

## Seeds of Compassion Matt. 9:35-38

It used to be the way you measured the size of a church was by Sunday morning attendance, but God is causing us to rethink what it really means to be the church. Only about 1/3 of those impacted by the church actually attend Sunday service. Whether in a group or by ourselves it is important to have a compass and a really good idea of where we are going and what we have been called to. As the church we have been called to share the good news of Jesus Christ on every street, side road, and trail, at every business, house, apartment, trailer, or cabin in the area. The Church is His only plan on getting that good news out to the people. The compass that God gives to the Church is the compass of compassion; compassion is God's true north. Anytime we wonder if we are going the right way, compassion always points to the love of God. The greatest thing any of us can have is our love for God and our love for our neighbour so we need to make sure we have that compass of compassion.

Jesus started at the synagogue to connect with God's people but most of his ministry happened on the streets and in people's houses. What He saw was people who were helpless, harassed, and who didn't know how to solve their problems and in many ways desperate and in need of something they couldn't produce themselves and it moved Him with compassion; that feeling in the pit of your stomach that tells you this is something. **Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 6:34; Luke 7:13**, He was moved with compassion anytime He saw human need. God wants to develop Christ's mind in us. In addition to the good thinking that Jesus had, knowing the word of God, being sensitive to the voice of Holy Spirit, and being motivated by love, God also wants us to feel the things that Jesus felt and that includes compassion; not the kind that has us walking around with a box of Kleenex but the kind that moves us to action. No matter what our personality is, as Christians we all desire to be more like Jesus. So how do we cultivate compassion? How do we put that seed of God's love in our hearts and grow a garden full of compassion? The 1<sup>st</sup> seed we need to put in the soil of our hearts is: we need to see people with Jesus' eyes. Not everyone that Jesus saw was harassed, many had the appearance of having it all together, like the Pharisees, they made an art of putting on a show. **1 Sam. 16:7** Jesus "saw" what was really going on. We are all guilty of looking on the outward appearance and sizing people up by what we see. The question is, "Do we see what Jesus sees?" Jesus sees what is causing the outward appearance.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> seed is we need to touch people where they hurt **Mark 1:40-42**. Jesus was willing to do what was politically incorrect or socially frowned upon. How do we really touch hurting people? What touches their heart? What does Jesus see in Englehart that's not being touched?

The 3<sup>rd</sup> seed a willingness to serve anyone in need. We have an attitude that says I will do this but not that. Never tell God "never"; that's His favourite list to work from. God is looking for people who will serve (period). What is God saying to us individually and as a church about people in need? How are we able to serve anyone? Jesus has a heart for the little ones, but who are they? There are a whole lot of "little ones" living in adult bodies. There are many people who are marginalized, falling through the cracks, being walked over. **Luke 14:16-23**. we need to go as far as we can to find people to come to the table to eat.

Jesus taught the Beatitudes, Satan has the Uglitudes:

Blessed are those Christians who are too tired, too busy, too distracted to spend time with God; they will spend their time for me.

Blessed are those Christians who are too tired, too busy, too distracted to spend time with their fellow Christians in church; they are my best candidates to backslide.

Blessed are those Christians who wait to be asked, and expect to be thanked; I can use them to slow things down.

Blessed are those Christians who are touchy, with a bit of luck they may stop going to church and get others to quit; they are my missionaries.

Blessed are those Christians who are very religious but get on everyone's nerves; they are my most effective stumbling blocks.

Blessed are those Christians who are troublemakers; they are my wrecking crew.

Blessed are those Christians who have no time to pray; they are easy prey for me.

Blessed are those Christians who are complainers; they are my best discouragers.

And blessed are you when you hear this and think it's about other people and not yourself; you're an easy target.

If we can see what Jesus sees, if we can touch people where they hurt, if we are willing to serve anyone in need, then the love of Christ, the compassion is going to grow in us. It will mess us up and change our hearts. We will start doing the things that were on our "I'll never do that" list; if we are willing, if we will take the risk. Jesus took the risk and was crucified for it. If we are willing to follow Him we will need to take a cross with us also, that's just the way it works. Is it your prayer to be changed on the inside, to have the compassion of Jesus? Are you willing to see the people in your community the way Jesus sees them? Tell Him and watch where He takes you.