


Missional view of the Good Samaritan parable in handling neighbourliness in Christ's view

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Diverse perspectives, be it, theoretical or theological, of the parable of the Good Samaritan, have shaped the mainstream thinking and practices of the global community (that is, global and local churches and communities). Many relief and developmental programmes were shaped, influenced and motivated by Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan. The double-sided question about attaining God's Kingdom and who my neighbour is remains the relational challenge of loving God and loving others, respectively – the whole mark of law and life. Loving God and loving others is a missional call, which should be expressed in handling the issue of neighbourliness. To do so, the question is: what the motive of Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritans is? This article is set to discuss the selfless love versus the self-righteous love uncovered in the parable of the Good Samaritans using the three main schools of thought, which represent the three Rules that govern human relationships namely, the Iron Rule, the Silver Rule and the Golden Rule.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: The article is adding a voice to the ongoing debate about the main message, motive and missional call behind the parable of the Good Samaritans. The selfless love as opposed to self-centred and selfish love is not only in demand in the socio-economic and political policies and practices but also should find its concrete expression in handling the issue of neighbourliness among those who are marginalised and underprivileged in South Africa and beyond.

Keywords: selfless love; self-righteous love; neighbourliness; a good Samaritan; parable; missional call.

Introduction

The parable of a good Samaritan was part of Jesus Christ's answer (namely, what selfless love entails) to the Jewish expert of law's question (namely, who is my neighbour?). It all started with a question: 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' (Lk 10:25). In answering a question with a question, Jesus Christ directed the Jewish expert of law to the common source of authority, which is the Scriptures as the Jewish expert of Law rightly quoted (Dt 6:5; Lv 19:18). The problem arose when the Jewish Lawyer misinterpreted it and limited its parameter and excluded others (namely, the Samaritans, Romans and other foreigners, etc.). Jesus then gives the parable of the Good Samaritan to correct the false understanding within the uniquely Lukan parables (Luke 10:25 – 18:14) as illustrated by the Chiasmus structure in Box 1. From the Chiasmus structure, Jesus Christ is teaching the scribe to refrain from the pride-driven self-righteousness attitude and to tend towards the humbleness-driven selflessness attitude in relation to who his neighbour is and what his duty is to his neighbour. The Jewish expert of law realised that the human selfishness and self-righteous hearts make it impossible to practise the selfless love and his conclusion, namely, to justify himself, was put in a form of a question, 'who is my neighbour':

A parable of a good Samaritan is a missional call to all sinners that the lack of ability to save oneself from sin and its effects needs the Saviour, who shows such a selfless love and compassion for others, so that in response we can be empowered by his word and Spirit to practise a neighbourly selfless love to anyone we encounter despite our sinful prejudice. This article is trying to put the above-mentioned interpretation across. The proceeding discussion in this article will clarify the Chiasmus structure and Table 1, 2 and 3 while in turn clarifying the discussion also. In this regard, before the concluding remarks, this article is set to discuss the nature, role and effects of the three main schools of thought that represent the three Rules that govern human relationships, namely, the Iron Rule, the Silver Rule and the Golden Rule.

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BOX 1: The Chiasmus structure.**The uniquely Lukan Parables indicated from Luke 10:25–18:14.****A:** The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25–37) and the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5–8): **Introduction:** promote selfless/sacrificial love**B:** The good Father, beginning with ‘Who of you...?’ (Lk 11:11–13)**C:** The rich fool (Lk 12:13–21) [no anxiety (Lk 12:22–34)] the stewardship demands (12:35–48) (share wealth-with poor)**D:** Three warnings to repent (13:1–9) & the mustard seed and yeast (13:18–22)**E:** The lower place at the banquet (14:7–10)**F:** **The Proud will be humbled (loose)-(Lk 14:11a): (The parables’ centre: prohibit self-righteousness)****F¹:** **The humble will be exalted (gain) (Lk 14:11b): (The parables’ centre: promote selfless/sacrificial love)****E¹:** The banquet invitations (Lk 14:15–24)**D¹:** The cost of discipleship (Lk 14:25–33) and three parables of the lost coming to repentance (Lk 15:1–32)**C¹:** The dishonest steward (Lk 16:1–13) [Jesu vs Pharisees-(16:14–15)-Rich man/Lazarus (16:19–31) (share wealth-with poor)]**B¹:** The unworthy slaves, beginning with ‘Who of you...?’ (Lk 17:7–10)**A¹:** The unrighteous Judge (Lk 18:1–8) & The Pharisee and the tax collector (Lk 18:9–14): **Conclusion:** promote selfless love)

Note: ABCDEF parallel to (complement) F1E1D1C1B1A1.

TABLE 1: The three forms of Rule or power.

Variable	Iron Rule	Silver Rule	Golden Rule
Role player(s)	Robbers	Jewish Priest and Levite	The Samaritan
Illustrations	Physical power	Apathetic attitude	Compassion
Echoed Motto	Might make right	None of my business	Moved to help
Displayed love	Self-interest love	Self-righteous love;	Selfless love
Main purpose	Self-gain or profit	Do not get involved;	2b on other shoes
Inter-relations	Get from others	Do not wrong others	Do right to others

TABLE 2: The three main goals of God-given holidays.

No.	Theme	Capitalist-led view	Communist-led view
1	Called	Out of the world-there and then	In the world-here/now-only
2	Goal	Individual Initiate-to make Profit	Peo.Initiate-2shareProfit
3	Solution	Capitalist and market-led solution	State/Socialist-led solution
4	Worldview	God on the right-pro-stat	God on the left (pro-poor)
5	Analogy	Heavenly-spiritual reality	Earthly-temporal economic reality
6	Interpretation	God-postponed poverty	God on side-f P-only reality
7	On land	Individual rights/totalitarian	State owned-absolute power
8	Monopoly	Private (to be compensated)	Nationalised- (no payment)
9	Policies	Trickle-down from 1 to +	Equal distribution

TABLE 3: World religious, cultural and/or philosophical maxims or sayings.

Nations	Maxims or sayings	Original sources or references
Judaism	‘What you do not wish done to you, you do not do to others.’	Rabbi Hillel’s version of Leviticus 19:18
Greeks	‘By never doing ourselves what we blame in others.’	Thale’s saying between 624 BC and 546 BC
India	‘Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.’	Buddhism in India 563–483 BC
China	‘Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you.’	Confucianism-Confucius 551–479 BC
Greeks	‘Do not do unto others what angers you if done to you by others.’	Isocrates, between, 436 BC and 338 BC

The three forms of Rule or power

Table 1 illustrates the three forms of Rule, whereby, in each case, the role player(s), the illustrations, the echoed motto and some implications are indicated. These aspects will be further discussed in the rest of the article to reach the set objectives.

The Iron Rule**Physical and mental power (force) are echoed**

In Table 2, the first role players to mention in the parable of the Good Samaritan are the robbers who tore off the victim’s clothes, beat him and left him half-dead by the roadside. Robbers display the physical and mental power to rule

over, dominate and subjugate. It can be explained by the Iron Rule concept. The Iron Rule mentality is a rigid mentality that echoed the motto, which says ‘the might makes right’. They also displayed the self-interest love with the conquest spirit for the self-gain and self-profit as the main purpose and hence without the concern for others. According to Abbott (1876:176), this is a form of Rule is characterised as an Iron Rule, which echoes the law of the jungle articulated by Charles Darwin, whereby the people who are poor and inferior mentally and physically are called weak competitors and hence are to be avoided or eliminated for the survival of the fittest. Darwin’s law was, and is still, to justify not only an elimination of the physically and mentally weak competitors, but also the immoral acts in the modern or popular culture (Brueggemann 1995:109; Wattles 1996:5ff, 81ff).

**Self-righteous (interest) presupposition is echoed
Self-righteous (interest) that misuses God’s unchangeable and unquestioned will**

The Iron Rule mentality is a rigid mentality. In this case, one’s interest and presuppositions misuse God’s unchangeable and unquestioned will. It is claimed that God’s will pre-determined everybody’s past, present and future life including one’s socio-financial class and status despite one’s being (at present) and the becoming (in future) (Erasmus 2016). This belief belittled one’s potential talents, initiatives and one’s future’s becoming. The origin of this belief can be traced back in the Stoics philosophy, which teaches that people are to submit themselves to a destiny, which is decreed by impersonal, unknowing, uncaring and unloving nature and/or god of fate. The Stoic’s apathy ethics urge people, especially the vulnerable and the marginalised people to seek no improvement of their position and condition of suffering and poverty, but to view and treat themselves as virtuous people who should not only eliminate passion and emotions as ‘evil’ in their own life but also resigned the pursue of money, riches, honour, reward and recognition, on the one hand, and hence spiritualise (downplay and postpone) their present reality as the afterlife promises, which is a goal of and for life and the only eternal (moral) status worthy to be earned. From such a will. In Colossians 2:16–23, Paul addressed such Stoic saying, ‘pain is good, and pleasure is evil’ and/or Platonic dualism call of *freeing the soul from the evil body*

(Hodges 2010:4). These ideas distort the biblical view of God's creation (both in nature and humanity) in general and the positions and conditions of the poor and the needy in this world.

The either/or dichotomy contestation

Table 1 illustrates the either/or dichotomy contestation between the two extreme views, namely the left-sided communist who advocate for an agrarianism-led views to benefit the poor and the right-sided capitalist who advocate for the market-led view to benefit the rich (Erasmus 2016). These two views did not only fail to address the perpetual socio-economic injustice, which is internally, inherently and deeply entrenched (rooted) in the society but also fail to reach the middle-ground consensus to help in the services delivery in and outside the church. In this regard, the marginalised and the disadvantaged in the Least-Developed Countries (LDCs) left in a position and condition of frustration, desperation, hopelessness, starvation and death (Davis 2003:33).

The socialists (on the left)

One of the strong socialist-led arguments is that the market should not control the resources like money, land, labour, etc., on behalf of the poor majority, but the state is best positioned for the social reforms of the stolen and robbed the poor's most valuable dignity in the form of their resources (Degenaar 1982:12, 26–27, 30). This argument does not only claim that the capitalist's centralised and controlled economy is an inherent cause or origin of evils but also propagates the state-centred and controlled market economy as a solution to the moral and social question of the majority who are in need for labour, decent wages, working hours, healthy conditions and security in workplaces, etc. (Degenaar 1982:27; Ver Eecke 1996:7–11). According to this socialist-led arguments, the rich cannot survive without the poor and their resources in general and their labour. The poor are the ones who do the real work and hence keep society going (Erasmus 2016).

The capitalist (on the right)

One of the strong capitalist-led arguments is that the poor people choose their fate (destiny), due to lack of vision and hence should be blamed for making the irrational choices when they are given the opportunities and resources (Erasmus 2016). In that regard, moved by profit-seeking market, the capitalist's successes (achievements), from the capitalist's point of view, is the results of making right choices, taking their risks and chances and hence working hard (and smart) in managing labour and resources to achieve their financial freedom, to build their history or legacy in this world here and now (Ver Eecke 1996:5f).

Equitable justice is to avoid both socialist and capitalist extremes

[T]he best plan for preserving' their liberty forever was to maintain a condition of mediocrity, lest a few persons of immense

wealth should oppress the general body. Since, therefore, the rich, if they had been permitted constantly to increase in wealth, would have tyrannized over the rest, God put by this law restraint on immoderate power. (Calvin 1982:158)

Based on Deuteronomy 15:7–8, Calvin (1982:158) argued that those who are privileged with power and resources are to be open-hearted and open-handed to 'release' and/or forgive those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised. To Calvin, this should be done to maintain the moderate (middle)¹ ground, and hence to avoid the two extremes, namely, on one hand, an immoderate power of few rich elites to have freedom to increase their wealth greedily that they use it to oppress and tyrannise over majority of people who are mostly the poor and, on the other hand, an extreme poverty of the majority of people some of whom die due to lack of basic needs like food, drink, shelter, etc. (Is 58:3f; Sider 2005:178).

Equitable justice promotes cohesion of socialist and capitalist ideals

'The poor and the rich will sit down at this feast and will eat and be satisfied.' (Is 25:6; Ps 22:26.)

According to Calvin, Isaiah (25:6) and David (Psalm 22:26) used the same metaphor to describes Christ's kingdom, saying, that 'the poor and the rich will sit down at this feast, and will eat and be satisfied'. Through the GR, equitable justice is applied to promote cohesion of socialist and capitalist ideals. Based on Deuteronomy 15:7–8, Calvin (1982:158) remind us that when the socio-economic injustice and the inequality gap between the rich and the poor are left unchecked, it will not help the current situation (for instance, the Western-International Monetary Fund (IMF)-led neo-liberal practices on the LDC loan), but it will only perpetuate economic oligarchs of the élites to increase their economic interests, businesses and land on the expense of the poor majority (Terreblanche 2012:67). Therefore, in this regard, Calvin's view is still relevant in a modern context where it is apparent that there is a dominant 'winner-takes-all' global economic theory² of the neo-liberalism-led capitalist on the right (Fukuyama 1989:3, 8), which dominates the socialist leftist ideologies as an out-dated and irrelevant ideology (Klein 2007:183, 216).

The Silver Rule

The Silver Rule echoes the indifferent and/or apathy attitude to others

The role players are the temple servants who crossed to the opposite side of the road, namely, firstly, the Jewish Priest came by and, secondly, later, came the Levite, who served God

1. The late 16th-century French word *médiocre*, from Latin *mediocris* derived from words, *medius* 'middle' + *ocris* 'rugged mountain' with literal meaning 'of middle height or degree' or of moderate or low quality, value, ability, or (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2023).

2. A **winner-takes-all market** is one where the top players capture a disproportionately large share of the rewards, while the rest of the performers are left with extremely little. In a winner-takes-all market, individuals are paid not according to their absolute performance, but rather according to their performance relative to their competitors. A winner-takes-all market may refer to people, products, or services (Market Business News 2023).

in the temple. The illustration here is that they both passed by, with an indifferent or an apathetic attitude (spirit) with a motto that says, 'It's not my problem', 'It's none of my business' or 'I mind about my own business'. The problem of indifference can be traced in Cain's response to God when he was asked to respond or account on his view and treatment of his brother Abel (Gn 4:9f.) and on the rich man's view and treatment of his fellow human who are created in his image, Lazarus (Lk 16:19ff.). It can be explained by the 'Silver Rule' concept.

The Silver Rule echoes invalid apathetic presuppositions

The major world religions in the Ancient Near East include Judaism

The common feature of the most, if not all world religions, cultures and/or philosophy is the Silver Rule kind of relationship because they are the pale reciprocity-like maxim (and/or principles) of the Golden Rule (to be discussed later). Some of the earliest recorded sayings of the World Religions, cultures and/or philosophy traced from about 700 A.D. onwards include the following:

These religious and philosophical pragmatic maxims,³ have a motto, saying, 'I give so that I can be given in return'. This kind of view (attitude) and treatment (behaviour) towards others led many not only to apathy or turning a blind eye on the socio-economic realities in general but also to show an easy way out on the reality of poverty if not the detachment to it. Depending on positive or negative returned action, that is, what they expect others to do or not to do, unto them, people perform positive or negative action. With this maxim, people treat others based on an expectation to receive the same treatment (Van Reken 1992:22). Positive actions, like charity and welfare, are done based on a return treatment (Bruce 1956:132) and/or with some expectation, that is, to be loved, rewarded, praised and/or glorified in return (Jacobus & Gillett 2007:409; Popper 1966:386). In that way, they get their self-righteous satisfaction and fulfilment (King 2008:114).

Unlike the window, the mirror has a silver cover for self-reflection version

Paulo Coelho de Souza, who was born in 1947, is the Brazilian lyricist and novelist who was the recipient of numerous international awards. He was one of the best-selling and most influential authors in the world. He sold more than 65 million copies in 59 languages. In *Alchemist*, one of his best-selling novels, which has been translated into 80 languages, he wrote about a very rich young man who went to see a Rabbi, to ask for his advice about what he should do with his life. The Rabbi led him over to the window and asked him: 'What can you see through the glass?' 'I can see men coming and going and a blind man begging for alms in the street'. Then the Rabbi showed him a large mirror and said to him: 'Look in this mirror and tell

me what you see'. 'I can see myself', says the young rich man. After Rabbi indicated the fact that the window and the mirror are made of the same material, glass, but differ in the fact that the mirror has an additional cover of silver, he urges the young rich man to make an analogy. And hence compare himself to these two kinds of glass, saying:

You will only be worth anything when you have the courage to tear away the coating of silver covering your eyes in order to be able to see again and love your fellow man. (Mt 7:1-4)

In this regard, Galatians 6:7-8 is often misquoted and/or misread that good is done for return expectation (not for own sake).

The Silver Rule echoes false motives of development projects and aids

The Silver Rule can be seen as echoes of the false motives of development projects and aids. The concept development is a loaded concept, but Miller in Sider (1981) defined it in simple terms, saying:

Development is a process by which people gain greater control over themselves, their environment and their future, in order to realize their full potential of life that God has made possible. (p. 19)

Yet the concept development is loaded with diverse meanings. Among various meanings, this article discusses the Western enlightenment and liberal meaning of development with imperialism and capitalism as some of its driving forces and motives. The aim of this discussion is to clarify the Silver Rule or power of the development plans, programmes, projects and aids, which echoes false motives behind them.

The context of the false motive of the Western development projects and aids

After the Second World War in the 1950s and 1960s, the socio-political and economic war, called the Cold War (Ajulu 2001:149; Deist 1984:53) not only produced the two superpower nations and their allies, namely, the capitalist and Christendom nations with democratic rules, principles and practices, led by the United States (US) and the communist and atheist nations with dictatorship rules, principles and practices led by the Soviet Union (USSR) (Ajulu 2001:149; Coetzee & Graaff 1996:139f.). Without going deeper and wider, this article will limit itself to the motive of the Western form of development projects and aids. The United States (US) with their well-articulated Marshall Aid (Plan) among others made developmental intervention by offering foreign aids, which includes industrialisation, modern agriculture techniques, education, etc., to their poor colonised' countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America that are labelled as traditional, backward, under or less-developed, emergent and developing countries with the motives among others, to benefit themselves and counter and contain the communist principles and practices. With such a mixed bag (package), the Christian missionaries, the charitable (development) agencies, the donor countries, and governments, arrogantly impose their development models as a tailor-made solution

3. According to Peirce (1878), 'Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object' (p. 293).

by introducing their systems, technologies and ideologies, disregarding the natives and/or indigenous' socio-political-historical and spiritual situation, solutions, systems, technologies and ideologies, which are distinct from that of the West.

The self-reflection to eliminate false motives to the Western development projects and aids

'The poor are passive recipients, incomplete human beings whom we make whole.' (Myers 1999:579)

The arrogant, paternalistic and/or condescending attitude with their naïve optimism to their Western technology, knowledge, systems, institutions and cultures is influenced not only by the advantaged (or privileged) oriented assumption that undermines the poor as people who lacked essential knowledge, skills, and resources and hence they are deprived their dignity in that they are neither be involved nor participate meaningfully in combating their poverty but also by the disadvantaged (or under-privileged) oriented assumption that the advantaged have solutions to every problems of the disadvantaged, that they can decide for (not with) them as they are nothing other than the mere beneficiaries, and hence it undermines and dehumanise them that they are not the shapers of their own destiny out of their plight. The imported solutions that were and are still imposed to the poor in an African, Asian and the Latin American context to some extent retard their growth and their self-determination and resourcefulness (Myers 1999:579). The same point was concluded by Ellingsen (1993:28) saying, '[t]he result is that underdeveloped nations may compromise their unique social fabric and receive in its stead the maladies of pollution, consumerism, alcohol abuse, and the like'.

Eliminating unequal treatment by Western authorities

This section is a reflection on the failure of Western oriented development agencies to eliminate inequality in the distribution of wealth. According to Goldewijk and Fortman (1999):

'[E]conomic growth does not help the poor much in countries where distribution of wealth is highly unequal ... In societies of high inequality, growth allows the poor to keep their heads above the water. When it falls, they sink.' (p. 19)

The social activists pointed out to the Western missionaries, technocrats, bureaucrats and experts from the Western-oriented development agencies that they failed and are still failing to eliminate poverty and other related (underlying) problems due to the fact that the equitable justice was not used in the past (and even in the present) to address inequality (disparity) relationships of the rich (Northern and Western) and the poor (South and East) (Ajulu 2001:151; De Beer 1998:132; Elliott 1987:89). In this regard, Bosch (1980), said:

During the Church and Society Conference – Geneva, 1966, in particular a definite alternative to the theology of development was advocated. The solution was to be found in revolution, not in evolution. The relationship between the West and the Third World was not one of development versus under-development, but one of dominance versus dependence, or, more specifically, oppressors versus oppressed. (p. 213)

It is fallacy to think that by implementing the Western development technology, knowledge and models all the problems of the poor are addressed while ignoring the fact that the poor countries have survived many years without such Western development interventions, which were and are still aimed at economic self-enrichment and advancement on the expense of the poor communities, whose human identity is uprooted and lost in such development process. In this regard, Gittins (1993) said:

The Gospel must challenge culture, but it must not crush it; to crush culture is to maim its people... This means that a task of mission is an encounter: a respectful engagement and dialogue with people wherever they are. And if people are not where we are, we must go with the spirit of Jesus and seek them, not to make them like we are, but to offer them a glimpse of Jesus and to invite them to follow him. (p. xiv)

It is a fallacy to assume that poverty-stricken African countries could achieve the same development that the Western countries accomplished, while these countries did not and could not go through the same historical processes of development (Ellingsen 1993:28f). According to Ajulu (2001:150), '[o]ptimism was still expressed in the possibility of finding shortcuts in the long historical process of development experienced by developed economies, and achieving desired results, especially improved results quickly'. The development of the Western countries was achieved in most cases through a terrible history and legacy of slavery, colonialism, imperialism and/or looting of the African continent's resources. In pointing out the shortcomings of such development, Bragg (1989), said:

Underlying this approach to development is an assumption that progress is basically materialistic. This assumption is one-dimensional and ignores the whole non-economic side of life; the human and cultural values in some cases that are much more advanced than those in the industrial north... It ignores traditional economic systems that have worked for millennia, and which might be better than participating in the world of monetary systems. (p. 64f)

Golden Rule: An answer to 'who my neighbour is'

The parable of the good Samaritan echoes the Golden Rule

The role player is the Samaritan, who was regarded as the Jew's enemy. He came by and saw a fellow human in need and hence was deeply moved to help him (Lk 10:27; Jn 4:9). By this parable, Christ defines what love is and illustrates who my neighbour is. It can be clarified by the term, 'Golden Rule'.

Origin of the Golden Rule

In the words of Barclay (1958):

It is a new teaching, and a new view of life and of life's obligations. (p. 277ff.)

The parable of the Good Samaritan points to and reflect the Golden Rule of love as a human commission of just and right

treatment of others (Jeremias 1972:205). Though the actual phrase, 'Golden Rule' does not originate from the Bible or Jesus self, it resonates with the life of Jesus (Mt 7:12b). The phrase 'Golden Rule' can be traced back as early as 1604 when it was uttered by Charles Gibbon that its use is detected (Flew 1979:134; Gensler 2013:84) since then, it was widely used between 1620 and 1670 in England and beyond (Metzger 1958:304; Wattles 1996:213ff.).

Definition of the Golden Rule

The Golden Rule is a single (unilateral), simple and easy-to-grasp moral and directive maxim, axiom and/or principle. Such rules or axioms are positive, proactive, provocative, revolutionary and radical maxims (Carson 1984:187). The phrase to just and right kind of actions which are not based on expect merit or return favours, but on the right view and treatment of one's fellow human beings, including one's enemy, as who would want to be treated as one does (Mt 5:17; 43f; 22:37–40; Ex 23:4f; King 2008:112). In this regard, a quick survey about the GR sayings, is that it influenced the writing and the teachings of almost all religious sayings, cultural sayings and philosophical ideas around the world. In this regard, it agrees with an English proverb idiom says, 'a friend in need is a friend indeed'.

The parable of the Good Samaritan: a reflection of the Golden Rule of love

The Golden Rule: A call to Christians to fulfill Christ's new law of love

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus urged them to do 'likewise.' He points them to the acts or marks of discipleship, namely (Exodus 23):

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength' (Deuteronomy 6:5). Love your neighbour as yourself (Leviticus 19:18b). 'Don't oppress a foreigner, for you well know how it feels to be a foreigner since you were foreigners yourselves in the land of Egypt. (v. 9)

The Tanakh⁴ and the New Testament teaching have the common (sole) intention, namely, the two sides of love, which is called Jesus's law of love. Both Old and New Testament teachings not only hang on (or depend) on but also point to two sides of love, that is, to love God and to love others (Lv 19:18,34; 25:44ff.; Dt 6:5; 10:19; Lewis 1952:17ff.). The Golden Rule maxim translates, sums up and fulfils that intended meaning of the two sides of love (Muswubi 2023:4f; 2024:5f). The Golden Rule is a pro-active, practical maxim and wisdom for moral living applied by Christ through his Spirit (Mt 5:17; 22:37–40). It should be noted that Matthew used GR as part of wisdom for moral living as it is used in the Wisdom Literature (Pr 1:7; 31:30; Wattles 1996:42ff.). In this regard, Matthew used the term, 'wisdom' more than other gospels combined (Mt 7:12a, 24; 11:25ff.; Deutsch 1996:57ff.).

4.Tanakh (תנ"ך) teaching is an acronym from the first Hebrew letter of the three traditional sub-divisions of the 24 canonical Jewish texts or the Old Testament, namely, firstly, the *Torah*, (the five books of Moses-which include the Decalogue or the 10 moral laws and the Sabbath day, the Sabbatical year and Jubilee laws; secondly, the *Nevi'im*, the Prophets and lastly the *Ketuvim*, the Writings.

The Golden Rule: A call to people, as God's image bearers, to help others

An empathy as a root of kindness and compassion is to put or imagine yourself in the recipient's shoes (including slaves and enemies), situation or position and their basic desire namely to be loved (understood, appreciated and treated kindly with love and respect), and hence; do so as a gift to them (Muswubi 2023:3f; 2024:4f). The giver in giving, is more blessed than when receiving (Ac 20:35).

Seek a better life for others as immediate and individual goal:

Practicing the Golden Rule opens the opportunity to take care of all people, including our families, relatives, neighbours in and outside the church (in society), without expecting any return. In this regard, Jesus Christ urges his disciples 'to do likewise' that is, to do just and right actions including loving all the people including the so-called enemy, the vulnerable (victims of abuse), marginalised (slaves and strangers) and disadvantaged (the poor and needy), etc. (Mt 5:38–48). To cancel debtors' loan and its interest is the last line of freedom and dignity, and such an act of undeserving mercy is given to the poor who always beg and could not return to reflect God's gospel of mercy in Christ through his Spirit (Mt 5:38–48; Lk 3:10–14). Their profession of faith (creed) is not only rooted in one's relationship with God in Christ by his Spirit (Phlp 2:3ff.) but also seen in its external manifestation or fruit of obeying and imitating him and his love in all aspects of life (Lk 6:31, 32–35; 7:12, 15–23).

The mediate and institutional goals – to restore social structural justice:

To be created in God's image gives all people, including enemies, is a basic human right, which is not only serve as a base to seek peace and a better life for other (Pr 31:7; Jn 17:23) including to do what is just and right, namely to respect, promote and protect each other and each other's moral and jural dignity and right (need and freedom), which include the right to live, to property and to worship (Ro 2:15), but also for the *modus operandi* (plan of action) for religious, educational and political institutions to share an awareness of justice and spread it to all people. In that regard, to be created in God's image is also affirmed and expressed in the essence and philosophy of the secular, liberal and humanistic institutions. These institutions not only promote (share) and protect the basic and common human (and natural) rights as the universal virtue (Muswubi 2023:3f; 2024:4f) but also to get involved (and co-operation as partners) in handling the spiritual and socio-economic injustice (instability and inequality) including fighting against all forms of abuse, violence (against women and children) and elevating the condition of poverty, human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS).

The ultimate and eternal goal – Gods glory: This is evident in Psalm 22:26, stating, 'the poor and the rich will sit down at this feast and will eat and be satisfied' (Calvin 1840–57).

Regarding this feast, Murphy (2020:112), concluded that, 'Both Israel and the nations are at the feast and benefit from

Yahweh's hospitality and generosity. Not only does he provide them with the best food and drink, Yahweh also swallows up the swallower, death, and comforts the nations and takes away the reproach of Israel. This image was no doubt comforting to Isaiah's original audience and still is a source of comfort for God's people today. Christians can find comfort and hope in the midst of the chaos as they wait on Yahweh's salvation in these last days.'

There will be a sphere of Rule, where the rich and poor will be. Jesus tells us to invite at his banquets table those at society's margins, the outcasts, the least, the needy, the lame, the blind, the poor, the powerless, the crippled, the oppressed, the prostitute, the slaves, etc. to whom one expects no returns (Lk 7:36–50; 14:7–14; Jn 13:34f; Ja 4:10; Ringe 1985:69). It points to God's grace and Rule, which is 'already' revealed in Christ's first coming and yet to be revealed in his second coming. Individual Christians and the corporate church are his agents to extend this gospel to all nations – under his watch and presence. When all is done, people who are caught up into Christ's sphere state or zone of reign from all cultural, class, tribal and national groups will gather and sit together before him at his communal meal to partake in his generous provision (Ex 23:4f; Rm 8:16, 26f. 34; Calvin 1982). Common goal of human existence and service in all spheres of life is to glorify God (Luther 1929:1:47; 65ff.). Calvin, by Isaiah (25:6) and David in Psalm (22:26), used the same metaphor to describe Christ's kingdom, saying, that 'the poor and the rich will sit down at this feast, and will eat and be satisfied'. Through the GR, equitable justice is applied to promote the cohesion of socialist and capitalist ideals. Based on Deuteronomy 15:7–8, Calvin (1982:158) reminds us that when the socio-economic injustice and the inequality gap between the rich and the poor are left unchecked, it will not help the current situation (for instance, the Western-led International Monetary Fund [IMF] and neo-liberal practices on least developed countries [LDC]), but it will only perpetuate economic oligarchs of the élites to increase their economic interests, businesses and land on the expense of the poor majority (Terreblanche 2012:67). Therefore, in this regard, Calvin's view is still relevant in a modern context where it is apparent that there is a dominant 'winner-takes-all' global economic theory of the neo-liberalism-led capitalist on the right (Fukuyama 1989:3, 8), which dominates the socialist leftist ideologies as an out-dated and irrelevant ideology (Klein 2007:183, 216).

Concluding remarks

Many relief and developmental programs are still shaped, influenced and/or motivated by Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan. The double-sided question about attaining God's Kingdom and who my neighbour is remains the relational challenge of loving God and loving others, respectively – the whole mark of law and of life. Loving God and loving others is a missional call. This article discussed the selfless love versus the self-righteous love uncovered in the parable of the Good Samaritans using the three main schools of thought, which represent the three Rules that govern of human

relationships, namely, the Iron Rule, the Silver Rule and the Golden Rule. This article, therefore, is adding a voice to the ongoing debate about the main message, motive and missional call behind the parable of the Good Samaritans. The selfless love as opposed to self-centred and selfish love is not only in demand in the socio-economic and political policies and practices but also should find its concrete expression in handling the issue of neighbourliness among those who are marginalised and underprivileged in South Africa and beyond.

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