

The Compassion of Christ

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Date: 27 March 2019

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[0 : 00] Now for a short time in seeking the Lord's blessing, let us turn back to the portion of scripture that we read together, Matthew's Gospel and chapter 9, and we can read at verse 36.

And when he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

Here we have an insight into the heart of Jesus. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them.

Because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. The theme of God's compassion is one that runs throughout the Bible.

[1 : 14] The book of Psalms frequently brings before us the compassion of God. In Psalm 116 that we have sung, gracious is the Lord and righteous, yea, our God is merciful.

In Psalm 86 we read, but thou, O Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious, longsuffering and plenteous in mercy and in truth. Psalm 112, unto the upright, there ariseth light in the darkness, he is gracious and full of compassion and righteous.

Psalm 145, the Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy. We could go on to quote many instances in the Bible that brings this truth before us.

The prophets often spoke of the compassion of God. Jeremiah says, for the Lord will not cast off forever, but though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

Finally, Micah says, who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?

[2 : 34] He does not retain his anger forever because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us. He will tread our iniquities underfoot.

He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. What all these Old Testament quotes teaches us is the faithfulness of God, who is full of mercy and compassion.

When the prodigal son started his journey home to his father, I am sure that one of the things that would be heavy on his mind was to know the attitude of his father towards him.

To know his father's heart for him. And we read in that well-known parable of the prodigal son that the father unseen his son a long way off.

That he felt compassion and ran and embraced him and kissed him or kept kissing him.

[3 : 43] In the compassion of Jesus, we see the compassion of God. And tonight it is important for us to know the attitude of the father's heart for sinners like me and you.

Here Jesus' son reveals to us the attitude of the father's heart. This is an insight of God that encourages sinners like me and you to come to Jesus Christ.

To come unto him. And although within the context these words were said about Jesus as he looked on Israel as sheep that was wandering helplessly without a shepherd.

Nevertheless, we see evidence of his compassion right throughout the chapter. We see the availability of Jesus in his compassion.

He has time for everyone who needed him. Satan, tonight may whisper in your ear that he will not listen to you.

[5 : 06] But look at the evidence that is here set before us in this chapter. In chapter 14 of this very gospel, in the feeding of the 5,000, we read that when Jesus saw a great crowd that he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

And the following chapter, in chapter 15 of this very gospel, on the feeding of the 4,000 with the seven loaves and the fishers, we read there, And as I said in this chapter, we have so many evidences that brings before us the compassion of Jesus.

This miracle that Jesus does here is very much given to us in a very condensed form here in the gospel of Matthew.

But we have the miracle also told to us in the gospel of Mark and Luke. And there it is at more length. There we are told that the man who came to Jesus was named Jairus.

And that he was a ruler of the synagogue. One of his responsibilities would be to main good order at the synagogue meetings.

[6 : 46] But we know that there were people who were very hostile to Jesus or to any of his followers. In the gospel of John chapter 9, we are told regarding the man that was born blind and whom Jesus healed.

That because he confessed Jesus, that he was eventually cast out of the synagogue. So to find a ruler of the synagogue coming and seeking the help of Jesus was not a very easy thing.

He would have come out of a very hostile environment. And possibly if known, he would have been brought to experience a severe end of that hostility, just like the blind man that was healed by Jesus.

It is never easy for any of us to make our way to Jesus. For we are all found in some measure to be in a hostile environment, whether it be at work, in school, at home, in our community.

But we must engage with that hostility and opposition to our coming to Jesus. This man came to the point where he did consider the hostility and opposition to be no more a stumbling block for him, as his case was a desperate case.

[8 : 13] And he knew that only Jesus could meet him. And maybe you remember a point in your own experience, where you saw your greatest desperate need as a sinner, which only Jesus could meet.

And despite all the hostility and opposition, nothing was going to keep you from coming to Jesus. And we see here that this man came to Jesus.

And he worshipped him. It is never an easy thing to witness for Jesus. There is always that hostile environment, that opposition.

And yet we must engage with that hostility and with that opposition and witness for our Savior. We read there in the Gospels that messengers came to Jairus from his home to tell him that his daughter had died.

In Mark's Gospel, for instance, we read that the messengers said to Jairus, your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further? The messengers simply assumed that whatever power Jesus had now, he could not possibly do anything to help the situation.

[9 : 50] It's possible even now that this is a point where Matthew takes up his narrative. For we read that Jairus' plea changed to, my daughter has just died.

But come and lay good hand on her, and she will live. However, the focal point is that this man found a Jesus who was compassionate and cares.

Satan may whisper, what's the point? Your daughter is dead. Your daughter has died.

What's the point? And maybe tonight, Satan may be whispering in your ear, what's the point? You are dead in sin.

The messengers came, and they said to him, your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further? But Jairus found a compassionate and a caring Jesus.

[11 : 01] And if you will come tonight to Jesus, you will find that he is full of compassion and caring. If you have a certain burden tonight, that's lying heavily upon your soul, you come to Jesus.

He is compassionate and caring. Many have come, and their testimony is that they found a compassionate and caring saviour.

And in his compassion, he raised this man's daughter. He brought joy into the home that was so full of grief and pain.

He brought life for those whose world had fallen upside down. He brought peace where there was turmoil.

And that is what happens when a person comes to Jesus. He brings life. He brings joy. And he brings peace.

[12:17] And whatever pain you may be suffering tonight, if your world has fallen upside down, if you are in turmoil tonight, come to Jesus.

He is the one who can bring you joy, who can bring you life, who can bring you peace. peace. And then, we have in the chapter before us, the woman who had suffered for many years, and has found no cure, despite all her efforts.

Satan may have whispered to her, look at yourself, you have sought relief for many years, it has cost you all your savings, and you have found no relief. Oh, what is the use?

But in his compassion, he gave healing to this woman, who was so polluted. This woman had a terrible physical problem, which made her a cast out from society.

She wasn't even allowed to enter the temple, or any place of worship. Everything she touched, according to the ceremonial law, of Israel, became unclean.

[13:37] She was unclean herself, according to that law. And for years, she had spent all that she had looking for a cure.

But you know, she sought it in the wrong place. She sought it from man, instead of seeking it from God.

And there was only one place, where she could come to. And that was to Jesus. She persevered in her faith, despite all the opposition.

If I only touch this garment, I will be made whole. And if you come tonight in total reliance upon Jesus, on Jesus only for the healing of your soul, despite whatever efforts you have tried in the past, you will find a compassionate and caring saviour.

Maybe tonight you are here and you are conscious of the fact that you are unclean, that you are polluted by sin, and that you need cleansing and healing. Well, where do you go?

[14:55] Maybe you have tried every avenue and means that you could think of, taking all that the world has to offer, and yet you remain unclean.

Perhaps tonight you are here and you have come to an end of yourself. Maybe you are crying out, what shall I do? Well, do as this woman did.

She came to Jesus, and in him she found one that could show compassion and that could give her healing. How did she come?

Well, she came and said, if I only touch his garment, I will be made whole. She came in faith. The power of cleansing and healing was not in the touch, but in Jesus.

Nevertheless, the touch of faith was necessary. You are filled with the pollution of sin. Come and touch Jesus by faith and be cleansed.

[16:02] And then we find the blind men in verse 27 that followed to him. These two blind men didn't need anyone to tell them that they were blind. They were quite conscious of the fact that they were blind.

But they followed Jesus and cried to him, saying, Have mercy on us, Son of David. And it is interesting that this was a cry of faith.

They gave him a messianic title. They called him the Son of David. They believed that he was the Messiah, that he was the promised one of God. But he tested their faith.

For when they came into the house, he said to them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? And they replied, Yes, Lord. Then he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it done to you.

And their eyes were opened. Now, when we think that there was a stigma against them because they were blind, they had to go and they had to beg for everything.

[17:07] And maybe today, Satan is whispering in your ears, Look, everybody knows you. They know the kind of person that you are.

Maybe there are certain stigmas of the past that people still bear upon you. Perhaps your lifestyle or whatever it was. maybe Satan is whispering in your ear, Well, the Lord may hear the preacher or the Lord may hear so and so, but not you.

He's not going to hear you. Maybe he's saying to you, What right do you have? Look at yourself. Who do you think you are? But whoever you are tonight, remember that Christ can be approached even now as then.

He is just as approachable now as he was then. He is just as available then, now as he was then. Yes, they found a compassionate and a caring saviour.

[18 : 26] there is the sense of that we are all spiritually blind by nature. Paul could say and even if our gospel is failed, it is failed to those who are perishing.

In their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God.

tonight, I'm asking you, are you convinced of your spiritual blindness? Then come by faith to Jesus trusting that I can give you spiritual light.

Or are you here tonight and you are praising God in your heart, you are thanking God in your heart that there was a day in your experience when you came to Jesus and when he took you out of your spiritual blindness and gave you spiritual sight.

And verse 38, a demon oppressed man who was mute was brought to him and when the devil was cast out the mute man spoke.

[19 : 50] Or the devil may have whispered in his ear, has it been known for the mute person to receive their speech? And maybe tonight you are convicted by the spirit of God of your deafness and your muteness to spiritual things, to things pertaining to God.

And you're saying, where shall I go? Well, it is interesting to see that it was others who brought this man to Jesus. And that is my responsibility and your responsibility to bring others to Jesus, to bring those who are deaf and dumb or mute spiritually, to bring them to Jesus.

How often we find that in the gospel, that it was others who brought people to Jesus in order to be healed. And that is a spiritual lesson for me and you.

It is part of our responsibility that if we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, then that we go out and that we bring others to Jesus.

That we lovingly persuade others to come to Jesus. in one of the gospels there, we read that our responsibility is to go out and to compel them to come in.

[21 : 24] For yet there is room. And the word compel there doesn't mean to go out and take anyone by force. What the word means is to lovingly persuade them to come in.

To do it in a way of compassion, in a way of love, and to persuade them to come in. Where can we bring the person who is deaf and mute, where can we bring them but to Jesus?

That he may give them the voice to pray, that he may give them the voice to praise, to witness, that he may give them the voice of witness.

that they who are dumb spiritually or mute may begin to speak. The approachableness and the availability of Christ.

Well, here we have a ruler, an alien woman, blind men, a demon oppressed mute man, brought to Jesus and he had compassion on them and cared for them and healed them.

[22 : 45] Whatever their state or status in life, when they came to Jesus, they found him approachable and his call tonight is the same, come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Isn't that your own testimony? testimony if you're a Christian tonight, that you came to Jesus with your burden and that in Jesus you found rest, you found joy, you found life, you found peace.

Here Christ was available for them and tonight Christ is available for you. Take your burden to the Lord. God, he may not remove it, but he will strengthen you to bear that burden.

You may be a Christian here tonight and you're heavily burdened and where will you take that burden? Well, take it to the Lord.

Yes, he may not remove it, but he will give you the strength to bear it. Paul's experience when he writes regarding the thorn that was given him in the flesh after his experience of being raised up into the heavens and 14 years passed before he spoke of that experience.

[24 : 19] I think that there we have the humility of Paul. I personally think that I would probably have been speaking about it the next day if I had such an experience.

Not waited 14 years. But given to him was a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass him, to keep him from becoming conceited.

He says three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness.

Therefore I will boast all more for the sake of Christ than I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities.

For when I am weak then I am strong. Maybe tonight you are burdened with your sin. Maybe you are like a man in Pilgrim's Progress who had a great burden upon his back that no one could relieve

him of.

[25 : 25] No matter where he sought relief in the world, in marriage, in family, and friends, it availed him nothing. Where did he finally get relief? At the cross.

His burden rolled away. And where will you get relief for your burden? For your burden of sin? Only at the cross in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ and him crucified that is raised up for you through the preaching of the gospel every week. For the cross is set before you.

And only there will you find relief for whatever burden you have tonight, whoever you are, and whatever burden may be upon your heart and soul tonight, that is where you find relief.

Jesus and him crucified. He brings comfort and peace to your heart with the truth of the gospel and your acceptance in Christ.

[26 : 26] Christ. But we notice here finally that in his compassion there was this compulsion to reach out to those who were needy and lost.

Here the chapter ends with his compassion for Israel whom he saw as sheep without a shepherd. He saw them as those who were scattered and going about aimlessly with no one to lead them, with no one to guide them.

And he gives a lesson to his disciples. And what he's really saying to his disciples is this.

He's saying to them, get the vision. Catch the vision. He has given them examples of him being a compassionate and caring saviour.

And now he talks of Israel and he talks of them as those who are wandering aimlessly without a shepherd. And he says, catch the vision.

[27 : 29] Do you see what I see? And enter into my compassion for the needy and the lost. And that's what I and you have, if we are believers tonight, have to examine ourselves.

Do we enter into the compassion of Jesus for the needy and the lost? Do we catch that vision that he sets before us here?

It is easy for me and you to affirm the compassion of Christ. It is easy for me to preach to you tonight about the compassion of Christ, but another thing for me, to show the compassion of Christ. Easy for you to affirm the compassion of Christ, but it is another thing for us, to show the compassion of Christ ourselves.

Jesus can do what no one else can do. Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus can do what no one else can do?

[28 : 41] Well, when we think of our parish, when we think of our district, how many tonight in this parish is wandering aimlessly to a lost eternity, do we believe that Jesus can change their lives?

Do we see the vision that he is giving us? do we believe that Jesus can do what no one else can do?

Then why are we sitting idle? Why are we leaving it to others? Surely, I'm going to be accountable for what I've done with the vision that he has given me.

Jesus can do what no one else can do. He is the one who can give hope to the hopeless. He is the one who can give light to those in darkness.

Here we see that he can raise the dead, heal the polluted, give sight to the blind, and open the tongue of the dumb. He says to his disciples, catch the vision, and go out to the highways and byways, and compel or lovingly persuade them to come in.

[30 : 07] for yet there is throne. You know, you would be amazed at how you could win people over by showing them compassion and love, to come even under the preaching of the word.

Not to go in there forcefully, but to go in there lovingly, with compassion. how you could lovingly persuade them to come.

All come for the yet there is strong. To those who are depressed, those who have overcome, those who are cast down, those who are hopeless, those who are questioning what life is all about, those who are spiritually dead and polluted and blind and dumb.

Come to Jesus, for he can do what no one else can do. do you believe this?

Do you believe this? Then is it not time that we got up? Is it not time that we went into the highways and byways?

[31 : 25] Is it not time that we lovingly persuaded others to come so that Jesus can do to them what he has done for me and you?

May the Lord bless our thoughts upon his word. We shall now sing from Psalm 112 on page 392.
Psalm 112 on page 392.

Praise ye the Lord, the man is blessed, that fears the Lord aright, he who in his commandments doth greatly take delight. His seed and offspring powerful shall be the earth upon, O upright men, blessed shall be the generation, riches and wealth shall ever be within his house and store, and his and spotted righteousness endures for ever more, and to the upright light doth rise, though he in darkness be, compassionate and merciful and righteous is he.

We shall sing these verses to the Lord's praise. Psalm 112, verse 1 to 4, Praise ye the Lord, the man is blessed, that fears the Lord aright.

Praise ye the Lord, the man is blessed, and fears the Lord aright.

[33 : 03] who in his commandments that greatly take delight.

His seed and all spring powerful shall be the earth upon.

the King riches and wealth shall ever be within his heart's store.

And his love's fault in righteousness endures forevermore.

Unto the upright life doth rise, though he incarnate thee.

[34 : 54] Compassionate and merciful and bright and righteous is he.

Compassionate and merciful