

November 1, 2020 James Gallaher
The Compassionate Christ

Compassion is a feeling or a showing of sympathy for another with a desire to alleviate pain. God's character is important to know as it shows us how to relate to God, that we are created like Him, and because the world needs to know Him.

John 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.* Jesus showed us how we are to live our lives with Himself as a picture. Like preparing for a baby and then holding a baby, when what's in our heart is suddenly in our hands it changes us. John was describing this in Jesus. Christ changed everything by giving us a living example.

A study of empathy on a college campus for 30 years found that 40% were less empathic within the latter years and associated it with those on social media. They also found that the ability of a group of 11 to 13-year-olds to be empathic was increased with a 5-day time away from all social media. We need more compassion today.

The character of Christ can be summed up this way: *moved with compassion*. As followers of Christ, it should be said of us too - modeling Christ's compassion.

1. Compassion interrupts us. Jesus was not agitated by the interruptions that came His way. He was not in a hurry. Hurry could be the enemy of compassion. Perhaps our compassion problem is in our priorities. In **John 11**, Jesus seemed to not hurry when hearing that His friend, Lazarus, was dying. **John 11: 35** *Jesus wept*. In that moment, knowing He would raise Lazarus, He took the time to have compassion. We need to take time and allow interruptions to become part of what God is doing in another or in us. **Mark 5** shows Jesus interrupted by a sick woman on His way to heal Jairus' daughter. He stopped to offer healing and compassion and yet still healed Jairus' daughter.

Matthew 14:13-14 *Now when Jesus heard about John, He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself; and when the people heard about this, they followed Him on foot from the cities. When He came ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.*

Jesus finds out about the death of His cousin, John the Baptist, and He takes time to go and grieve. Yet as the people followed Him, He allowed compassion to overwhelm Him in His time of grief. Compassion changes our perspective. **Matthew 6:33** *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you.*

2. Compassion costs us. Compassion in the Gospels was always attached to an action. Jesus tells the parable of the good Samaritan in **Luke 10:30-37** *But a Samaritan who was on a journey came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion.* He acted and took care of the injured man. Compassion without action is pity. Compassion without action doesn't help anybody.

Jesus' compassion always costs Him something. Some of those things were:

- His reputation by befriending Zaccheus, the tax collector.
- His reputation and His position of authority by defending the woman caught in adultery where Jesus goes to the ground to defend her.
- His time as He stops to attend to Lazarus.
- His emotions as He grieves Lazarus and John the Baptist.

3. Compassion changes us. Jesus' compassion was inclusive to whoever needed His compassion. **John 4:7-42** Jesus interacts with the woman of Samaria as He knew what she was looking for. Jesus speaks words of life to her. She received Jesus' compassion and a whole community was changed. **Verse 39** *Now from that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done."*

When compassion interrupts us, it changes others, but it also changes us. As followers of Christ, we are called to be the example. Instead of reacting to what we see, we need to look at hearts. Look to others as Christ sees them. Give God permission to interrupt us, to make us more compassionate, and use us to care for others.

Jesus wants to be Lord of our life:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God. I believe that on that cross You took my guilt, my sin, and my shame and You died for it. You faced hell for me, so I wouldn't have to. And You rose again to give me a place in Heaven, a purpose on Earth, and a relationship with Your Father. Today, Lord Jesus, I turn from my sins to be born again. And now, God is my father, Jesus is my Savior, The Holy Spirit is my helper. And Heaven is my home. Amen.

What would seeking His kingdom first change in my priorities, my schedule, today?

How have I attempted to see things from another perspective?

How can I be compassionate in a relationship or in a situation? What action can I take?

Ask God to open our eyes and to make us more compassionate this week!