

Studies in the Life of Christ The Amazing Compassion of Jesus

Intro: In this series we are looking together at some of the amazing things that Jesus did. Our focus however is not so much upon the amazing miracles that He performed or the amazing teaching that He did, but upon the deeds of Jesus that reflect His character as the Son of God.

In our first lesson we looked at the amazing prayer life of Jesus. Today let's consider the amazing compassion of Jesus.

In the gospels we see the remarkable compassion of Jesus again and again.

His compassion for the lost

And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. (Mt. 9:36)

Hagner in his commentary points out: "What causes Jesus' deep compassion at this point is not the abundance of sickness he has seen but rather the great spiritual need of the people, whose lives have no center, whose existence seems aimless, whose experience is one of futility."¹

His compassion for the sick

And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and felt compassion for them, and healed their sick. (Mt. 14:14)

His compassion for the hungry

I feel compassion for the multitude because they have remained with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat; (Mk. 8:2)

His compassion for the handicapped

And moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him. (Mt. 20:34)

His compassion for the bereaved

And when the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, "Do not weep." (Lk. 7:13)

But in each case Jesus acted upon His compassion by performing deeds of mercy to help.

He used His miraculous power to heal the sick, feed the hungry, restore the handicapped, comfort the bereaved, and to urge others to join him in teaching the multitudes.

In addition, He, along with the disciples, kept a money box from which they would help the poor from time to time (Jn. 13:29).

*Then He *said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." (Mt. 9:37-38)*

We too need to show compassion like Jesus

¹ Hagner, D. A. (1998). *Mt. 1-13* (Vol. 33A, p. 260). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

Jesus urged his disciples to imitate His example of compassion. He not only taught them to love their neighbors as themselves; he taught them that love shows compassionate response in time of need.

Jesus replied and said, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went off leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him, and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return, I will repay you.' Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same." (Lk. 10:30-37)

Jesus' apostles likewise urged Christians to put on a heart of compassion.

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. (Col. 3:12-14)

But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? (1 Jn. 3:17)

An open heart will open our hand to help.

We cannot like Jesus perform miracles to eliminate human need. In fact, Jesus did not use His power merely for that; but rather to give proof of who He was.

There are things that he expects us to do:

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink?'" (Mt. 25:34-37)

Job once asked:

"For when the ear heard, it called me blessed; And when the eye saw, it gave witness of me, Because I delivered the poor who cried for help, And the orphan who had no helper. "The blessing of the one

ready to perish came upon me, And I made the widow's heart sing for joy. "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; My justice was like a robe and a turban. "I was eyes to the blind, And feet to the lame. "I was a father to the needy, And I investigated the case which I did not know. "And I broke the jaws of the wicked, And snatched the prey from his teeth. "Then I thought, 'I shall die in my nest, And I shall multiply my days as the sand.'" (Job 29:11–18).

What will motivate us to act?

First we are motivated by the knowledge of God's compassion toward us.

"Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust." (Psalm 103:13–14)

Jesus' illustrated that compassion in the story of the father of the prodigal son.

And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him. (Lk. 15:20)

We are motivated by the realization that what we do for others honors God.

"He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him." (Proverbs 14:31)

It is like an offering made to Him.

"And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased." (Heb. 13:16)

We are motivated the promised rewards to the compassionate.

He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed. (Prov. 19:17)

"Light arises in the darkness for the upright; He is gracious and compassionate and righteous. It is well with the man who is gracious and lends; He will maintain his cause in judgment. For he will never be shaken; the righteous will be remembered forever." (Psalm 112:4–6)

We are motivated by the understanding that the service of our brethren is the service of our Lord.

"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 'And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;" (Mt. 25:37–41)

Conclusion: How will you respond to Jesus' amazing compassion? Will you