

THE COMPASSIONATE CHRIST

Key Verse: Matthew 9:36-38

Key Thought: Compassion is to be Like Christ

Compassion! When that word is used, most people don't have any idea at all what it means. Some people think of weakness when they think of compassionate people. Men especially are guilty of viewing compassion as something "***weak, soft people do***". In truth, expressing compassion towards others reveals a strength of character that few people possess!

You see, we live in a compassion-less world. Most people place themselves and their family above any other consideration in the world. The sad reality is that most people simply do not care what happens to others! They do not possess compassion. In fact, I would venture to say that most people don't even know what it means to have compassion!

The word compassion, as it is used in the Bible means, "***To be moved inwardly; to yearn with tender mercy, affection, pity and empathy.***" It refers to the deepest possible feelings. The phrase, "***moved with compassion***" means to be moved in the "***inner organs***". It has the same idea as our modern expression, "***From the bottom of my heart.***" Someone has defined compassion as "***Sympathy coupled with a desire to help.***" Sympathy means "***The capacity to share feelings, to enter into the same feelings, to feel the same thing***". So, compassion is "***sharing the feelings of others and possessing a desire to help them in their trouble.***"

When we read the Gospels, they tell us of Jesus and His great compassion for mankind. We see that our Savior was moved deeply in His inner being by the needs of those around Him. In this message, I would like to address this matter of compassion. I don't know about you, but I surely need all the help in this area that I can get. Too often, I am selfish and self-centered, but I want to be more like Jesus.

Let's look at *The Compassionate Christ* this morning and learn His secrets for caring about the needs of others.

I. THE ORIGINS OF HIS COMPASSION

A) Originated In His Essence - How could Jesus reach out to all the people He did? How could He care about so many different people with so many different problems. What motivated Him? Think for a moment about who Jesus is. He is God in the flesh! He is not encumbered with a fallen nature. He is not selfish. He is not self-centered. He transcends all the faults and flaws that mark humanity!

Many people read the Old Testament and come away with the idea that God is mean, angry and harsh. Yet, Jesus, in the New Testament, reveals the exact nature of God,

"No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known."

John 1:18

He is holy. He is a consuming fire. He is a God of wrath and judgment. Yet, He is also a God of infinite love, grace, mercy and compassion.

A man fell into a pit and couldn't get himself out. A Christian Scientist came along and said, "***You only think that you are in a pit.***" A Pharisee said, "***Only bad people fall into a pit.***" A compassion-less Fundamentalist said, "***You deserve your pit.***" A Charismatic said, "***Just confess that you're not in a pit.***" A Methodist came by and said, "***We brought you some food and clothing while you're in the pit.***" A Presbyterian said, "***This was no accident, you know.***" An Optimist said, "***Things could be worse.***" A pessimist said, "***Things will get worse!***" Jesus, seeing the man, took him by the hand and lifted him out of the pit. That is the essence of Christ and of His compassion.

B) Originated In His Experiences - One reason Jesus was able to express such sympathy for others was His Own experiences in life. Jesus did not come into this world to live a pleasant life! The life He lived was difficult at best! He grew up, lived and died in poverty.

Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

Matthew 8:20

When He died, His worldly effects consisted of just the garments on His back. He knew about loneliness. He was despised, hated and rejected.

He even endured a time of severe temptation, *Matthew 4:1-11*.

Jesus knew the feeling of pain. He knew what it felt like to hurt deeply and as a result, He can understand our hurts with us. He can feel our pain.

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.”

Hebrews 4:15

II. THE OBJECTS OF HIS COMPASSION

A brief study of the gospels reveals the truth that His compassion knew no boundaries. Jesus felt the need of all classes and kind of people. His love and compassion are a challenge to each of us!

***He Feels Compassion For The Scattered Ones - Matthew 9:36**

***He Feels Compassion For The Sinning Ones - Mark 16:7**

***He Feels Compassion For The Sick Ones - Matthew 14:14**

***He Feels Compassion For The Suffering Ones - Luke 7:11-13**

***He Feels Compassion For The Seeking Ones - Mark 10:17-22**

Why was Jesus able to do this to so many different people in so many different settings and situations? Because Jesus, even though He knew all their faults, did not let that get in the way of His compassion and expression of love! He did not look just at that which was apparent on the surface, He was able to look at these people and see their deepest need! He loved them at the deepest level of His being, as a result, He was never impatient with them or offended by their needs.

How do WE see people? We often base our evaluation of a person on what we see with our eyes or hear with our ears.

What we need to learn is to look past a person's exterior to see them as they really are. We must see their needs before we can express compassion to them! May we learn to see them as Jesus does!

A man tells of an unusual experience on the New York subway. While people were sitting quietly in the car, a man entered with his noisy and rowdy children. The father sat down and closed his eyes as though he was oblivious to them. The once quiet subway car was now a disturbing place of chaos. The children's inappropriate behavior was obvious to everyone except their father. Finally, the man confronted the father about his children. The father opened his eyes and evaluated the situation as if he were unaware of all that had transpired: "Oh, you're right. I guess I should do something about it. We just came from the hospital, where their mother died about an hour ago. I don't know what to think, and I guess they don't know how to handle it either."

Compassion starts when we begin to understand the hurts of others.

III. THE OBJECTIVES OF HIS COMPASSION

A) **The Objective of Instruction** - A brief look at the gospels reveal that the disciples knew nothing of compassion. James and John wanted to call fire down from heaven to punish a Samaritan village that refused to receive Jesus. Another time the disciples wanted to send a hungry crowd away with nothing. The disciples had no compassion for the people.

- They did not really see them at all.
- They were too caught up in the lives they were living.
- They were not concerned about the people.
- They had no thoughts of reaching outside their circle and helping the people around them.

It's sad, but it is also easy to see ourselves in these men! Aren't we often self-centered and selfish? If it doesn't touch our lives or the lives of our family and friends, then it is no concern of ours! Why are we that way? Why did Jesus have to teach His disciples about compassion and why do we still need the lessons today?

I think the answer lies in the fact that compassion is against our very nature. ***That which does not touch us personally does not matter!***

Jesus used two illustrations to teach the need for compassion:

- The parable of the Good Samaritan - **Luke 10:30-37** and
- The parable of the Prodigal Son - **Luke 15:11-24.**

A banker had just turned a man down for a loan, then made an unusual offer. He said to the man, "I have one good eye and one glass eye. If you can tell me which is which, I'll approve your loan." The man looked for a moment, then said, "Your left eye is your good eye." The banker was surprised. "That's right," he said. "How could you tell?" The man said, "I detected a hint of compassion in the other eye."

It may go against our human nature to be compassionate, but it is not against our new nature! When we are saved, we are given all the resources we need to feel the needs and burdens of others!

Even though the little creatures in Winnie the Pooh are imaginary, we can see ourselves in them. This one scenario reveals how downright insensitive we often are.

Pooh Bear is walking along the riverbank. Eeyore, his stuffed donkey friend, suddenly appears floating downstream ... on his back of all things, obviously troubled about the possibility of drowning.

Pooh calmly asks if Eeyore had fallen in. Trying to appear in complete control, the anguished donkey answers, "Silly of me, wasn't it." Pooh overlooks his friend's pleading eyes and remarks that Eeyore really should have been more careful. In greater need than ever, Eeyore politely thanks him for the advice (even though he needs action more than he needs advice). Almost with a yawn, Pooh Bear notices, "I think you are sinking." With that as his only hint of hope, drowning Eeyore asks Pooh if he would mind rescuing him. So, Pooh pulls him from the river. Eeyore apologizes for being such a bother, and Pooh, still unconcerned, yet ever so courteous, responds, "Don't be silly ... you should have said something sooner."

In truth, when we love others as we should, we will not wait to be asked. We will be moved with compassion for them, and we will get busy helping them for Jesus' sake!

B) Objective of Involvement - Not only did Jesus want to teach His men about compassion. He wanted them to become involved in the ministry of showing compassion to others.

He wanted them to start seeing people as He saw them. He wanted them to be moved by the needs of others. So moved that they were compelled to do something about those needs. He wanted them to become involved.

Compassionate involvement is the essence of the ***“Golden Rule”***.
In ***Matthew 7:12***, Jesus said,

“So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

He wasn't the only teacher to say something like this. In fact, the Jews, the Hindus, Buddhists and others has been saying similar things for years. For example: **Hindu Faith**: ***“This is the sum of duty: do naught to others which if done to thee would cause thee pain.”*** **Jewish Faith**: ***“What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow men. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary.”*** **Zoroastrian Faith**: ***“Whatever is disagreeable to yourself do not do unto others.”*** **Buddhist Faith**: ***“Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.”*** **Greek Philosophy, Socrates**, ***“Do not do unto others what angers you if done to you by others.”***

They all sound similar, don't they? However, there is one subtle difference. All these I have just shared with you are negative in nature, while the words of Jesus are positive in nature. You see all those other religions warn men to withhold evil from others. They tell us what not to do. Jesus, on the other hand, tells us to be active in reaching to others in the same manner we would desire to be reached out to. There is a difference!

A businessman and his wife were busy to the point of exhaustion. They were committed to each other, their family, their church, their work, their friends.

Needing a break, they escaped for a few days of relaxation at an oceanfront hotel. One night a violent storm lashed the beach and sent massive breakers thundering against the shore. The man lay in his bed listening and thinking about his own stormy life of never-ending demands and pressures.

The wind finally died down and shortly before daybreak the man slipped out of bed and took a walk along the beach to see what damage had been done. As he strolled, he saw that the beach was covered with starfish that had been thrown ashore and helplessly stranded by the great waves. Once the morning sun burned through the clouds, the starfish would dry out and die.

Suddenly the man saw an interesting sight. A young boy who had also noticed the plight of the starfish was picking them up, one at a time, and flinging them back into the ocean.

“Why are you doing that?” the man asked the lad as he got close enough to be heard. “Can’t you see that one person will never make a difference—you’ll never be able to get all those starfish back into the water. There are just too many.”

“Yes, that’s true,” the boy sighed as he bent over and picked up another and tossed it back into the water. Then as he watched it sink, he looked at the man, and smiled, and said, “But it sure made a difference to that one.” Often, there is so much to do that it sometimes can seem overwhelming. But any difference made in the life of another through the ministry of compassion will bear fruit to the glory of God!

How involved are you in the ministry of showing compassion to others? I would just remind you that it is God’s will for every one of us!

In Closing, I want to tell you a story about a boy named Mark. While walking home from school, Mark noticed the boy ahead of him had stumbled to the ground and dropped everything he was carrying. Mark hurried to the boy's side and helped him collect his belongings. Surprisingly, the boy was carrying an especially hefty load. There was a baseball glove and bat, a couple of sweaters, a small tape recorder, and an armful of books. Mark helped him carry the things home and his new friend, Bill, was most appreciative of his compassion. During the walk home, Mark discovered Bill was struggling in school and had just broken up with his girlfriend. When they arrived at Bill's house, he invited Mark in for a Coke and they spent the rest of the afternoon talking, laughing, and watching TV. Although the two boys never became real close friends, they kept up with each other throughout the rest of junior high and high school. Several weeks before graduation, Bill approached Mark and asked him if he remembered the day they met when Mark helped him with all his stuff. Mark nodded as he remembered. Bill then asked, "Did you ever wonder why I was carrying so many things that day?" Without pausing for an answer, Bill explained he had cleaned out his locker and was going home to take his life. He had been storing away sleeping pills and was headed home to end it all when Mark happened along to help him out. Bill told Mark how that simple act of compassion inspired him to go on living. He said, "Mark, when you picked up my books that day, you saved my life!" Imagine how many times our small, seemingly insignificant gestures of concern may reignite the flame of life and inspire someone to continue.

Thankfully, compassion has a way of doing that. You never know what a little compassion will accomplish!

Remember, compassion is more than feeling sorry for someone.

Truthfully, Compassion is a desire to BE Christ to someone else!

Place: FCA

Date: Sunday, June 1, 2025

Time: 10:30am

After Service Song: There Was Jesus