



DISCUSSION GUIDE

“PROPHETIC EMPATHY”

SPEAKER: BO STERN BRADY

DATE: August 5, 2025

TEXT(S): Romans 12:15, Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34, and Mark 1:41, with Luke 19, 2 Corinthians 1:3, John 11, and Micah 6:8

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE: *This resource is designed to help you, or your group, step through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker’s message. Our goal is to help you better understand and apply B4’s teaching.*

MESSAGE SUMMARY + DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Two words run through every part of Jesus’ story, woven throughout His teachings, His miracles, His death, and His resurrection. They are empathy and compassion. These aren’t just nice character qualities. For anyone who follows Jesus, they are essential. They mark the presence of His Kingdom in us.

But let’s be honest. Our culture doesn’t encourage this way of living. It tells us to protect our comfort, hold our ground, and defend our positions, political and otherwise. This is often at the expense of ignoring the pain or humanity of those on the other side. At B4, we don’t preach politics. That’s not our calling. But we do teach the Bible. And Scripture has a way of shaping everything in our lives, including our political leanings. It doesn’t let us stay indifferent or untouched. It always speaks plainly to us, whatever the circumstances of our time. Today, it says, “The Lord requires mercy.” And the good news? He also blesses it.

LEAN IN: *These are icebreakers and warm-ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Who was the most compassionate person you know, and what makes them stand out?
2. What’s something small someone did for you recently that made your day better?
3. Are you more likely to tear up during a movie, a commercial, or a sports moment, and why?
4. If you gave an “*Empathy + Compassion Award*” to any public figure or celebrity, who would it be and why?
5. Describe something from church where you felt God’s compassionate mercy.

LOOK DOWN: *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) from the message. Spend about 15-20 minutes discussing your choice of two or three questions:*

1. Romans 12:15: Why do you think Paul connects both joy and sorrow here? Which one is harder for you to practice when you consider your relationships?
2. Matthew 9:36: What does it tell us about what Jesus saw and felt before He acted? Why is it significant that compassion begins with seeing?

3. 2 Corinthians 1:3: Paul calls God the “Father of compassion and God of all comfort.” What do you think it means to carry God’s character of compassion into our everyday relationships?
4. Micah 6:8 says God requires us to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly. How does this connect to the definition of compassion in this message, namely “the movement of love”?
5. 1 John 4:17 says, “In this world we are like Jesus.” What is it about Jesus’ empathy and compassion that challenges you to reflect Him more clearly?

LOOK OUT: *These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes discussing your choice of two or three questions:*

1. In this message, Pastor Bo said, “Empathy keeps us human.” Where do you see people today becoming less human in how they treat others: online, in politics, or even in everyday life?
2. Jesus had compassion on crowds, the sick, and the hungry. If Jesus were walking through your city today, who do you think He’d stop for? Who are today’s “harassed and helpless”?
3. We live in a time-pressured, priority-challenged world that’s driven by efficiency. What does it cost people to slow down long enough to feel someone else’s pain? What might that look like in your workplace, neighborhood, or school?
4. In this message, Pastor Bo said, “We can’t love people we refuse to see.” How does social media or cable news make it easier to flatten people into opinions instead of seeing them as full humans?
5. We often hear phrases like “protect your energy” or “set boundaries.” How do you think followers of Jesus can live with compassion without burning out in a culture that promotes self-protection?

LOOK IN: *These questions help you consider how to engage the teaching for yourself. Spend about 15-20 minutes discussing your choice of two or three questions:*

1. When was the last time you slowed down enough to truly feel what someone else was going through? What helped you do that, or what got in the way?
2. Which do you tend to practice more: empathy (feeling with someone) or compassion (responding with action)? What might help you grow in the other, or both?
3. Are there areas of your life where you’ve grown emotionally detached or hardened? What do you think caused that, and what would softening your heart look like?
4. What does “becoming like Jesus in this world” (1 John 4:17) look like in your daily routines: your home, job, friendships, school, or neighborhood?
5. If someone were to describe your life this past week, would the words “empathy” and “compassion” show up in their description? Why or why not, and what would you hope might change going forward?

LIVE IT OUT: *These practical action steps help you apply this message to day-to-day life. Choose one prompt and talk it over for 5-10 minutes:*

1. What’s one small practice you could embrace this week to lean towards compassion? (e.g., listening more closely, praying for someone, writing a note, offering help, etc.) How will you do this in the coming week?
2. The message mentioned that Jesus saw people as stories, not just problems. Who in your life can you see through that lens right now? What might change if you did? What do you want to do about it this week?