

Sermon Title: Caring Like Jesus Cares

by: Pastor Spencer Sweeting

Scripture: [Matthew 9:35-38 NLT] - ³⁵“Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷He said to his disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. ³⁸So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.”

Good-news people don’t just notice people — we care like Jesus cares.

The Compassion of Christ

- Compassion is the character that fuels acts of kindness and mercy.
- Compassion, a form of love, is stirred up within us when we are confronted with those who suffer or are vulnerable.
- Compassion is often what produces action to alleviate someone's suffering.

“If you would sum up the whole character of Christ towards us, it might be gathered into this one sentence, He was moved with compassion.” - Charles Spurgeon

1. Compassion grows as we know the Father’s heart.

- Old Testament: Isaiah 40:11; Isaiah 43:5-7; Isaiah 54:8; Isaiah 49:15; Isaiah 66:13
- New Testament: Jesus as the True, Great and Good Shepherd (Matthew 9:36; John 10:1-18)

2. Compassion grows as we let what we see get inside us.

- Jesus allowed Himself to be affected by what He saw.
- The reason our “compassion” so often fails to lead to meaningful action is because we haven’t let what we see get inside our hearts.

3. Compassion grows as we join in God’s work of reconciliation.

- In every situation where Jesus demonstrates compassion in action, His motivation is not simply to meet their obvious needs, but to see us reconciled to God!

Jesus explicitly tells His disciples that their compassion is evidence of their conversion.

Scripture: [Matthew 25:34-40 NLT] - ³⁴“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’ ³⁷“Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? ³⁹When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

⁴⁰“And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’”

Life Group Discussion Questions

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WARM-UPS:

1. If you wear glasses or have had eye surgery, how has your eyesight changed or improved? What differences did you observe?
2. After last week's message, "Seeing Like Jesus Sees", how was your spiritual eyesight challenged this past week? How have you seen people or situations differently?

DISCUSSION:

1. Read Henri Nouwen's quote. *"Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely...Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human."* Then, read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. How does this align with the Apostle Paul's and others' missionary strategies?
2. Look at the following examples of Jesus' compassion. What is common in each scripture passage?
 - a. Matthew 10:29-31
 - b. Matthew 14:13-14
 - c. Mark 1:40-42
 - d. Luke 7:11-15
3. In your spiritual life, how have you grown in compassion? What were key times and circumstances that caused growth? How have you experienced God's and Jesus' compassion modeled through others?
4. *"Compassion involves so identifying with the situation of others that one is prepared to act for their benefit. What are the needs God has opened your eyes to?"* (Pastor Spencer) Share an example how this occurred in your life? What was the situation and how were you impacted?
5. What did you find most challenging, helpful, or inspiring in the sermon today, and what will you do differently as a result? What did the Holy Spirit impress upon you?

IN THE WORD:

Read the following scripture passages and discuss how they apply to this week's sermon about "Caring Like Jesus Cares".

- Colossians 1:15, 19-20; Hebrews 1:1-3a
- Matthew 2:6
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
- 2 Corinthians 5:20-21

PRACTICE:

1. Pastor Spencer concluded his message saying, *"...the ministry of reconciliation – the way God is bringing people back to Himself through Christ – that Jesus inaugurates, models, and then delegates to His disciples."* Pray for Spirit-led places and opportunities to meet practical needs of others and do so in such a way that the LOVE, the HOPE, the PEACE, and the PRESENCE we embody gives those whom we bless a foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven.
2. Secondly, *"Our compassion is evidence of our closeness with Christ"* and that it is evidence of our conversion. Ask God in what ways does He want you to draw closer to Him?