

## COMPASSION

TEXT: Moved By Compassion (Matthew 9:35-38)

INTRODUCTION: 41 times in KJV and 47 in the NKJV

1. Compassion "to love," "pity," "be merciful" "to suffer with (another)"; sympathize, "mercy" (1 Kings 8:50); "to show mildness," "kindness" (Matt 18:33; Mark 5:19; Jude verse 22), "spare" (Ex 2:6; 1 Sam 23:21), (Ps 78:38; 86:15; 111:4; 112:4; 145:8),
2. Have been the recipient of compassion this summer.
3. While, when compared to the world in general, Christians far exceed them in compassionate acts, we don't always show as much compassion as we should or could.

### I. Compassion,

- A. Literally a feeling with and for others,
- B. Is a fundamental and distinctive quality that the Bible shows us of God.
- C. The world owes more to compassionate people than words can express.
  - 1) Compassion was the foundation of Israel's faith in God.
  - 2) For it was out of His compassion that He delivered them from Egyptian bondage and called them to be His people.
  - 3) Nothing, therefore, is more prominent in the Old Testament than the compassion, pity, & mercy, of God.
- D. The people survived because of it.
- E. It is summed up in such sayings as the one in Ex 34:6: "*Jehovah is a God full of compassion*"
  - 1) And, because this was the character of their God, the prophets declared that compassion was an essential requirement for His people (Hos 6:6 I desire mercy, not just sacrifice)
- F. Compassion was an outstanding feature of Jesus Christ, in whom God was "manifest in the flesh," (Matt 9:36; 14:14, etc.)
  - 1) He taught that it ought to be extended, not to friends and neighbors only, but even to our enemies (Matt 5:43-48; Luke 10:30-37).
- G. The God of the New Testament, the Father of men, is most clearly revealed as "a God full of compassion."

- 1) It extends to the whole human race
  - 2) It was for us that He enacted a spiritual and eternal, deliverance,
  - 3) Giving up His own Son to the death of the cross in order to save us from the worst bondage of sin, with its consequences was a compassionate act.
  - 4) Therefore all who know God the Father & Jesus, His Son, and who call themselves His children, must have compassion and show mercy, (Eph 4:32; Col 3:12; James 1:27; 1 John 3:17, etc.).
  - 5) Christianity may be said to be distinctively the religion of Compassion.
    - a) You don't see atheistic organizations rushing to help in times of disaster.
    - b) Compassionate people who believe help millions every day.
- H. Compassion is the aspect of God's love that causes Him to help the miserable, just as grace is the aspect of His love that moves Him to forgive the guilty.
- 1) Those who are miserable may be so either because of breaking God's law or because of circumstances beyond their control.
  - 2) God shows mercy upon those who have broken His law (Dan 9:9; 1 Tim 1:13,16),
  - 3) God also shows mercy by actively helping those who are miserable due to circumstances beyond their control.
  - 4) We see this aspect of mercy especially in the life of our Lord Jesus.
    - a) He healed blind men (Matt 9:27-31; 20:29-34)
    - b) Lepers (Luke 17:11-19).
  - 5) These acts of healing grew out of his attitude of compassion and mercy.
- I. Because God is merciful, He expects His children to be merciful (Matt 5:7; James 1:27).
- 1) Matt 15:32 (Mark 8:1-10) *Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."*
  - \* 2) Matthew 18:23-34 Compassion is the subject of the parable.
- II. Things necessary for true compassion:**
- A. **Time** Rom 13:11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.
- 1) We get busy or into a routine that we don't want to change.

2) Sometimes we ignore the needs of others because we simply can't fit a long term solution into our lives.

B. **Empathy** is the capacity to recognize and, to some extent, share feelings (such as sadness or happiness) that are being experienced by another.

1) One must have a certain amount of empathy before they are able to feel compassion.

2) Empathy is the key cornerstone in genuine human relationships.

3) One with empathy feels compassion, while those without do not take into account other people's emotions.

C. **Genuine caring** about others 1 Peter 5:7 "Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."

D. **Realizing the need to return the favor** Matthew 7:12; Eph. 4:32; Col 3:13

E. **Good listening skills:**

F. **Not always rescuing but seriously looking for solutions.**

G. **Patience** : Forebearance under suffering and endurance in the face of adversity.

H. **Letting God teach us how to love** - 1Th 4:9; 1Jn 3:16-17

I. **Spending time around people**. To love people, we need to get to know them

1) We need to beware of becoming isolated from people

a) Certain technological advances can be a hindrance to getting out and being with people (e.g., television, air conditioning, computers)

b) Remember, Jesus was often moved by compassion when among the "multitudes" and "individuals"

### III. **Miscellaneous thoughts on Compassion:**

A. **Extremes:**

1) Not caring for others at all.

2) And being compassionate to your own detriment and that of your family.

B. Sometimes we feel so badly for the plight of others, that we put our own lives and the good that we are doing on hold for them.

1) We don't help others by depleting our resources for them.

2) We help them help themselves.

3) We help them realize their own options and their own potential.

4) We don't help others by allowing their plight to cause us to lose sight of the goal.

C. **Acts 6:1-7 Great example of compassion in action.**

### IV. **Compassion, the motivation for Evangelism:**

A. **JESUS HAD COMPASSION FOR THE LOST...**

1. As mentioned on numerous occasions; In our text - **Mt 9:36**, Prior to feeding the five thousand - **Mt 14:14**, Prior to feeding the four thousand - **Mt 15:32**A demon-possessed man

- **Mk 5:1-20** (cf. **verse 19**), The widow of Nain who had lost her son - **Lk 7:11-15**, The two blind men - **Mt 20:30-34**

2. He was moved with compassion when He saw people weary and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd, Suffering from diseases, demon possession, and hunger

#### **B. HIS COMPASSION MOVED HIM...**

1. To heal the sick and demon-possessed, raise the dead, and feed the hungry

2. To personally teach those in need of a Shepherd - cf. **Mk 6:34**

3. To call upon His disciples to pray for more laborers - **Mt 9: 37-38**

4. To send out His disciples as laborers - **Mt 10:1-7**

#### **C. HOW SHOULD COMPASSION MOVE US?**

1. To do whatever we can do...

a. Such as teach others - cf. **Mk 6:34**

b. Unable to teach? Then compassion should move us to:

1) Learn to teach others - cf. **He 5:12; 1Pe 3:15**

2) Make arrangements for others to be taught

a) As Philip did for Nathaniel - **Jn 1:45-46**

b) As Cornelius did for family and friends - **Ac 10:24,33**

2. To seek to involve others in saving the lost...

a. By praying that the Lord will send more laborers - **Mt 9:38**

1) This is something everyone can do

2) Even if we can't yet teach, we can pray! - **2Th 3:1**

b. By sending out others to teach - **Mt 10:1,5-7**

1) Jesus did more than teach and pray, He trained and sent out His disciples

2) We can be involved with sending out others also

a) Encouraging the training of those willing to teach

b) Supporting financially those who go out to teach

- **Php 4:15-16; 3Jn 5-8**

#### **Conclusion:**

1. Compassion is an essential Christian characteristic.

2. However, we often misunderstand how to express it.

3. If we don't do it properly, people will get two wrong ideas.

a) They will think we do not care about them at all.

b) They will think we should bale them out every time they make a bad decision.

4. One thing we can understand about compassion is that God showed it to us by sending Jesus to save us.

5. One of the most compassionate acts we can perform, is to put lost, struggling people in touch with the Savior.