

October 2, 2022. Compassion Series – Part 2

Jesus and John the Baptist were cousins as were their moms, Mary and Elizabeth. John would prepare the way for Jesus and John baptized Jesus. It was hard for Jesus to hear that John had been beheaded and He withdrew.

Matthew 14:13 *Now when Jesus heard about John, He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself; and when the people heard of this, they followed Him on foot from the cities.*

This series on compassion began last week with the compassion of the Father. Compassion is recognizing the suffering of others and taking action to help. Compassion is powerful as it goes beyond "pity." Pity is the knowing when someone is in a terrible place but not doing anything about it. Compassion wants to alleviate that misery. Compassion is a turning point in scripture. Jesus uses stories to give pictures of compassion.

1. Jesus saw differently. Matthew 14:14 *When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.* Jesus withdrew to grieve the loss of John. At the Sea of Galilee, people watched and followed Jesus. He didn't ask for a moment to grieve but felt compassion (a turning point) and healed their sick. These people wanted their needs met; they weren't looking for salvation. Why would Jesus turn to them? Jesus saw a large crowd. "Saw" meant "to know" or "to possess information." Jesus saw what was inside the people that came.

Mark 6:34 *When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.* Jesus saw them being lost and without hope. Our response to suffering depends on what we force ourselves to notice about the world. Jesus saw what was different and unexpected from what others saw. He saw not a shoreline full of needy people but saw people desperate for a Savior. We must be willing to recognize people's misery. Where are we looking? What do we focus on? Do we focus on our own problems right in front of us, neglecting to look up and out?

Mark 10:13 *And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked them.* The disciples saw Jesus as important and saw that these children were disrupting Him. But Jesus didn't see it that way. **Mark 10:14-16** *But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all." And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them.* The disciples only saw with their physical eyes but Jesus saw more. Jesus gives them a glimpse into the spiritual. He takes the things in the physical and paints a picture of what we should be desiring in the spiritual. He shows how we should examine our own lives.

2. Jesus felt compassion. "Felt" is an emotional word and more than a decision of the right thing to do. God is not distant but feels the misery that we are in. God sees us in our pain and He is motivated by His emotion toward us. He will get involved in our pain. Jesus saw the needs at a deeper level and it resulted in a turning point. Jesus was grieving but His compassion for others was greater than His own pain.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. As believers we have a hope. Jesus knew that He would see His cousin again. Jesus saw people without hope.*

Matthew 9:35-36 *Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus saw their hopelessness and it produced compassion in Jesus and resulted in a turning point.*

Mark 10:40-41 *And a leper came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."* **Matthew 20:29-34** *As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed Him. And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Lord, we want our eyes to be opened." Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.*

Over and over, we see Jesus moved with compassion.

3. Compassion results in action. Matthew 14:14 *When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.* The compassion of Jesus resulted in action. We are not called to be passive people but a compassionate people. **1 John 3:17** *But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?* Do we focus on physical and not spiritual? Jesus used physical needs to point to our spiritual needs. Do we only see the fallen exteriors of others that we don't care about their spiritual condition? Jesus healed physical problems to reveal the spiritual need - the need for Him. Jesus is about the Kingdom! Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Do we put salvation ahead of compassion? **Matthew 9:37-38** *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."* We are His workers. This was the response to Jesus compassion - more people like this - so go. Offer a turning point to people. A compassion for Christ will generate a compassion for people.

How has the compassion of Jesus changed you?

Where do you have a lack of compassion? Do you see why?

What is your next step to show compassion?