

Compassion For Others

Sermon Title: **Compassion For Others**

Sermon Number: **6559**

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Jason Thomas: One of the most important things that you can have towards somebody is compassion.

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(Music Playing: 00:00:14 - 00:00:26)

And now for Compassion for Others.

Jason Thomas: Welcome to Brothers of The Word, because brother you need the word. I need to word, we all need God's word.

If you have your scripture with you, we're going to be in the Gospel of Mark tonight Chapter 6, and if you haven't caught on yet, I believe that God wants to do something special in our midst tonight. He may have thought that you just checking off your box to do your Thursday night thing, middle of the week, but I believe God desires to speak something fresh from something that is extremely familiar for most of us. We're going to begin in Verse 30. Old story, fresh revelation.

Verse 30 said, "The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and talked." And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. Verse 33 says, "Now, many saw them going out and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them and when he went ashore, he saw a great crowd and he had compassion on them." Somebody say, "compassion."

Because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things and when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "this is a desolate place and the hour is late send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But he answered them, "you give them something to eat." And they said to him, "shall we go and buy 200 denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" and he said to them, "how many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they found out they said, "five, and two fish." And then they commanded them all to sit down and groups on the green grass.

I love how God so into the details, it could have been brown grass, it could have been brown grass, it could have been like bootleg ghetto grass, it could have been any kind of grass, but he said, “get them to lay down on the green grass.” God is in the details man, I love it. So they sat down in groups by hundreds and by 50 and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people and he divided the two fish among them all, and they all ate and we’re satisfied and they took up 12 baskets full of broken pieces and a fish. And those who ate the loaves were 5,000 men.

Jesus, I pray that you would just speak so clearly this familiar passage of one of the most amazing miracles that we have recorded in your holy book. I pray that you would peel back some layers for us tonight and open up fresh revelation, help us to see it with new eyes, help us to see it with mature perspective and more experienced understanding. God, we’re so thankful for everything that we’ve known about this story. But God, I pray that you would just use it to challenge us tonight. And so God, we trust you for it, we believe you for it. Thank you just for the sweetness of your spirit that we’ve already experienced and we trust that God you are continuing to be here. So we thank you and we bless you in Jesus name. Amen.

Now, I know all of you all around here, all healthy and everybody looked like Pastor Jamie, you all take care of yourselves. My man over here, the tank top busting out making me insecure, I know how you all roll around, you all value health and I loved it. But, I got to be honest. There’s something about growing up in Atlanta where some of my fondest memories are driving through the west end with my dad or downtown with my mama and there’s something that would always catch our eye -- I know you all healthy and you all don’t fall victim to this. But it’s this bright red neon sign.

And I tell you, Lord, you know my heart like when I try to do good evil is present but it seems like every time I ride by the neon sign that shining and it’s like, “Jason, Jason” and it’s just a donut. It’s a donut but it’s something different when you see him hitting the grease and flipping over and getting on the rack and all the ice and I just went to Krispy Kreme a couple days ago.

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So I'm speaking from experience, but you see that and it captures your attention and this is fresh. Maybe a person like my mama who love a Red Lobster biscuits who -- she necessarily care about anything that they serve, but she wants to go and make sure she gets the biscuits or you might be in Texas Roadhouse, I used to grow up in the kitchen with my mom and making yeast rolls. She had me right next to her, learning how to knead dough and roll it and dip it in butter and all this goodness and I just used to sit right there in the stove just waiting for it, just to come out and just stop some butter on it, but I loved it because it was fresh. Probably tasted it -- I mean, it's still bread, is still a doughnuts, still biscuits, but it's just something different when it's fresh and I believe that God has a fresh word for us here, a story that most of us have heard. Let's just be honest, just raise your hand if you ever heard the parable of the 5,000? We all had. We all had, you raised your hand too boy, you do hear it before.

I got my middle son with me tonight. That's Joseph Daniel. But I love that this story picks up right after John the Baptist has been headed. Like, this a wild time, Herod hears about what Jesus is doing, there's this party with Herodias, this woman is doing this tempting dance, the king it messed him up -- just like baby, whatever you want tell me. He said I give it up to you, it's up to half of my kingdom whatever you want. And she says, "I want John the Baptist head on a platter" and right before we read this story, it says the disciples heard of it they went and took his body and they buried him in a tomb.

In their excitement, they returned to Jesus. We pick up Verse 30 says, "so the apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and all that they had taught." And Jesus understood that -- if you look through these first six chapters of Mark, there's a word that you see so often and it's "immediately." It's immediately and immediately this happened and this is a rush paste is hurried, whereas you start in the Gospel of Matthew, you might get some genealogy you get a little runway, but Jesus hitting the ground running in Mark. And Jesus understands that they're hurried, and they're frantic, and they're probably a little bit anxious. They're a little thrown off by having to bury John the Baptist who was the Forerunner of Jesus and he says, "you know what? The most important thing you can do right now is just come away to a desolate place and rest."

And in their mind, they might be like, Jesus is people all around us, they pulling on us, they got demands, were trying to heal people, we're casting out demons, we're feeding folks, all of this stuff is happening and the crowd is not slowing down. But I love the rhythm of Jesus. Because Jesus was a man of mission, Jesus would come, live out his mission, pull away to be refilled with the father. He'd come and do what God called him to do, but then he recognized the wisdom and pulling away.

And so the first thing he tells his disciples after this is, "go away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." They were so busy; people were putting so many demands on their lives that they didn't even have time to eat. You know, it's got to be busy. I don't know about you all, but if I'm not eating, like I'm really in the thick of some stuff. But there were so many demands that they couldn't even eat and Jesus is like this is not good. This is not good. So they did what they knew to do. They got in the boat, they went to the desolate place by themselves and I love that the fame of Jesus was happening so much. It said people recognize them, people recognize them. I mean there was no printing press, there was no social media, this is just word of mouth. You were like, man, did you hear about the dude who healed a man with the withered hand? Have you all heard about the ones who cast out Legion and threw him into some pigs and they jumped off a cliff have you all heard about that person?

So they recognized him in the back. They like, "hold on, I think that's them. Hey, hey." And it said, on foot, they started running to get ahead of them. No rest. But when he went ashore, he saw this great crowd and he had compassion on them. Everybody say, "compassion." He had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. These people were hungry for something that Jesus and his crew had. But there was something that connected what Jesus saw, with what he interpreted with what connected to his heart. Somehow, what he saw broke something in here and it motivated him here to figure out how he can step into it. And I don't know if you've ever been in that zone before where you see something that just breaks your heart, that forces you to have compassion to say, "you know what, it shouldn't be this way." But Jesus saw something, he saw something in their eyes and it says that he had compassion because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

And then of course, what did Jesus do? He did what Jesus always does. He began to teach them many things, but he couldn't teach them to a point where they would receive if he didn't have compassion on them.

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That would have just been a speech. That just would have been a, "hey, this is what I got for you, I'm just going to spit it out. If you get it, you get it. If you don't, you don't." But I think what made it connect with their hearts and change their lives was the fact that he took the time to have compassion on them. And I believe that God is calling us in this day, in this time, in this hour, in the season, in this city, in this community, in this nation that if things are going to change for us, if he's going to use us, we have to lead from a place of compassion. We have to live from a place where we see something in our first response shouldn't necessarily be anger, and our first response should not be frustration. Our first response should be compassion.

When we look at the Story of Nehemiah, you can see that as he's processing everything that's happening in his hometown. It says the first thing that Nehemiah did was he stopped, and he sat down, and he wept, and he prayed, and he mourned, and he fasted because there's something about compassion that compels us to change. So when I see a young man who's struggling, with maybe some of the things that I struggle with when I was his age, my response is "boy, I don't know no better." It's to extend compassion because I know and Jesus saw something in them and he says, "you know what? Before I teach them anything, they need to know that I have compassion on them."

Before we attempt to reach anybody in our community, in our city, in our neighborhoods, they have to know more than anything that we have compassion for them. It's not our job to change anybody. I learned this early in marriage, man. This has save me a whole lot of headaches. It's not my job to change my wife, it's my job to love my wife, it's my job to serve my wife, it's my job to listen to my wife, it's my job to help her become everything under God that he desires for her to become because I have to have compassion towards her. And so Jesus starts from this place of compassion before he taught them anything, it says, "he had compassion." Somebody say, "compassion."

Compassion is deeper than empathy. It's getting down with somebody where they are on their level, feeling what they're feeling, getting in their shoes, understanding their experience and not just operating from a place of this is the way I see it. And Jesus challenge them and he showed them that one of the most important things that you can have towards somebody is compassion.

And after he began to teach them many things, it started to get late. His disciples came to him and said, "Jesus, I don't know if you noticed but there are no street lights out here. We kind of far out. It's desolate, it's getting late -- if I had to guess, if I was a bad man people about to start getting hungry in a little while, so you might want to wrap up the teaching, we can resume it tomorrow." Let's go ahead and get people on their way so they can stop and go through the drive-thru on their way home. Get him little chick-fil-a nugget or little salad, kale salad or something for you all healthy people. But it says, "this is a desolate place and the hour is late, send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.

Oh, man. I love how reasonable the disciples were and Jesus answered him, "you give them something to eat." You want to be reasonable, let's change the dynamics here. "You give them something to eat" and they said to him -- and this is where as my mom would say, they got a little smart in the mouth. They got a little sarcastic. They said, "so you want us to take pretty much half a year's wages and go out and buy bread and feed all these people?" I love Jesus responded to their question with a question, like he always does. He said, "how many loaves do you have, take inventory, go and see what you got. Don't come at me about spending half a year's wages."

They were trying to be reasonable, but God was trying to teach them something different. When they had found out, they said we got five loaves and two fish, and he commanded them all to sit down and groups on that lush green grass, and they sat down and those groups by hundreds and by 50. And taking those five loaves and the two fish, the first thing he did, he looked to heaven and he expressed gratitude and then he broke it and he distributed it and everybody ate and there were leftovers. People were leaving with to go plates, because here's what I want you to take, Jesus force them to be creative. Jesus showed them in these few verses that we read that if we are going to effectively reach the people

that God has called us to reach, the two things that we're going to need is we're going to need creativity and we're going to need compassion.

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You have to start from that place of compassion, but you also have to be open and willing to be people of creativity because we have a tendency just like the disciples to lead reasonably. They were being reasonable, at first, they weren't trying to be funny, they are like, Jesus it's getting a little late, people are going to get hungry, they might start to revolt like we might want to cut this short and send people on their way. Because this human nature for us to think reasonably. However, God is not interested in reasonable. He was challenging them to lead faithfully. There's a huge difference between being reasonable and being faithful. So the reasonable thing was, hey people are hungry, we need to feed them blase-blase-blah. Yes, I get it. But Jesus says, "before we go a little further, I've been looking at these people. My heart has been connected to them. I want you to think about not what somebody else can do, but what can you all do?" And it's never fun when it's put on you. Even like my God, what about (00:16:00), what do you have?

I want you to be faithful. I want you to be faithful in what you have. But God it would be so much easier -- uh-uh, uh-uh. What do you have? Okay. So now you're going to put it on me. So you expect us to spend half a year's wages to feed these people? Jesus said, "what do you have? Stop arguing me about all the other stuff, what do you have?" They took inventory and I said, man got five loaves of bread, two fish. And Jesus says, "that's all I need." I just need you to be faithful. I don't need you to worry about what's going to happen way down the road. I just need you to be faithful in this moment. I need you to have enough faith to be compassionate about the people that I placed around you. The same people that are frustrate, the mess out of you. The same people that just get up under your skin. Yes, those are the ones I want you to see and I want you to understand and I want to empathize with and I want your heart to connect with them because there's always so much more of a bigger story than what you see on the outside.

Jesus says, 'I want you to have compassion.' God is calling us to be people of compassion, but not only that he says, "you got to get

creative, use what you got.” He has Moses, he’s asking a lot of different ways. He says, what is that in your hand Moses? A staff. He tells the disciples to go out and he says, “uh-uh, before you go, don’t take anything with you, but staff. No money belt, no sandals. Definitely don’t take two tunics because they might think that you really balling out if you got two tunics.” Two tunics, (00:17:33). What do you have? What do you have? That’s all he’s asking, just trust me enough with what you have.

God, give us compassion and creativity to reach the people around us. Father, I just thank you. God, I’m so thankful for just who you are. I thank you for this word that has been passed down from generations to generations and yes, we celebrate them finding the five loaves and the two fish, yes, we celebrate the miracle of it and yes, we thank you for giving them comfort, but I pray right now, October 15, 2020 that you would help us to be more compassionate. God, I pray that you would breathe creativity into us to reach those around us. God, I pray that you would help us to be faithful students of your word. God, help us to be faithful stewards of our influence. God, give us boldness, give us courage, give us wisdom, give us discernment, give us favor to be able to declare your truth to those around us. God, we trust that you and you alone have the ability to change lives, never allow us to minimize what you’ve placed in our hands. God, I pray every single day when we wake up that our motivation, the first question on our minds would be, “God, am I being faithful? Am I being a faithful steward of what you’ve placed in my care? God, that faithfulness would emanate, it eliminates through our compassion towards others, and God, trusting you for creativity and reaching everyone around us. So I’m so thankful that you love us, I thank you for your Spirit dwelling among us. And I just pray these things in Jesus name, and every heart(ph) agreement said it, amen. Amen. God bless your heart.

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