

A Call to Compassion

Matthew 9:18-26; 35-38
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Our goal is not just to imitate Christ's character that we find throughout scripture, but also to be empowered by Him to weather the calm and storms of life. Christian compassion is something that we all long for, whether to give or to receive. Even as fallen people living in a fallen world, deep down inside we know there is a need for compassion. Jesus was a man who was immensely compassionate, and His followers must be people who are known for their compassion as well.

Matthew 9 records for us a series of encounters Jesus had that displayed His compassion and Him acting on it. He healed a paralytic man (vv1-8), called Matthew (a tax collector) to be His disciple and reclined together with tax collectors and other sinners. He also took notice and healed an insignificant woman among a crowd with a blood condition (vv18-22). Jesus came to seek the lost and to save sinners. Only Jesus' compassion is constantly true. It will never diminish!

vv18-26 – A ruler whose daughter had just died rushed out to meet Jesus. He knelt before Him, displaying fully the faith he had that Jesus Christ is the Lord (Ex. 34:6). Jesus' compassion is constantly true and unceasing (Matt. 11:28-30). He went with the ruler to see his daughter (v19). *"Meek. Humble. Gentle. Jesus is not trigger-happy. Not harsh, reactionary, easily exasperated. He is the most understanding person in the universe. The posture most natural to him is not a pointed finger but open arms."* – Dane Ortlund.

vv35-36 – What moved Jesus' heart to compassion over the people He saw was their lostness. They were like sheep without a shepherd. It did not matter who they were; a helpless paralytic, a rich tax collector, a synagogue ruler or an insignificant woman with a blood condition. Jesus' compassion is

for all of us. We who are lost and far away from God need a shepherd, and Jesus came to be our Shepherd. Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6). He chose not just to be our good Shepherd, but also our Redeemer – He laid down His life for our sins so that we can have new life in Him (John 10:11).

3 Characteristics of The Compassion of Jesus

- 1. It is tradition breaking – unconventional**
- 2. It is constantly true – unceasing**
- 3. It is for all who are lost – unbiased**

vv37-38 – Compassion is not just about feelings but reaching out practically; to go into places of pain and share in the brokenness, shame and anguish of others. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable and powerless with the powerless. Compassion makes caring specific. Our compassion is a diminishing resource, but God's compassion can never be exhausted!

What can we do when our compassion runs dry?

#1 Slow Down – do not be in a hurry to show compassion. Take time to understand and act.

#2 Draw from the Source of all compassion – do not depend on our experience and competency but on who we are in Christ.

The compassion of Christ embraces us, transforms us into his likeness, and then empowers us to the ministry of compassion. Draw compassion from the One who gave it all for us – Jesus Christ our Lord!