

October 9, 2022 Compassion Series Part 3

On week one of this series on compassion, we studied the compassion of the Father from the parable of the prodigal son. On week two, we studied the compassion of the Son from the story of the feeding of the 5000. Now today, we study the compassion of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 3:1-6 *Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms. But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, "Look at us!" And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!"*

These verses tell the story of a man unable to walk from birth; everyday carried to this temple gate; everyday he begged for alms; everyday he carried the burden, the insecurity and shame of his disability. It was a scene of great contrast. The glory and amazement of the majestic temple on the one hand and the frailty of man on the other. This gate, called Beautiful, was described by Josephus, the historian, as ornately adorned, overlaid with gold and silver or bronze. At that time of day, a large crowd would be entering the temple for the hour of prayer. But on this day two disciples, Peter and John stopped rather than walking by him.

The word "saw" meant more than just seeing the physical person, he saw something beneath that was different. He asked for their charity - spare change. Peter answered honestly knowing he did not possess what the crippled man needed. Do we answer this way to others' requests? Do we limit what we do because we only see our usefulness as something we can accomplish on our own? Do we tend to look at only what we have to help someone? Is our own fear of helping others based on an inhibition because we possess nothing of value to help someone? Sometimes our view of ourselves limits our value to those around us. (I'm not good enough; I don't know enough; I don't have enough or the right resource.)

Acts 2:1-4 *When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.*

The Holy Spirit had fallen on these disciples days before. So despite the same place, steps, and people, this day was different for the disciples, the beggar, and the people around. Things had changed. All that was required was a willingness to follow the Holy Spirit.

John 5:19 *Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.*

Jesus was always looking to His Father and seeking what His Father wanted Him to do. Sometimes our unwillingness to help another is based not on what the Father is able to do but what we are able to do. Jesus always points out that the Father is doing these things through Him. He did the will of His Father. Jesus' ministry, works, and emphasis was on the Father - to reveal the Father.

Compassion is one of the primary ways that the church will reveal the Father to a lost and broken world. Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit. **Luke 3:21-22** *Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."* **Luke 4:1; Luke 4:14; Luke 4:18; Luke 10:21;** All through the gospels we see the infilling of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was led by, directed by, guided by, led by the Holy Spirit in everything He did. The Holy Spirit is The Helper, One who comes alongside, a help-mate. He will lead, guide, and direct everyone of us. The Holy Spirit equips us to be people of compassion, sent on mission from God to be the hands and feet to the world around us for the purpose of revealing the Father.

All that Jesus did was in response is to these promises in **John 14:7-31**.

Acts 1:4-8 *Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*

The Holy Spirit opens our eyes and empowers us. We become a people of compassion with the power of the Holy Spirit. Do we stop and consider what God would want us to do in a particular situation? or do we look at only what is in our hands. What does it require of us? We ask. **Luke 11:9-13** *So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?* Jesus was offering the Holy Spirit and His direction. He was offering what we couldn't provide in the physical. All that Jesus did was to reveal the Father. The Holy Spirit comes to us so that through us the world would know the Father. He uses us as vessels of compassion offering Jesus to those in need. Compassion is a compound response to pain; it simultaneously notices, feels, and responds.

Salvation was the most obvious and costly act of compassion. It not only moved Jesus to surrender His position in Heaven, it required that He give His life. A sacrifice He endured because of His love for us, because of His compassion on us. Welcome the power of the Holy Spirit. Yes, we receive the Holy Spirit at salvation but we can ask for more of the Holy Spirit. **Luke 11:13** *...How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?*

Do you tend to look at only what you have in order to help someone? Do you feel limited?

Do you think about compassion as an obligation or a vessel to reveal the Father to others when they need help?

Was there a time when someone saw Jesus through your compassion to help?

What does being filled with the Holy Spirit mean to you?