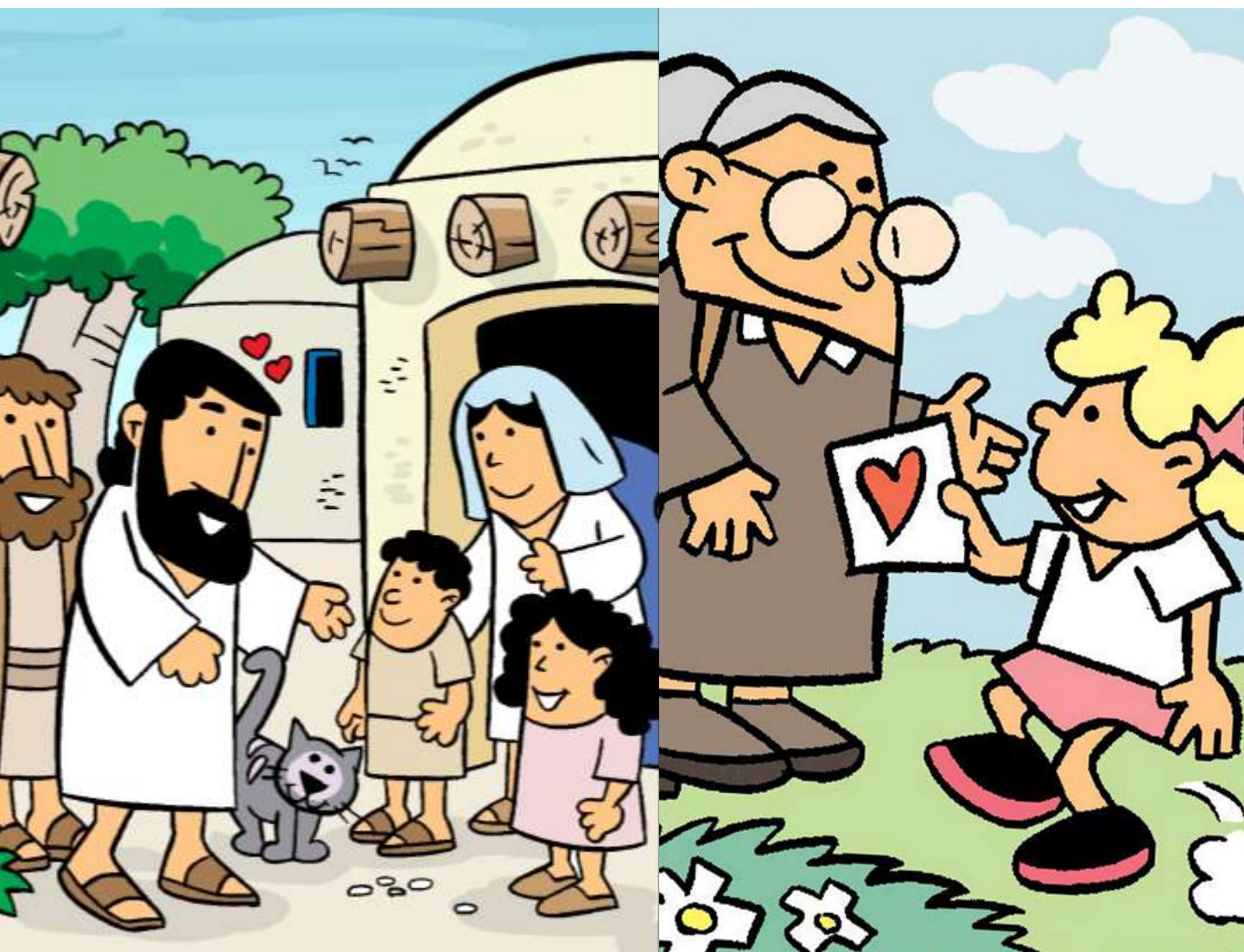
Your neighbor is anybody that needs your love. He may not live next door, but if he lives on this earth he's your neighbor.

*** Followers of the Man of Love should be loving!**

Jesus was the Man of Love who went about everywhere doing good, loving and caring for those He met. How can we prove that we are His followers?—By following in His steps and being loving.

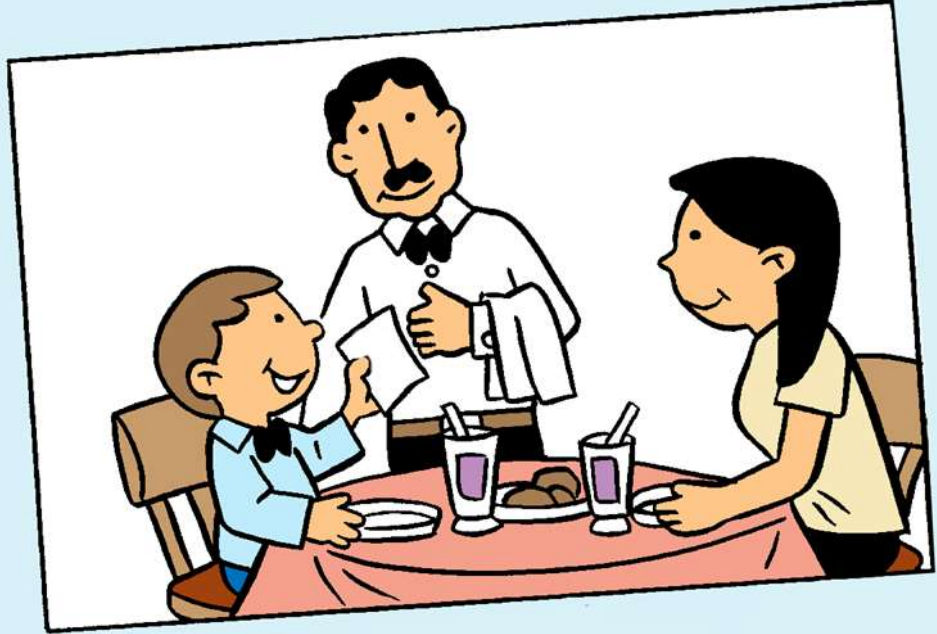
John 13:35—By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Ephesians 4:32—And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.



Giving love to others isn't always a matter of going out of your way to do some outstanding action like feeding the homeless, but it also means being a sharing person with those around you.

If you see someone who needs help, pitch in to help for a few minutes. Smile and thank the waitress in the restaurant, That's love.



Class Section 2: Strength to Love

Jesus says,

John 15:5—Without Me you can do nothing.

We also know that:

Philippians 4:13—I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

The Lord understands that we don't naturally have enough love to live in the loving manner that He's asking us to. But He's promised that He can give us the love we need,

Matthew 7:7—Ask, and it will be given to you.





Love at Work

From Jesus with Love

There is a special happiness and contentment that comes from putting others and their needs above your own. When you're doing something kind for someone, it doesn't just benefit them, it also benefits you. You are letting My Spirit of love into the world around you, into the lives of others, and into your own life.



Where love is at work, there I am at work. It's human nature to look out for yourself first, to be selfish, even demanding, and to expect to be treated well by others before you treat them well. But it is My way to give. Doing something kind and generous for someone else often takes effort, and yet each time you do it, you realize that it's the best way to live.



Look for ways to make someone else's day or week a little brighter, a little more enjoyable, a little more fun. As you do, you're making your own day or week the same. Look for Me in others, and let them see Me in you too.