The Compassion of Jesus (Part 1)

I. Mission Statement - To show that Jesus was a man of compassion that we can imitate and be more like Him. He made a decision to stop and relate, to feel deeply, to be moved, by others pain and suffering. This personal relationship drove him to heal and teach in a way that was most meaningful to others. We can so the same.

II. Pray

III. Lesson
   A. READ Mark 1:40-42

      A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing”, he said. “Be Clean!” Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

      Video 1 - Do you see it in Jesus’s eyes?

      Video 2 - Do you hear it in Jesus’ voice

   B. What makes this event in history so powerful?

      1. You don’t even go near someone with leprosy. His was an outcast. This man risked everything even getting this close to anyone, especially a rabbi.
      2. Who did Jesus see? - Child of God
      3. What made Jesus willing to cleanse this man? - Felt his suffering
      4. Why was this so powerful? - Its the WAY Jesus healed him.
      5. Knew the man hadn’t been actually touched in months to years.
      6. Jesus risked also. Touching this man would of made Jesus unclean in the Pharisees eyes.
      7. But can you imaging the longing to be touched? To be embraced? To be seen as human?
      8. What was Jesus moved by? Compassion. Jesus had compassion on this man. Jesus was willing to share in his suffering.
      9. Jesus was willing to go there. Feel this man’s pain and suffering as his own. Be able to relate on a deep emotional level. Jesus was moved by compassion. Moved by an insatiable desire to end this man’s suffering
      10. Give him what he longed for - to be touched again.

Compassion is Powerful Medicine

C. The Compassion of Jesus

   1. I had to strip away other words and ideas that may be closely related to compassion like empathy, pity, mercy, grace.
   2. Compassion denotes action.
   3. Its an inward welling up of emotion from the bowels that moves one to act in love and understanding.
   4. Its what makes us uniquely made in “Their” image. (Genesis 1:27)
5. It’s a driving force behind acts of mercy and kindness
6. Compassion is literally - sharing in another’s suffering, a co-suffering, a willingness to go there.
7. This lesson changed my life
8. Tonight you have an opportunity to change your life

D. READ John 11: 17-44
   1. v. 35 He shared in their pain of losing their brother. Even though He knew He would raise Lazarus
   2. v.38 Jesus thinking about the the pain of the disciples, when they come to his tomb.
   3. v.8 Again Jesus risked

   Compassion Requires Understanding

   Compassion is Risky Business

E. READ John 8:2-11
   1. Ever wonder what Jesus was writing in the dirt? Reminding us that showing compassion means getting our hands dirty.
   2. v.6 Do you see it? Understanding how his own mother must of felt. The shame. The condemnation. The judgmental attitudes. Stone her!
   3. v. 11 Do you see the difference between compassion and mercy? Through Jesus’ compassion for this woman, he showed her mercy.
   4. Jesus of all people could have thrown the first stone. But he didn’t. Why?
   5. He choose to relate to this woman instead.
   6. How quick are we to pick up a stone?

   Compassion Requires Getting Our hands Dirty

   Compassion is Contagious

F. READ Luke 7:12-15
   1. Do you see it?
   2. Jesus’ heart went out to her - another way of saying compassion
   3. Again relating to how his own mother will feel in a short time
   4. Jesus acted in compassion

   Compassion Doesn’t Need an Invitation

G. Other Scriptures
   1. Matt. 9:36 - When He saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless.
      a) Very timely scripture today
   2. Matt. 14:14 - When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and heal their their sick.
   3. Mark 6:34 - same story - So He began teaching them many things
      a) Jesus was willing to be inconvenienced and risked being confronted by the Pharisees
      b) Out of compassion, Jesus took the time to teach people about God
   a) Jesus told this parable to help us understand how He and His Father feels about us when we repent.
5. John 9:1-6 After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes.
   a) We can have fun and a sense of humor in our compassion as well... Here’s mud in your eye.

H. Transition (Summary)
1. We’ve looked at the Compassion of Jesus. We see that...
2. **Compassion is Powerful Medicine**
3. **Compassion Requires Understanding**
4. **Compassion is Risky Business**
5. **Compassion Requires Getting Our hands Dirty**
6. **Compassion is Contagious**
7. **Compassion is a choice.**
8. **Compassion Doesn't need an Invitation**
9. **Compassion changes lives.**
10. **Compassion draws people to God**

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The Compassion of Jesus (Part 2)

I. Recap
   A. What is this compassion that we’ve seen in Christ?
      1. “Compassion” is the aspect of love that has to do with feelings and attitude. Overlaps with “mercy” and “pity.”
      2. “Compassion in action”—inward feelings that drive outward, loving action.
   II. We are called to compassion.
      A. **Luke 6:32-36**
         1. Loving “our own” is not enough
         2. Called to reflect God’s compassionate/merciful nature.
         3. He described Himself as “the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness” (Exo. 34:6; see also Hos. 11:4, 8-9; Mic. 7:18-20)
         4. We are to show God’s heart to the world.
      B. This doesn’t come naturally for most us.
         1. Some reasons I’m not compassionate:
a Selfishness.
b Lack of love.
c It’s often emotionally draining and even painful.
d It’s time consuming.
e It usually demands a sacrifice.
f I feel ill-prepared or unappreciated.

2. Compassion comes easier to some of us, but is a choice/decision for all of us.
3. This warning reminds us that it matters: “judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.” (James 2:13)

C. Be compassionate because God is! By God’s compassion we are:

1. Forgiven: “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” (Eph. 4:2)
2. Chosen undeservedly: “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion” (Col. 3:12)
3. Recipients of mercy: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.” (Rom. 12:1)
4. Comforted: “the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” (2 Cor. 1:3-4)
5. Loved: “Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.” (Php. 2:1-2)

III. How do I put this into practice? “Who is my neighbor?”

A. Jesus’ example and NT direction suggest some groups to consider.

B. The poor, needy, helpless, or marginalized

1. Zec.7:9-10
2. Examples:
   a Good Samaritan: Samaritan was “moved with compassion” (Lk. 10:33).
      heartfelt love that is free from the seeking of praise or honor and which is willing to endure distress, suffering and loss, in the path of good works, such as is set forth in this parable, is extraordinarily rare”
   b Compassionate Employer/Workers in the Vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16):
      i Master is invested—he keeps going back himself, he doesn’t send his servant.
      ii Sensitive to their needs, dignity—they want work not just a handout.
      iii Workers received more than mere “justice” (as in equal application of the law)—mercy and compassion as well.
3. Obstacles:
   a Uncertainty (about the circumstances, or the “law”); fear about the consequences, risks or costs
   b Legalism (“Who is my neighbor?” rather than “To whom must I become a neighbor?”)
   c Prejudice (economic/racial/cultural, cf. James 2:2-ff)
   d Hardened to the spoken or silent appeal for pity/mercy (c.f. Mk. 9:22; 1 Jn 3:17)

C. The bereaved/grieving

1. Lk. 7:11-17
   a Compassion moved Jesus to act
2. Obstacles:
a. Self-protection—not wanting to feel their pain
b. Compassion fatigue: “It is easy to develop armor to protect ourselves from feeling the pain of others; and as that happens we cease to mourn for or with them.”
c. Self-doubt—I’m not able to do this (on my own strength!)
d. Procrastination

D. The lost or enemies
   1. Jesus extends compassion to all humans, not just good ones!
      a. Matthew’s version of the Lk. 6 passage: “But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Mt. 5:44-45)
      b. “Oh Jerusalem...” (Mt. 23:37-39)
      c. Perspectives: “harassed and helpless” (Mt. 9:36), “under the control of the evil one” (1 Jn. 5:19)
   2. Parable of the Lost Son (Lk. 15:11-ff):
      a. The father, who symbolizes God, was “filled with compassion for him” so he acted...
   3. Obstacles:
      a. Prejudice (Read Jonah!)
      b. Feeling like certain people don’t deserve compassion.

E. The weak
   1. Isa. 42:1-3 (cf. Mt. 12:20)
      b. God delights!: “Among the many lovely qualities that make God smile is compassionate understanding.”
   2. Examples:
      a. Jesus would gladly carry their burdens: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest...” (Mt. 11:28-30)
      b. Woman caught in adultery (Jn 8:10-11)
      c. Paul’s example: “Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?” (2 Cor. 11:28-29)
   3. Obstacles:
      a. Our attitudes towards carrying their burdens (Gal. 6:2):
         i. resenting their weakness which hinders our goals
            “It is only when he is a burden that another person is really a brother and not merely an object to be manipulated.”
      b. Refusal to acknowledge others’ disadvantages/challenges (cf. Lk. 11:46)

IV. Conclusion
   A. Christ-like compassion demands being, not merely doing (c.f. 1 Cor. 13:3)—right heart and actions.
   B. We’re motivated by the impact of God’s compassion in our own lives.
   C. “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” (Acts 20:35)

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