

Matthew 9:35-38

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 November 2018

Preacher: Jordan Leach

[0 : 00] Press my heart, the compassion of our Savior. So I hope I can communicate that.! He's a relatively compassionate guy, and his compassion has often driven him to prayer over the years.

He's spent many times creating lists, praying for people that he loves, that don't know the Lord, praying for people that he cares about, that know the Lord, but really aren't walking with the Lord, and praying for people who are passionate about the Lord, that God would continue to work that passion in their lives.

It seems all good, but while all this seems great, the problem with this guy is his inconsistency. You see, he has been good at prayer in streaks, but this streaky prayer life is exposed by this text, by this text's call to earnest prayer.

And I believe the cause of this guy's inconsistency in his prayer life was due to shallow motivations for prayer. So I want to go to the main idea, maybe the next text. The main idea is rightly motivated Christians will pray earnestly for Christian workers.

And then I'll jump to the text if you go back a slide. So this is from Matthew 9, 35 to 38. And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction.

[1 : 46] And when he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. So we'll develop our premise by first looking at Christ's compassion, and then by assessing this text's motivations for prayer.

So one thing that stands out in this text right away is that Jesus was moved with compassion at the sight of the crowds. This might not stand out as much to us today, but the Greek verb used here has the connotation that compassion welled up deep, from deep inside of him.

One Greek scholar translates this verb, or in this context, to be moved with pity from the very inmost vows. It is an empathetic word, signifying vehement affection of commiseration, by which the vows and especially the heart is moved.

So this is a strong motive word. Verse 35, it tells us what Jesus was doing, he was going ministering, but verse 36 tells us something of Jesus' heart. So you can learn about somebody, you can learn about somebody by watching what they do.

[3 : 02] But when you start to get to the level of a person, where you start to learn why they do what they do, now then you're really starting to get to know that person. So we as Christians, the emotive language here used for Christ ought to be a waving flag for us, because this is an opportunity for us to see the heart motivations of our Savior.

But before we get into the discussion of Jesus' compassion and its implications on our prayer life, I want to try to go back through Matthew 8 and 9 and show you his compassion. I want you to see that though this current text that we're in highlights his compassion, this compassion of Jesus has been a mark of his ministry all along.

And in fact, Matthew alludes to this as he summarizes Jesus' earthly ministry in 35. He says, And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching the synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction.

And this is exactly what we've seen through Matthew. Jesus teaching, proclaiming, teaching, proclaiming the kingdom, and healing every disease. Matthew hones in on Jesus' teaching ministry in chapters 5 through 7, when he talks about the Sermon on the Mount, teaches us about the Sermon on the Mount.

Then in chapters 8 through 9, Matthew adds validity to Jesus' teaching ministry through the demonstrations of his authority and power. He demonstrates his power over the weather, over sickness and disease, over demonic activity, over sin, and even over death.

[4 : 22] So verse 35 is a summary statement to all that Jesus has been up to. But this passage today links this activity to his heart.

I hope that you can see that all of Jesus' ministry has been motivated by his deep compassion for people. In chapters 8 and 9, we have read, taught, and worked through story after story of how the unmatched power and authority of Jesus has been applied in personal ways to people with need. We've seen Jesus personally, lovingly, and powerfully reach out to people of every social demographic. Jesus' personal interactions were marked with compassion. So we're going to go back, and we're going to recap some of the stories from Matthew 8 and 9 with an eye towards his compassion.

We're not necessarily going to focus on the main point of those texts, but we're going to look at these texts with new eyes, with looking for his compassion and the elements of it. So we'll first start out, we'll look at the story with the synagogue ruler and the woman with a discharge of blood.

So do you remember the story from chapter 9? Of the religious ruler with a sick, well, actually dead daughter, and the woman with a discharge of blood. In this story, Jesus cares both for this respected religious leader, who was the ruler of the synagogue, as well as a lady who wasn't even allowed in the synagogue, because based on her disease, she was considered ceremonially unclean.

[5 : 45] To this woman, she had exhausted herself and all of her finances trying to find healing. To this woman, Jesus says, take heart, daughter.

Your faith has made you well. Please note his compassionate and gentle response. To her desperation, he says, take heart. To her, the fact that she was ostracized from worship, he says, he calls her daughter.

He uses this as language of family. Then he goes to the religious leader's house. He goes to the ruler's house to attend to his daughter. The majority of his, this friend, he was, the majority of the religious leaders in this time were giving Jesus a hassle, right?

They were questioning his ministry, they were kind of subverting his teaching, right? Jesus isn't deterred by this man's associates. Instead, he goes to his house, he shoos away the mourners, and he raises his daughter to life.

In chapter 8, we read the story of the Roman centurion who comes to Jesus to request the healing of his servant. But Jesus does more than simply heal his servant.

[6 : 53] He takes the time to confirm this centurion's heart of faith, saying, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. You see, though the centurion was in a respected position, he was a man of esteem, he was also a leader in the occupying portion in Israel, right?

The Jewish people were under the control of Rome, and he was a key player, a head figure in that control. So he wasn't, needless to say, very liked within his community. And the other thing is, the Jewish people often had this kind of tendency to think that the promises of God were mainly for them, and not for Gentiles, not for people outside of their thing.

So then, more than simply healing this Roman commander's servant, Jesus takes time to honor this man's faith, and exalt his heart of faith in front of the Jewish crowds, who would scoff at the idea that a Roman soldier could be an exalted member of God's kingdom.

The leper. At the beginning of chapter 8, Jesus cleanses a leper. Leprosy was a highly feared disease in Jesus' day because it was disabling and contagious. Lepers were therefore isolated from society and from temple worship.

They were considered dangerous and unclean, and Jesus heals a leper, but more than simply healing him, he touches him, something regular people would never have done out of fear of contracting disease, and then he pronounces him clean.

[8 : 20] He gives him instructions on how to be reunited with society and considered clean again in the eyes of the people. You see, healing him would have been seen as a powerful act of compassion, but Jesus goes beyond the simple act, showing his compassionate heart through his cleansing touch and socially restorative instruction.

The disciples in the storm, right? We saw Jesus, he has power over the weather. When he calmed the raging storm at sea with a simple word. But as we considered when we worked through this

text, this passage together, the calming of the storm did more than just demonstrate his power and authority over the weather, though this was the main point.

It also taught the disciples a valuable lesson. The disciples were terrified in the face of the storm, yet Jesus compassionately walks them through their situation by teaching them that there was no need to get all worked up.

They need not give themselves to anxiety and fear because he, the agent of creation, commands power over the world that he created. It was both a display of his power and a show of how his heart longs for his disciples to be emboldened and freed from fear because of his power and personal care.

The tax collectors. As we discussed a few weeks back, the tax collectors were strongly disliked by their Jewish peers and for good reason.

[9 : 40] They were traitors of sorts. They were people who not only worked to collect money from the Jewish people for the Romans, but they often used their positions to exploit the Jewish people, charging extra so they themselves might personally benefit.

In Matthew 9, Jesus is called out by the religious leaders for hanging out with such sinful tax collectors. And in the face of the ruling, moral enforcing players of society, Jesus defends their worth.

He defends the worth of the tax collectors by acknowledging the fact that the kingdom of God is for people like them. People who recognize their need for grace. This must have been so powerful to the tax collectors.

The moral authorities in society were actively scorning them. But rather than accepting the verdict of these so-called leaders, Jesus says, no, these men have a place with me.

They have a place in God's kingdom, not because they've earned it, but because God is gracious. He does not argue for their worth based on their actions, but because they in all society knew that there was no backing for the argument.

[10 : 42] But he argues their value based on the gracious character of God, a place where they could stand fully secure against the scorn of society. To the paralytic, at the very beginning of chapter 8, we got to observe Jesus' compassion both for paralytic and for his friends.

To the paralytic man, Jesus grants more than simply the restoring of his ability to walk. He forgives his sins. You see, neither the paralytic man nor his friends came looking for this depth of healing. But Jesus, in his compassion, knows that the healing that this man truly needs is forgiveness from sin. For it is his sin, not his disability, that will keep him from being restored to God.

God did more than restore this man's ability to walk. He restored him to a place of eternal favor before his maker, the God of the universe. But the compassion that Jesus shows this man comes at a great personal cost.

For Jesus knew, as Hebrew teaches, that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin. Jesus knew that the forgiveness that this man was receiving would require the shedding of his own blood. So far beyond the understanding of the paralytic or his friends, Jesus' compassion here was backed by a commitment to the cross.

[11 : 57] On the surface, the friends were psyched because they were used in the healing of their friend. The paralytic was elated because he could now walk and because he had been pronounced forgiven. But Jesus knew what was at stake under the surface, and yet he freely poured out his compassion and made a powerful statement to all that he was both willing and able to forgive sins.

I hope you see a little more clearly the depth of Jesus' compassion, both in his actions but also in his interactions. His compassion is not deterred by situations, by social boundaries, nor by great personal cost.

So maybe you are here today, and you, like the leper, feel like an outcast. You feel like you're on the outside of society. Maybe you feel dirty, unwanted, or untouchable. Please know that Jesus' compassion is for you.

He is not deterred by those things. He does not care what society thinks. Turn to him and receive grace. Maybe today you feel like the tax collectors. You feel like the verdict has been set against you. You feel written off.

And deep down inside, you believe the verdict. You know you don't meet expectations. You know that you can't stand on your own. Well, know that we have a Savior who is willing to stand up against your accusers and proclaim your value based on his work and based on his grace.

[13 : 14] You do not need to despair before the attacks of your accusers for his grace is sufficient. Maybe you feel like the synagogue ruler and you have your life together.

You are established and respected, yet you know that there are many, many things that in a moment's notice could turn your world upside down. Like the severe illness of a loved one. In this case, two will you turn to? Your career, your reputation, your money, or to Christ, your deeply passionate and powerful Savior? Or maybe you are in the same place as the synagogue ruler. Maybe your world has been flipped upside down by sickness, hardship, or disaster. Will you turn to the powerful, passionate, personal Jesus of Matthew 8 and 9? Maybe you are here today and you feel like the woman with a 12-year discharge of blood. Maybe you have exhausted yourself trying to unsuccessfully fix your problems. Then hear the words of your compassionate Jesus. Take heart, daughter, your faith has made you well.

[14 : 20] Turn to him in faith and find his compassionate healing. Maybe you are like the paralytic man and you don't even realize that your biggest need is forgiveness, but Jesus offers it to you anyways. He is willing to help you with what you perceive your biggest need is, but know that he is also willing to do so much more.

He is willing to die for you so that you might be restored to your maker. So now that we have recapped some of Jesus' activities with an eye towards his compassion, we can come to today's passage with a greater appreciation for the compassionate heart of Jesus.

So last week, Matthew left us with a choice. Cool. Recognize Jesus for who he is or deny his power. This week, we transition to Jesus.

He is giving instructions to all the people who have accepted him. He is giving them a job, a task, an instruction, something to do. So we are going to look at it in three ways. We are going to first look at what we are called to do, why we should do it, and how we should go about it.

What, why, and how seems pretty easy, right? So if you go back, maybe two slides back to the text and we will read it again. And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.

[15 : 43] When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest and to send out laborers into his harvest.

So what, what's pretty easy here, right? Might get confused if you lump in the next passage, but in this particular passage, what are we called to do? We're called to, here, to pray and to pray for laborers.

We see this in verse 38. It says, therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. But this command is prompted by Jesus' compassion towards the crowds. And we'll unpack this concept a bit when we consider our motivations.

But for now, at this point, I just want you to be sure you're called to pray, right? I know me personally, I want to jump to the next text, the next text where he sends his disciples out. You know, but we're stopping here today. And this idea that we are called to pray and our prayer is to connect to the compassionate heart of Christ, I think, is something that he wants us to dive into and to focus on and to relish in.

[16 : 56] So we see that we're called to participate. We see that we're called to participate in prayer for the laborers. But I will jump to the next text. But as we pray, we ought to also be prepared to be sent out.

So we're cheating a bit and stealing insight from the next passage, but in the next passage, you will see that Jesus sends his disciples out immediately. And I want to highlight this not because I want to take focus away from this call to prayer, but because I think it adds, it adds to our understanding of prayer.

It adds the integrity of our prayer, right? It adds the integrity because God wants us that when we pray for laborers, to know that we could be the laborers that we pray for. The disciples pray here in this passage and in the very next passage, God sends them out as an answer to their own prayer. Now, nothing guarantees that this is going to happen, right? This isn't like a pattern that we see, but it's something that I think we need to be willing for, right? If we see a need, and biblically from this text, we're called to pray for laborers for that need, know that God might raise you up to be that

laborer.

And I think a willingness and an understanding of that will help the integrity of your prayer. We also see that prayer precedes the harvest. Please note the order.

[18 : 09] Jesus instructs his disciples to pray, and then he sends them out into the harvest. We see this pattern elsewhere in scripture. In Acts 1, we see the disciples, some women, Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Jesus' brothers all gathered in the upper room in unified and devoted prayer.

Then in Acts 2, we see the pouring out of the Spirit and the salvation of 3,000 souls. Later in Acts 4, we see a group of Christians from the other church. They gather together and they pray that the Lord would bless his workers, that he would bless his laborers through the gift of boldness.

God grants this request immediately and the text tells us that when he had prayed, the place in which they were gathered was shaken and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and they continued to speak the word of God in boldness.

And then in Acts 5, just a chapter later, we read these incredible words. And more than ever, believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women. So I'd like to kind of zoom back into Shoreline's situation for a second.

God has blessed Shoreline in many ways. He's blessed us with both personal and numerical growth. He has been maturing us and bringing new people into our fellowship. However, the majority of the people that he's been bringing into our church are individuals who already claim his name.

[19 : 24] They're people versus people who are coming to know Jesus through our ministry. And it's these people, it's these people that don't know the name of Christ, that Jesus' compassion is on display here in Matthew 9.

And yet we wait for the Lord of the harvest to reap a harvest through us. Now it seems like there's kind of been, I've had a lot of conversations, it seems like there's a lot of people talking to this end. I think there's a real desire in our church to kind of grow in our impact, in our evangelism, in our personal ministry to those who don't know the Lord. But until then, maybe God will do this work amongst us soon, we don't know.

But one thing we do know that before God enables his people to bring in a harvest, he pours out a spirit of prayer upon them. So pray that God will raise up laborers for his harvest among the members of Shoreline.

Pray that our church will be compelled to prayer and compelled to action by the remarkable compassion of our Savior. So we see that we are challenged to pray. This is important because I believe rightly motivated Christians will pray for laborers.

[20 : 34] So now let's look at why we should pray. This text offers us lots of different motivations. Got them up there? We're not going to... Yeah. Stay on that other one. And we'll look through some of them.

So the need. We see this. The first verse of this passage tells us that Jesus is... Basically... We've seen Jesus, right?

He's been going throughout all of Galilee. It says in every city, in every village, he's been going out. And what is the thing that resonates with him? It's the neediness of the people, right?

So he's sitting here. He's looking back on his ministry to all the cities and villages of Galilee. And he is impacted by the neediness of the people. And his assessment is that people were confused, distressed, and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.

The text says they were harassed and helpless. Jesus saw this and he had compassion. But to better understand what Jesus is feeling here, we need to bridge this text to an Old Testament counterpart.

[21 : 40] In Ezekiel 34, the prophet Ezekiel prophesied against the religious leaders of Israel, accusing them not only of neglecting their duties as spiritual leaders, but of actually using their position of power to mislead and abuse.

So I'll read a little bit of Ezekiel 34 so you can get a feel for the context. This is Ezekiel through God talking to the leaders of the day. Ah, shepherds of Israel, you have been feeding yourselves. Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.

So they were scattered because there was no shepherd and it became food for the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered all over the face of the earth with no one to search or seek for them.

You see, Jesus' compassion over the helpless state is amplified by the failures of the leadership of Israel. And this makes a lot of sense when we consider last week's passage, right?

[22 : 56] Last week, we saw Jesus cast out a demon of a mute man, thus enabling this man to speak.

The people marveled while the religious leaders snarled, and they said, he, Jesus, casts out demons by the prince of demons. The response was a willful rejection of him, a denial of his power, and a slanderous lie about his motives.

You see, just as Ezekiel had prophesied to the religious leaders about the religious leaders of Jesus' day, they were more interested in retaining their power and influence than caring for the people left under their charge.

They did not even rejoice over the fact that this man now had the ability to talk, nor that he had been freed. They didn't even care that he had been freed from the torment of a demon, right?

Rather, they attacked the one to whom the crowds marveled at for fear that they would lose their influence. But, but it's also within this context, this context of Ezekiel 34, that this reference becomes all the more powerful.

[24 : 03] For Ezekiel goes on and he says, for thus saith the Lord, God, behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and I will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks for his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so I will seek out my sheep.

I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on the day of cloud and thick darkness and I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and I will bring them into their land.

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep. I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord. I will seek the lost and I will bring the strayed and I will bind up the injured and I will strengthen the weak. You see, with Jesus' assessment of the neediness of people, he makes a powerful statement about his identity and his role.

He says, I will be the shepherd of my people. I will care for them. I will gather those who are scattered. I will feed them. I will protect them. I will heal them. I will give them peace and I will strengthen them. Jesus is the one that Ezekiel wrote about.

He is the means by which God is rescuing his people. He is the great and good shepherd, one capable of shepherding his people with true compassion and power. I guess we see all this context and we're kind of amazed that Jesus came as a shepherd in such a personal way to his people.

[25 : 15] but is it relevant today? Does Jesus' assessment of people stand today within our cultural context? I don't know.

Let's think about it. Do we have a problem with the abuse of power and influence in this country? Maybe you feel let down or even taken advantage of by the cultural leaders, the power holders within our society.

Well, take heart. Jesus is the promise, has promised to be the good leader, the ruler, the influencer that you desire. Harassed and helpless, those are strong words. Surely they refer to a culture then and not now.

Well, let's take a minute and let's assess some of the cultural messages of today. I just threw this list together. There's many more, but make a difference. Change the world. Vote for me. I'll change the world.

Don't vote for him. He's a liar. He'll raise your taxes. Don't let politics get you down. Don't worry about what you can't change. Focus on being the best version of you. Buy my book and I'll show you how. Buy this car.

[26 : 12] You will get the girls of your dreams. You can't afford a car or buy this deodorant and you'll get the girls of your dreams. When you get the girls of your dreams, your life will be happy. You'll have meaning.

Use this act and you'll be ten times more efficient. Use this supplement and you'll feel ten years younger. Work hard, play hard. You only live once. Nah. You only live once.

That's too short-lived and too nearsighted. What you really need is a decent salary with a respectable employer, a retirement plan, and some exotic vacations along the way. And maybe two and a half kids at some point.

These examples are kind of silly, but they illustrate a point. I hope they illustrate a point. I don't know. There are just so many mixed cultural messages that are being powerfully sent to people within our culture.

They're being powerfully sent to us. It's hard. It's hard to sort through them, right? There's so many people out there. There's no shortage of people working to capture your attention, your money, or your allegiance.

[27 : 12] There are many working tirelessly to convince or impose their values upon you or others. And amidst this barrage, many are lost and confused. People of our day are harassed and helpless, simply trying to stay afloat in this world of compelling yet contradictory social narratives.

I mean, it doesn't take us long to see that. You look at the news, I don't know. Look at our own hearts, right? We're so easily, and this is, I wasn't planning this, but she's like, yeah.

Right? Like, I like Ohio State football, but those people that write Ohio State football articles, they know how to compel me to read articles in very powerful ways. And I know it's stupid, and I know it's not really that important, but there are so many people that are so good at capturing your attention and your thoughts and twisting the way that you think.

And our world is just full of them, and people are just flopping back and forth. Well, we need a good shepherd. We need somebody to straighten our paths. We need somebody to rescue us and help us.

And this is our, Jesus has done that, right? He has given us truth that we can stake our lives on, truth that is not contradictory, truth that stands the test of whatever, I don't know, whatever situation we're going through.

[28 : 27] And this is, this is, this is the world that we live in, right? And this, and Jesus has compassion for people in our world.

Compassion for people that are confused and tossed back and forth by all the compelling social narratives that are being thrown at them, right? And so what does Jesus want us to do?

He wants us to pray, right? He wants us to pray for these people. I mean, even, even the people that look like they have everything together, right? They seem like they have it together. But God's word tells us, for what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?

For life without God, like the book of Ecclesiastes is great for this, life without God is meaningless. It's full of vanity. It's a chasing after the sun. Your enjoyment, your wealth, dies with you.

Kingdoms you build will eventually fall. The people you love will someday die. No matter how great you are, your legacy will someday be forgotten. There has to be more than this life, right?

[29 : 27] And our world is going around searching. They're grasping for something to stake their lives on. And Jesus, I think, would say, they're harassed and helpless because you're staking your life on something that's not eternal.

You're staking your life on something that can't save you, right? And Jesus comes and he's here. He is the good shepherd. He has come to rescue his people. He himself will do it, right?

And he calls us to pray. He calls us to pray for laborers, to join in this effort. So may God give us the eyes to see the spiritual needs of those around us. And may he motivate us to pray for the laborers to bring in this harvest.

Next, we see the potential. The language here says the harvest is plentiful. And Jesus looks out at these crowds, out at these people, and he sees more than just needy people.

He sees great potential. Right? We see the metaphor change here, right? He's going from sheep without a shepherd, now he's going to harvest. So he's going, you know, to another agricultural thing. But, right, the idea is like wheat ready to be harvested, ready to be brought in, fruit ready to gather, right?

[30 : 32] And this is amazing. This is pretty remarkable, right? Because Jesus, he looks at the crowd, the crowds that are teeming, jostling eagerly and impatient, right? He was always surrounded by them.

No doubt they were kind of pushing and nudging and trying to get closer and just kind of always swamping him wherever he goes, right? Jesus does not give in to irritation. He does not look down on them. Instead, he looks at them with compassion and commits to die for them, right?

But instead of, just the simple compassion, he sees the great potential in the crowds. He sees the kingdom harvest. He sees potential salvation. He sees future saints. And we should do this too, right?

When we look at people around us, needy people, we should see their potential. We should see that through Christ, God can make them into saints. He can bring them into his fellowship, right? And so we ought to interact in the same way and we ought to pray in that way.

Allow the anticipation of Christ to lead you to pray for the impossible work of God in the lives of people around you. have that hope, that anticipation, that excitement, that potential.

[31 : 37] May we see that in people. May we not be irritated when we see brokenness, but may we be compassionate and may we match our compassion with prayer that our God who actually can do something will step in and rescue people and heal people.

The next, Jesus is compassion. The compassion of Jesus compels us to pray. We've talked a lot about his compassion.

I think it's the main point, right? That's a driving motivation. This, according to the text, is our greatest motivation towards praying for laborers, praying for the lost. I've worked hard to show the deep, personal, powerful compassion of Jesus through this sermon.

I hope that you've been compelled by it. I hope that you've marveled at the goodness of our Savior, how he brings his power in such personal and real ways to people in need, right, to us. We can look at God's word and see that.

We can look at our own lives and see it. We can look at our friends' lives. We serve a powerful God that personally and in the places that matter most to us and the places that hurt the most or the places where we have the most need, he inserts his truth and his grace and his power.

[32 : 46] I hope that you see that. This is the Savior that we serve, right? And, you know, like the saying, like, you are what you eat, it's kind of silly, but like, you become what you value, right?

And so I think as we, as the Christians, learn to value the compassion of our Savior, the heart of our Savior, we'll take on that desire because that's what we value most and if we esteem it most, that's going to work its way into our DNA and the way we operate, right?

As we marvel at his compassion, compassion will well up inside of us, motivated by the same things that motivate him. And the outpouring of that, according to this text, is prayer. So as you consider Christ, let his compassion compel you to pray.

One pastor puts it this way, Matthew gives us a glimpse into what true Christian prayer looks like. It is thinking God's thoughts after him. Prayer is feeling what Jesus feels and translated it into requests of the Father.

Now, side note, kind of, not really. Your compassion is not enough, right? I know this because I'm the man from the introduction, right? I believe that I tend to be pretty empathetic.

[34 : 02] I tend to be pretty compassionate. And I can have compassion really drive me to prayer in many ways, right? But this prayer is never long-term, right? It only lasts as long as the thing that's capturing my compassion lasts.

Or until something bigger steps in its way, right? So if I rely on simply my God-given compassion to motivate me to earnest prayer, like Jesus calls us here, it'll never last.

It'll never satisfy, right? And God gave us that compassion and that compassion wells up inside of us. But we need to be primarily motivated by the compassion of our Savior. Because if we just rely on ourselves, we're going to be praying earnestly!

for things that don't really matter to Christ, right? Or that they're not the most important things, right? Or we're going to get distracted or something else is going to come up or we're going to forget, right? And so, I don't know.

We, I need to pray because I'm enamored with the compassion of Christ. My compassion needs to match His compassion and then my prayer will match His prayer.

[35 : 07] My prayer will become less about the desires from my situation or situations that I feel compelled about and more about what compels Jesus. Another side note, kind of clarification, right?

Jesus' compassion isn't simply an emotional response, but His compassion is also seen as commitment to action. I just want to make sure that I haven't miscommunicated, right? We've talked a lot about Jesus' personal interactions and how He's healed and how He's came in really special ways.

But the main way that we see Jesus' compassion throughout His ministry is in His proclamation ministry, right? Jesus goes throughout every town. In Mark 1, we see, in Mark 1, right, Jesus spends a day of healing people, right?

And then He wakes up early the next morning and He goes to a desolate place and pray. Right? And the disciples come and say, people are looking for you. Come on, people are looking for you. And Jesus responds. He says, let's go to the next town that I may preach there also, for that is why I came.

Please recognize that Jesus' compassion for lost people, in His desire that they hear the good news of the kingdom, drove Him in His ministry of proclamation. We have a tendency to only attach compassion to His healing ministry, but it was not His physical healing ministry that was the thrust of His ministry of compassion.

[36 : 23] It was a proclamation that He had come to rescue humanity from their sins, to reunite them from their God by suffering in their place for their sins. You see, Jesus' ministry of healing is a fanfare, announcing and adding credibility to Jesus' greater ministry of reconciliation.

reconciliation. And we've seen this touched on in several of the texts that we've talked to so far. I hope this is making sense. I'll do an example, right? First, the paralytic. When He was healed, right, Jesus restored them, Ben's ability to walk, something that we could see, to demonstrate in a tangible way that He had the power to forgive sins, something we can't see.

Randy talked about, let's do that. And then we see that when a couple of weeks ago when we did, Jesus healed the two blind men and then He tells them not to go and tell other people.

And Dave walked us through an explanation of that. And yes, Jesus healed, but He came mainly to die, right? And Jesus doesn't want us to get enamored by His healing or those kind of things because His chief ministry is one of suffering and dying and raising to life and bringing us with Him, right?

And so we see the compassion of Jesus poured out in all these ways, but I don't want you to miss it. I don't want you to miss that all of this proclamation and all of this commitment to the cross was a place where His true compassion lies, right?

[37 : 42] We see it like when He went and healed somebody, right? That person saw that He cared, right? And it was assurance to them that they were dealing with a compassionate Savior, but it was His death and His resurrection that actually free people, that actually free us.

And Christian, just remember that His compassion is for you and your motivation for prayer, right? Please don't forget that the compassion you personally receive from Christ, and through His compassion you have become a walking, praying embodiment of Jesus' compassion in the world. Let the personal compassion of Jesus for the lost, for you, compel you to pray. We're also motivated by the privilege. We've been given a great privilege to pray, right?

Jesus chose to use you and your prayers as a means of satisfying His compassion for the lost. In verse 36, we are called to pray.

It says, To the Lord of the harvest to raise up laborers for His harvest. Therefore, it is God who both brings the harvest and raises up the laborers. It is Jesus who provides the means of salvation for those of the harvest, and it is the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin and righteousness.

[38 : 57] You see, God doesn't need us. He doesn't need us to reap a harvest of souls for His kingdom, but for some reason, He's given us this privilege. For some reason, Jesus has tied His compassion for people to our prayers for laborers.

Our God is a God who delights to work and answer prayers, to work through our prayers for His work, right? What a privilege we've been given. Pray because the privilege of being given this role, and allow this to motivate you, right?

It's a great privilege we have. We don't deserve to be God's agents of restoring this world, but He's chosen us to do that, and He's given us this great honor, so allow that to motivate you.

Though our driving motivation ought to be Christ, His compassion for people and His compassion for us, God is good to provide us with other means of motivation. God is good in this way. He first motivates us by the work, His work for us, but then He reinforces His goodness through people and through situations.

So this last point is kind of maybe cryptic, right? Praise the church. But please recognize that for 2,000 years since Christ gave this command, the church has been praying for laborers for the Lord of Harvest, and you are the fruit of those prayers.

[40 : 11] And the fact that you're saved and now have been commissioned to go out into the world is evidence that this prayer has been answered in your life and in mine. We are all the embodiment of compassion that moves His disciples to pray in this way.

So please join in this continued generational prayer, and please teach your children to do the same. So finally, how? I mean, we've talked a lot about how already, right?

But just two things I want to highlight. Earnestly. So what does earnestly look like? Earnestly means with the right heart, with sincerity, right? With the right motivation. So we've talked a lot about the motivation.

So really check your heart and see why you're praying for what you're praying. Is it driven by Christ's compassion, by Christ's agenda, or by yours, right? And commitment. So earnest is kind of continuing, like pressing forward, keep working into it.

So schedule times in your day where you sit to pray. Work this prayer into your everyday life. Meet together with other Christians and pray for the raising up of more laborers to do this work in our area and in the world around us, right?

[41 : 17] Like, we pray for laborers. This one is actually kind of interesting to me. I don't know.

I'm kind of thinking out loud now. Right? So I've always, like, prayed for lost people, right? And I guess I've prayed for laborers. I've prayed for helpers soon. But I feel like my compassion kind of leads me towards people.

Right? But I think what God is showing me is this prayer for laborers is bigger, right? It's bigger than me. Not that God doesn't want me to pray for specific people. But, right, if I'm only praying for people, I'm only thinking locally.

And I'm only thinking in the realm of Jordan. Right? Christ says pray for laborers. Because, and I don't naturally want to pray for laborers, right? Because that could be a laborer in Africa.

Right? And I love Africa, but I'm never going to see the fruit of that prayer. Right? I want to pray for things that I'm going to see the fruit of. And Jesus is like, no, no, no, no. You're motivated to prayer because of me.

[42 : 15] Because of my compassion for this world. So align your prayer with my desires. Right? And with my kingdom. Right? And so this has been kind of a critique. I mean, continue to pray.

Continue to pray for lost people that you know. Continue to let your compassion drive you to pray. But also let the compassion of Christ teach you to pray globally. To pray for laborers in this world. If you see a need, pray for laborers for it. If you see within this church, pray for laborers. If you see a need on the news, pray for laborers. Pray that God's kingdom would be ushered in through his people.

He's given us this great blessing. He's chosen to work with us. So pray accordingly. I mean, I guess the application of this is just go pray. Like, if you see something, if you see a need, schedule time. Make a prayer. Tell God, like, Jesus, I love your compassion that you've shown this world. And part of the outpouring of that compassion that you've called me to do is to go forth and pray for more laborers to do your work.

[43 : 11] So just go do that. That's all I got. All right. Dear God, thank you for this text. God, I thank you, I don't know, just for the opportunity to take a deep dive, a deep look into the compassion of Jesus.

God, I'm just amazed. I've been so amazed this week to see how he can be so powerful, but yet so personal. How he can take the areas that people needed the most. Like, knowing that this lady had exhausted herself, trying to heal herself, she exhausted all of her money.

And just the simple compassionate words, take heart. Daughter, you are restored to society. You are restored to me. You are healed. Don't worry anymore.

And it goes from that to, like, his commitment to the cross. Like, he came here to die for humanity. He came knowing that. He healed people and he forgave people, knowing that it was on his blood that he was forgiving.

And I just thank you that we have this Savior that isn't deterred by social boundaries. He isn't deterred by what people think. He isn't deterred by great personal costs.

[44 : 21] He is committed to his restoration of this world for his glory and for the good of people because of his great compassion and because of his great love. God, I pray that you would equip us because of his love to pray according to his instructions.

God, I pray that you would raise up laborers and shorelines. God, there are needy people here in this local area. I pray that you would put it on people's hearts, that you would raise us up, that you would give us passion to reach out to the difficult and hard places.

God, I pray that when we see brokenness among people, we would not look down on them, but we would reach out to them with compassion, with the life-giving hope of Jesus. God, I pray that you would just instill us with his compassion and may that drive us to prayer.

May that drive us to active service, too. We get to learn that next week. But Lord, may we not skip over this prayer. I think in our 21st century American, go do, make your own destiny, whatever, we don't, we want to see results for the things that we do, but you call us to pray because it brings you glory, because you get glory out of using our prayers for your great needs.

And sometimes it's hard for us because we don't really see the benefit of it, but you ordain that as a privilege for us to do for the purposes of your kingdom, for the pouring out of your compassion in this world.

[45 : 40] So help us to do that faithfully. God, raise up a spirit of prayer in this church and do a work in us. Usher your compassion through us, through prayer and through active service to others.

Amen. Amen. Amen.