

Jesus Showed His Compassion for People

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain to others, from the Word of God, that God is the source of both physical and spiritual life. In this topic, we will see how Jesus showed compassion both for the needs of individuals and also for the multitudes as a whole.

Jesus left the house where He had raised the daughter of the ruler from the dead. Matthew 9:27-31 says, “When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, ‘Son of David, have mercy on us!’ And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you believe that I am able to do this?’ They said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord.’ Then He touched their eyes, saying, ‘According to your faith let it be to you.’ And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, ‘See *that* no one knows *it*.’ But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.” Here, we see that these two blind men had heard about Jesus and wanted to receive their sight.

The men began to follow Jesus and cried out to Him, “Son of David, have mercy on us!” The title “Son of David” showed that these men recognized that Jesus was the Christ. This title is used several times for Jesus in Matthew. Matthew 12:23 says, “And all the multitudes were amazed and said, ‘Could this be the Son of David?’” The two men also asked Jesus to show mercy to them. They realized that their blindness could only be healed by God and so they asked for help for their need for sight. Jesus did not respond immediately. Instead, He continued to the house where He was going. The two men followed Jesus right into the house. Here, we see that they were desperate because they knew that Jesus could heal them and give them sight.

Jesus just asked the two of them one question. He said, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” Jesus knew that these two men had faith. As a result, He wanted to give them an opportunity to demonstrate their faith by this question. They answered Jesus, “Yes, Lord.” The fact that they added the word “Lord” to their “yes” showed that they recognized they were placing their faith in Jesus. This showed that they had spiritual sight, because they placed their faith in Jesus. Jesus then touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith let it be to you.” At that moment, they received physical sight in addition to the spiritual sight that had been shown by their statement of faith.

Jesus told them not to tell anyone that He had opened their eyes. However, they had good news because they had been given both physical and spiritual sight. They probably felt like Jeremiah did in the second part of Jeremiah 20:9. That verse says, “Then I said, ‘I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name.’ But *His word* was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding *it* back, and I could not.” Jeremiah had said he was not going to talk any more about God because of persecution. In contrast, these men had good news because Jesus had given them sight but He had told them not to say anything. However, Jeremiah and these two men had one thing in common. They could not keep quiet. The two men told others what Jesus had done for them and the news about Jesus spread throughout that whole surrounding area.

When Jesus left the house where He had given sight to the two men, some other people brought a man to Jesus that was demon-possessed. Matthew 9:32-34 says, “As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute

and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, ‘It was never seen like this in Israel!’ But the Pharisees said, ‘He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.’” We see that this man was mute and unable to talk because of the demon. Jesus knew why this man was unable to talk. As a result, Jesus cast out the demon and immediately the man was able to talk.

There was a large crowd that had seen and heard what had happened. We see that the people were amazed. The people expressed their amazement by saying, “It was never seen like this in Israel!” The crowds realized that the things that Jesus was doing had never before happened in the land. We read how the crowds responded to another time when Jesus cast out demons. Mark 1:27-28 says, “Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, ‘What is this? What new doctrine *is* this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.’ And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.” We see that the crowd was amazed as they saw the results when Jesus cast out the demon.

That was exactly what the Pharisees had feared. That is why the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.” The Pharisees later said this again. Jesus said at that time, in Matthew 12:26-28, “‘If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.’” This time, Jesus showed why their statement could not be true. If Jesus cast out demons by the power of Satan, He would be defeating Himself. In contrast, if Jesus was casting out demons by the Spirit of God, they needed to admit that the kingdom of God had come to them. The Pharisees did not want to admit that Jesus had come from God, that was why they accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Satan.

Then, Matthew 9:35-38 goes on to say, “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” We see that Jesus then left that area and began traveling to the various cities and villages throughout the region of Galilee. We see that Jesus focused on three things as He traveled throughout Galilee. He was teaching in the synagogues. He was preaching the gospel of the kingdom. He was healing every sickness and disease.

However, Jesus did more than just teach, preach and heal. We read that He was moved with compassion as He saw the multitudes. The word translated “moved with compassion” means *to be moved from one’s bowels* (inner being) and meant *to be filled with love and pity*. This word is used twelve times in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Luke 10:33-34 says, “‘But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.’” In these verses, we see that the word was used to describe the Good Samaritan. Then, Luke 15:20 says, “‘And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.’” In this passage, we see that the father of the prodigal son showed compassion when his son returned home. Most of the rest of the uses of this word talk about the compassion of Jesus for the people.

Jesus was moved with compassion for the people because they fainted and were scattered abroad. The word

translated “fainted” means *to grow weak or to become faint-hearted*. The word translated “were scattered abroad” means *to be thrown down or thrown to the ground*. Jesus saw the people as sheep scattered abroad like sheep having no shepherd. We see a similar use of the word “scattered abroad” in Matthew 27:5, where it says, “Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.” This verse talks about Judas casting down the pieces of silver because of the guilt that he felt for betraying innocent blood. When sheep do not have a shepherd, they just wander and become easy food for the coyotes and the wolves because they have no protection. In John 10, Satan is described as a wolf. Just before that description, Satan is also described as a thief in John 10:10, where we read, ““The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.””

Then, Jesus said to the disciples, “The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” In this statement, Jesus gave the response that He wanted each of the disciples to make as they looked at the great spiritual need of the people around them. Jesus wanted them to develop the same compassion that He had for the people. That is the same thing that Jesus wants for each of us. A related word is used in 1 John 3:17-18, where we read, “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” Here, the Word makes it clear that we are to have that same love in our heart for others that Jesus had for the multitudes.

Jesus told the disciples, and us, what to do if we have that kind of love for people. Jesus said that we are to pray the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into His harvest. Here, we see that the harvest is His harvest. We are to pray that the Lord will send forth laborers into His harvest. We want to help our physical and spiritual children develop the kind of love for others that will also cause them to pray that the Lord will send forth laborers into His harvest. We see in the following verses that the very ones asked to pray were then sent into that harvest field. We want to show our children, by our example, the importance of praying for laborers. May the Lord richly bless you as you lead your children by your example as you pray for laborers.