

“BE COMPASSIONATE AND HELPFUL”

Romans 12:13

INTRODUCTION:

- A. **“DISTRIBUTING TO THE NEEDS OF THE SAINTS, GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY;”**
 - 1. *Distributing*: giving or sharing in order to meet the needs of others.
 - a. Contributing (NASU).
 - b. Share with God’s people who are in need (NIV).
 - 2. *Needs*: necessity (KJV)
 - 3. *Saints*: brethren in Christ. Not limited to saints only.
 - 4. *Hospitality*: also translated “entertain strangers” (Hebrews 13:2). Extending hospitality was a very important trait for Christians in the first century. They didn’t have *Hampton Inn, Comfort Inn, the Hilton or the Opryland Hotel*.
- B. From our text we get the thoughts that lead us to the title of our lesson: “Be Compassionate and Helpful.”
- C. We will look at these two concepts in order.
- D. What is Compassion? “Sympathetic consciousness of other’s distress together with a desire to alleviate it.” Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary

I. JESUS WAS A MAN OF COMPASSION.

- A. He serves as our example in all things:
 - 1. “Leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps,” **1 Peter 2:21**.
 - 2. “As I have loved you, so you ought to love one another,” **John 13:34-35**.
- B. THE MOST COMMON WORD USED IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT to refer to God's compassion is (*splanchnizomai*. This word is) used twelve times.
 - 1. Once it is used of the *SAMARITAN'S COMPASSION* for the wounded man (Luke 10:33).
 - 2. The other eleven uses refer to Jesus’ compassion. In *two separate parables* Jesus uses this verb to refer to God's compassion in saving and forgiving sinners (Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, Matthew 18:27 and Prodigal’s Father, Luke 15:20).
 - 3. *The remainder of the uses of this word all refer to compassion as the major motivation for Jesus' healing and miracles*.
 - 4. So in nine out of eleven occurrences where this verb is used of God's compassion it refers to the compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ as his motivation for healing!
 - 5. The nominal form of this word originally referred to the *inner parts of a man*, the heart, liver, and so on. It could be used of the inward parts of a sacrificial animal, but it became common to use this word in reference to the lower parts of the abdomen, the intestines, and especially the womb (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament).

6. Some theologians have felt that this term was *too rough or graphic* to be used in reference to God's compassion. Using the word for "*intestines*" to refer to God's compassion is akin to our using the word "guts" for courage in modern English, as when we say, "He really has guts." *However, I think the New Testament writers meant to do exactly this.*
 7. The choice of such a graphic word served *to impress the New Testament Christians that God's compassion for them was rooted in his deep love for them and his sensitivity to their pain.*
- C. Jesus had compassion and fed the 5,000 – **Matthew 14:14-21.**
1. And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. v.14.
 2. He fed 5,000 men with five loaves and two fish, v.17-21.
 3. *His compassion overflowed as the food overflowed* and filled 12 baskets with the leftovers.
- D. Jesus had compassion and fed 4,000 – **Matthew 15:30-32.**
1. He had just healed the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others, **v.30.**
 2. Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way." **v.32.**
 3. Jesus fed them with seven loaves and a few fishes to feed 4,000 men, with *seven baskets* overflowing, v.36-37.
- E. Jesus healed two blind men on the side of the road, **Matthew 20:29-34.**
1. They cried out, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!" v.31.
 2. *Mercy:* to compassionate (by word or deed, specially, by divine grace): (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance).
 3. "So Jesus had *compassion* and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him." **v.34.**
- F. Jesus felt compassion, pity and sorrow at the death of his friend, Lazarus, **John 11:34-38**
1. "Jesus wept," John 11:35
 2. "Behold, how he loved him!" John 11:36
- G. To sum up the compassion of Jesus, **Matthew 9:35-36.**
1. Jesus went about teaching, preaching and healing sickness and disease, v.35.
 2. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. v.36.
- H. He is an high priest who can be touched with our infirmities, **Hebrews 4:15.**
1. His heart can be touched and feel compassion for us.
 2. What more could we ask of the Son of God?

II. JESUS TAUGHT COMPASSION.

- A. Shown in what we call the GOLDEN RULE, **Matthew 7:12**. “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”
- B. THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN, **Luke 10:30-35**
- C. Preceding this parable a lawyer asked Jesus a question, **Luke 10:25**.
1. Jesus in turn asked him a question, *verse 26*
 2. The lawyer answered properly, *verse 27*
 3. He, willing to justify himself: he was trying to divert attention from his shortcomings, asked: “And who is my neighbor?” *verse 29*
- C. EVENTS OF THE PARABLE, **Verses 30-35**.
1. Man robbed, beaten, left for dead, *v.30*.
 2. Priest and Levite passed by on other side, *v.31,32*.
 3. A certain Samaritan had *compassion* on him, *verse 33*.
 4. The Samaritan helped as much as he could, *and offered to do more!*
- D. ILLUSTRATION: *A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a man was beaten, robbed, and left for dead. She described the situation in vivid detail so her students would catch the drama. Then she asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?"*
- A thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd throw up."*
- E. Jesus turned back to the lawyer, **verses 36-37**
1. “Which of these three was his neighbor?” *Verse 36*
 2. And he said, "He who showed *mercy* on him." *verse 37*.
- F. Harmon Black, a gospel preacher from Michigan, now deceased, wrote the following:

*A stranger was beaten and robbed one day
And left to die at the side of the way.
A Priest and a Levite ignored his need.
They hurried right by and left him to bleed.*

*He would have perished except for the fact
That a kindly soul got into the act.
The Good Samaritan showed his concern
Doing the job....asking no return.*

*He was a “good neighbor” our Lord declared.
A worthy example of one who “cared.”
So the best way to serve God here on earth
Is to show compassion for all we’re worth.*

III. COMPASSION IS TO BE A CHARACTERISTIC OF ALL CHRISTIANS

- A. "Having compassion for another," **1 Peter 3:8**.
1. Greek word: "having a fellow-feeling" ("sympathetic"), (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance).
 2. Rejoice when others rejoice, weep when others weep, **Romans 12:15**.
 3. "Pitiful" (KJV): full of pity; *be tenderhearted* (NKJ) *be compassionate* (NIV).
 4. "Courteous:" friendly minded; kind.
 5. Not rendering evil for evil, but rather blessing, **verse 9**. (Even show compassion toward those who would do evil against you).
- B. Put on "tender mercies." **Colossians 3:12**.
1. "bowels of mercies," (KJV); "a heart of compassion," (ASV).
 2. Having put on Christ, we live with His spirit of compassion within us.
 3. Also involved in the Christian's character: kindness, humility, meekness, patient even in trials and patient with one another, forgiving, **verses 12,13**. (cf. Ephesians 4:32).
- C. "Bowels of compassion" (KJV), **1 John 3:17,18**. (*HEART* – NKJ)
1. *Bowels*: considered the seat of the emotions because they are deep within us.
 2. One who has the ability to help another and does not have compassion on them does not have the Love of God within him. Such a one **DOES NOT PROPERLY LOVE GOD**.
 3. Let's not love just in word only, but also by **DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT**.
ILLUSTRATION: A man's car got stuck in a *snowstorm* and he went home to get a shovel to attempt to remove it. As he was walking back to the car, a neighbor called out, "Where are you going with that snow-shovel?" "To get my car out of a ditch," he replied. "**Call me if you need any help**," the neighbor said as he stepped back inside. Another neighbor saw him and asked the same question. "I'm going to get my car out of a ditch," he told him. The neighbor said, "Hold on, let me get my coat. I'll help you." The second neighbor loved in word and in deed.
- D. This is an example of "pure religion and undefiled," **James 1:27**
1. Supply the needs of those less fortunate.
 2. In order for one's religion to be pure and proper, this must be a part of it.
- E. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ," **Galatians 6:2**

SOME AREAS WHERE WE NEED TO SHOW COMPASSION:

In marriage – passion AND compassion.
As parents and children.
Toward friends and neighbors
Toward co-workers.
In the CHURCH.

IV. BE HELPFUL. Hebrews 3:12-13.

A. DON'T BE HARMFUL.

B. HAVE THE DESIRE TO HELP OTHERS. Be like Jesus, Acts 10:38.

38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, *who went about doing good* and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

C. Take the TIME to help others.

1. ILLUSTRATION: COMPASSION TAKES TIME. (See Below)

2. It takes TIME to show compassion and be helpful..

D. Take ACTION.

1. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. **James 1:22**

2. My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

1 John 3:18.

E. Sometimes in Children's bible class rooms, you will see a poster on the wall reminding the children to be *HELPFUL* at home or with friends.

F. We all need that reminder every day.

CONCLUSION:

A. We should want to be like Jesus in every way.

B. Do you need to show more compassion toward someone in *YOUR* life?

ILLUSTRATION: COMPASSION TAKES TIME.

An ethics professor at Princeton Seminary asked for volunteers for an extra assignment...

At two o'clock, fifteen students gathered at Speer Library. There he divided the group of fifteen into three groups of five each. He gave the first group of five envelopes telling them to proceed immediately across campus to Stewart Hall and that they had fifteen minutes to get there. If they didn't arrive on time it would affect their grade. This he called the "High Hurry" group. A minute or two later he handed out envelopes to five others. Their instructions were to also go over to Stewart Hall, but they were given forty-five minutes. After they departed, he gave the last of the envelopes with instructions to the third group, the "Low Hurry" group. They were given three hours to arrive at Stewart Hall.

Now unknown to any of these students, the teacher had arranged with three students from the Princeton University Drama Department to meet them along the way, acting as people in great need. In front of Alexander Hall one of the drama students was going around covering his head with his hands and moaning out loud in great pain. As they passed by Miller Chapel on their way to Stewart Hall they found a fellow who was on the steps lying face down as if unconscious. And finally on the very steps of Stewart Hall the third drama student was acting out an epileptic seizure. It's interesting that of the first group no one stopped, of the second, two of the five stopped, and of the third group all five stopped. Maybe one of the reasons that the Good Samaritan was able to stop and help was because he had a more leisurely agenda, while the religious "pros" of Jesus' day were living in the fast lane and simply had no time for interruptions. Their calendars may well have been filled with commitments that left them no leeway" [James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited.]

When I first read Hewett's illustration, I thought to myself, "No, that's not right. The problem isn't a hurried or leisurely agenda, the problem was a lack of compassion the part of the Levite and priest (cf. Luke 10:30-34.) The Samaritan was commended for his compassion." Then I got to thinking about it again. Perhaps Hewett has identified part of the problem with compassion. It takes time.

THOUGHT: You can't be compassionate in a hurry. Compassion demands time. It insists that we sit down with people, that we get into their head, their heart, sometimes into their life. Compassion is a bother. It won't be rushed into action. It pleads for you to stop a moment and find out how to help... [Dr. Bill Denton, "Too Big A Hurry For Compassion," Cross Ties, <http://www.crossties.org>.]

KneEmail #306: "Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous" (1 Pet. 3:8.)

