

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1

Psalm 16, Romans 13:8–14

Jesus told a story about a man beaten up on his way to Jericho. He was neglected by two men before he was picked up by a Samaritan who bandaged his wounds and took him to an inn. The Samaritan paid the innkeeper what was due and promised to come back and reimburse the innkeeper whatever extra expenses the man might incur.

This is a man whose debts had been paid. He owed the innkeeper nothing. His stay was pre-paid with a promise that future expenses would be covered too. The message to that rescued man might be the same as Romans 13:8, “Owe no one anything, except to love each other...”

I wonder if the man who was rescued by the Good Samaritan ever forgot about his rescuer. I wonder if he ever robbed a boy like Jean Val Jean did in *Les Misérables*, after he too had been redeemed, or did he live a life of love, free from the debts that can hound us?

As I read the passage, I want to remember that we were once in the ditch. We were once that man, beaten up and left for dead, only to be pulled out by someone who doesn't look like us, an outsider, a Samaritan, someone we would have rejected.

That ditch could be any of these things listed in the Romans passage—from financial debt to covetousness, but do not forget you were once in the ditch! Remember the great love of the man who pulled you out, who paid off your great debts and who raised you from the dead by his great love. Nothing else is owed. Like the man in the ditch, we wait for him to come again.

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