

Compassion Sunday

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Date: 21 April 2013

Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0 : 00] You're going to remember, isn't that right? You're going to remember the different people who spoke, the different ministry facets that they represented and challenged you to think about.

! And I trust that what happens as a result of our time today is not that you will go out of here saying, well, I was really encouraged by listening to what's going on around the world with Compassion Ministries or thinking about adoption and, wow, I am really excited with what John and Kristen are doing.

That's not the purpose of it. The purpose is to bring you to a point of saying yes or no to God and saying, you know what? God wants me to step forward and be more actively involved in ministering to individuals who are challenged and have needs that God's put me here to meet.

So I want you to pray with me as we close off our time this morning with a brief focus on some underlying biblical truth that is the foundation upon which we rest.

And so you pray that God would help me in the remaining 10 or 12 minutes. And some of you are looking at your watch and saying, I don't think he can do that. Trust me.

[1 : 14] You're going to be praying for that. So what we pray for, God helps with, right? And secondly, you'll be praying and say, all right, Lord, I don't want to walk out of here just saying, well, I heard something good, but you want to walk out saying, listen, God, you've got a part that you want me to play and you want me to step in and be involved.

Let's pray. Our gracious God and Father, we are so very thankful that we can rely upon your spirit to work in the lives of your people.

The scriptures come to mind where you explain to Zachariah the prophet, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord.

And we want you to work in us that you who abide in heaven and enjoy the praises of angels would be praised here on earth in our own hearts and lives as we recognize that mercy has taken us from the bankruptcy and the hollowness and the selfishness of our past and made us to be children of the King and examples of His grace.

Work in us this morning that we might produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness. We ask this in your precious name. Amen. Well, let me take just a minute and start at the outset by saying there's a reason for this Sunday and I want you to think about it.

[2 : 39] I want you to have this idea fixed in your mind that a forgiven people are a generous people. Will that spot off for you? A forgiven people are a generous people. And when we recognize that we have been forgiven so richly as we think through the scriptures, we recognize that those who have been blessed and delivered from the bondage of their sin have a reason for being a generous people.

And we want to think that way as a general rule. I do want you to recognize that this fellowship has a rich history of generosity. And I am fully aware of the giving and the generosity that is reflected in the way in which you go about the responsibilities of being part of this fellowship.

But even more so than that, I recognize there are so many different ways in which you as God's people are actively involved in meeting needs personally that have nothing to do with what we do collectively.

Individually, many, many times you are involved in meeting needs, whether it's a neighbor, an individual who you work with. You respond to the need when you see it.

At the same time, it follows that our desire is to be growing more generous and to keep on growing and being more effective, not only here but around the world.

[3 : 53] And so we want to think about that in a formal sense as a family of believers. And when we take a Sunday and we set it aside and say, all right, this Sunday is Mother's Day, guess what we're

always going to focus on on Mother's Day?

Guess. We're going to focus on Mother's Day. And then Father's Day follows that, not too long behind that. And what are we going to do? We're going to focus on Father's. We want Compassion Sunday to be something that is woven into our fellowship.

And it's not the one Sunday in the year that we think about that, but it's the one Sunday that we remind each other that we want this to be part of our DNA, of the heart that we have as believers. Well, let's think secondly about the reason for this Sunday from the Scriptures. And I want you to think, first of all, the most obvious thing that we come to is, so what was Jesus like? And when we think about a Sunday such as this, where we remind ourselves of the importance of compassion in the believer's life, we think about the model that Jesus set.

And I'm going to have you look quickly at a couple different texts, because I made that statement that I can do this in 12 minutes, and some of you are counting down already. I have about 11 to go, right? But Acts 10, verse 13, or 38, let's just take a look at it quickly.

[5 : 08] Here in Acts 10, we find Peter preaching his sermon to Cornelius, who actually, subsequent to that ministry, became the first Gentile believer.

And I want you to look there, if you will, at verse 38. But God appointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil.

The thing that I want you to mark in that passage here is that proof of God's anointing and his power in Christ was the fact that he did good. Now, when you stop and think about that connection, the ministry of God in the life of the believer should follow the same pattern.

Isn't that right? And if the Spirit of God working in Christ produced goodness in his ministry, all different kinds of needs, it follows that if the Spirit of God is working in us, what's going to come about?

We're going to be engaged in doing good as well. I want you to look at another passage in Luke chapter 7. And we're looking at the passage where John the Baptizer, John the Baptist, sent some of his disciples to Jesus.

[6 : 18] And they asked Jesus this question, Are you the one? Now, what was John's concern? Are you actually the Messiah? Are you the one that was promised? Are you the one that we are looking forward to be the one who is the answer to the problem of the world?

And here in Luke chapter 7, verse 20 through 23, I think it's very interesting that here's what Jesus said. And he answered them, verse 22, Go and tell John what you have seen and heard.

The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.

As John's disciples heard Jesus make this summary statement, I have no doubt that in the back of their mind they were thinking this, Ah, Jesus must be the one because he is referring to what we find over in Isaiah chapter 38, and you don't need to turn to that passage, but it's Isaiah chapter 35, verse 1 through 5.

Here's what Isaiah the prophet foretold about the coming Messiah. He would do these kinds of works. You remember when Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, he said, Hey, listen, you've got to be somebody special.

[7 : 37] Why? Because if you weren't, you couldn't pull these things off. You wouldn't be doing them. There's another very interesting passage I want you to think with me just for a moment about, and it's over in John chapter 10, verse 32.

In John chapter 10, we find that Christ's public ministry was an incredibly powerful testimony to his mission. When he did these miracles, when he healed individuals, when he took care of their desperate conditions, he very clearly pointed to who he was and what he had been sent to accomplish.

And we find in that passage in John chapter 10, verse 32, he makes this statement, I've shown you many good works from the Father, and for which of them are you going to stone me?

Now, what had happened is, as usual, he'd ended up in conflict with the religious leaders of the day, and he had zinged them very good, very well. And they were responding against that.

They were angry with him. And, boy, he pointed out the frailty of their wicked heart, and they really didn't take it well. But he says, Hey, listen, look at the things I've done.

[8 : 45] For which of these things are you going to stone me? And they responded, Well, you've said you're God. But Jesus was very, very clear that his works were the evidence of his heart and his ministry.

Over Christ's three years of public ministry, you will find that there were innumerable acts of mercy meeting people's individual needs. And for the most part, many, many, many of those individuals who he blessed and met their practical physical needs, how did they respond?

Remember the ten that he healed? How many? Ninety percent. Nine of the ten turned and walked on and didn't pay any attention. And only one turned around and praised God for the blessing that he had.

And I want you to recognize that when we, as Jesus' representatives in this world, go about doing good, we're not always kind of lifting the lid to just double check and see, Okay, how is this going to work out?

We do it simply the way Christ did it. I want you to recognize, secondly, that when we are involved in acts of mercy and kindness, we're reminded of the fact that the early church, the apostles and the church, and also throughout history, have been involved in acts of kindness.

[9 : 58] It's part of what ministry and being Christ's child means. Look over, if you would, in Acts chapter 3, verse 3 through 26, and we're not going to look at all the passage.

But here is Peter and John. They're walking into the temple. And when they're there on Solomon's portico, they end up seeing a man who is lame from birth.

And it says there in verse 2, A man lame from birth was being carried. He couldn't get there by himself. Several friends brought him and set him there because his daily occupation was begging. And he would appeal for alms. Give me something. Give me something so I can care for myself today. And we find Peter and John show up there. They look on him in verse 5.

And they say to him, Look on us. That's what Peter and John said. And guess what that guy expected? It's a little bit like when you stop at the stop sign and you begin to roll down your window.

[10 : 56] The guy holding that sign that says, We'll work for food. What does he do when you roll down your window? This guy says, Well, I think I'm going to get something. He goes over there. And Peter and John say, Hey, listen, I don't have silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you.

And he heals him. Subsequent to that, we find that what took place is Peter and John took advantage of the attention that that miracle created. And they preached the gospel and let people know that the reason this healing had taken place was because of the ministry of Christ who had come to redeem man from their sin.

I think also of the fact that when you look through the scriptures, you recognize that gospel and compassion are inseparably linked. Turn over in your Bible, if you would, to Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2. And mark what Paul has to say in relationship to the matter of salvation. In Ephesians chapter 2, verse 8, it says this.

It says, For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of your own doing, it's the gift of God. Not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

[12 : 09] For we are his workmanship. We've been created by him in Christ Jesus for good works. Why did he save you?

Just to give you fire insurance and to give you a future? No, he saved you, among other reasons, so that you would be an active witness for him in this present world.

And what way do you witness in particular as is displayed here? It is more the way you live and the way you respond to the challenges of life than anything else that's in play here.

I want you to think with me also another passage that I think has bearing on this, and turn over, if you would, to Galatians chapter 2. Galatians chapter 2, verse 10.

And here is Paul in Jerusalem giving an explanation of his gospel ministry to the apostles. And at the conclusion of his explanation of his gospel ministry, they do two things.

[13 : 14] Number one, they affirm, hey listen, Paul, we really appreciate the gospel that you're preaching, and we respect the ministry that God has called you to, but at the end of that, they tag a little bit on, and I want you to look at that.

Only they ask us to remember the poor the very thing I was eager to do. Now, what were they saying? They hadn't heard Paul in his explanation of his gospel ministry explain how gospel was being played out perhaps in practical terms.

And so they said, listen, we appreciate your heart to share with clarity the gospel message. But we also want to remind you that attached to gospel ministry is gospel behavior, and that means meeting the needs of those who are desperately in straits, and they need your attention.

And Paul actually says, which I was very eager to do. He says, listen, I'm doing that. That's going on. And if you stop and think about Paul's ministry over and over again, wherever he went, as he ministered to individuals early in his gospel ministry, he called people to be involved in meeting needs.

I get the idea sometimes when I listen to people that being charitable and kind and meeting needs is something that is only pertinent or valuable for those who are advanced in their Christian education.

[14 : 38] Do you follow me? When you're older in the faith, and you've kind of figured out all the P's and Q's, then's when you get involved in gospel ministry and meeting needs. That's not it at all.

In fact, let me tell you something. At the very beginning of coming to faith, one of the indicators that something genuine has taken place in your life is you stop being a grabber and a getter, and you become a giver.

I want you to think with me just for a moment to a passage in Ephesians where here's what the apostle says. We'll come to it later when we get there, but he says this, let those who used to steal steal no longer, but work with their hands so they may have something to give to those who are in need.

So why are you working? I see that bumper sticker that says, I owe, I owe, and off the work I go. That's not a Bible answer. I am working to meet the needs of others.

That's what Ephesians tells us. I want you to understand that the reason we are looking at this subject this morning and the reason that we did it the way we did was because we want you to catch fire individually, personally, privately, as families in being involved in a wide variety of opportunities to meet needs.

[16 : 05] And you stop and think about the different ones we had up here this morning.

Compassion International, many opportunities to meet needs, genuinely, honorable, responsible opportunities.

It's not something that takes off a large overhead to do their service. Compassion International has a genuine heart for ministry and they are responsible with their funds.

We think about the persecuted church. We think about adoption. And each one of these, you got a chance to hear from individuals actively involved. And the reason that we put those out for you is we want to challenge you.

You're sitting here this morning saying, what can I do? We gave you just three practical choices.

Are there others? The answer is undeniably so. And here's what I want to challenge you to do. We close with this.

Turn in your Bible to James chapter 1. James chapter 1, looking at verse 22 through 25. But he, but be doers of the word and not hearers only.

[17 : 09] Does that make sense? But be doers of the word and not hearers only. So you write that down in your mind. Sketch it out on a piece of paper. But be doers of the word and not hearers only. There are innumerable opportunities to be involved in meeting needs.

Two weeks ago, one of our small groups was at the Mid-Ohio Food Bank. And that small group, I don't know how many of us were there that week, that day, but we were throwing food in boxes. We had 830 boxes that were packed. Mid-Ohio, we were part of the team that did that. And that was shipped out to elderly families and individuals who do not have the adequate resources to provide for food.

This last Saturday, we had another one of our small groups who was working at the Homeless Family Foundation and moving them from the facilities they'd been in into a new set. And we see that happening week after week after week, and we want to challenge you.

If you're here this morning and you are not involved in meeting needs, I want you to understand that if you're a child of God, that's part of His plan.

[18 : 16] Those who have received mercy are those who display mercy. Isn't that right? That's the way it should be. And if you are here this morning and you don't know Christ, I want to tell you this, works have nothing to do with your eternal destiny.

You do not get to heaven by working at the Homeless Family Foundation or at the Mid-Ohio Food Bank. Those things don't count. The thing that counts is coming to the point of recognizing that you stand condemned before a holy God.

And He, realizing the hopelessness of your condition, sent His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die in your place that you, through faith in Him, might have everlasting life.

And let's take a minute and bow our heads and ask God to bring us to the point of not being just hearers of the Word, but doers also. Let's pray.