

The Seven Compassions of Christ

What moved the heart of Jesus, and how He wants to move ours

But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

MATTHEW 9:36

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	Jesus did not just <i>feel</i> for hurting people; His compassion always moved Him to act. When we abide with Him, we learn to love the same way.
SCRIPTURE	Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34 · Mark 1:41; 9:22 · Luke 7:13
LENGTH	About 25 minutes, or seven short devotions (one a day)
BEST FOR	Middle school and high school
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles, a whiteboard, and seven sticky notes or index cards

Start here: who are you comparing yourself to?

Most of us measure ourselves against the people around us. "At least I'm nicer than *him*." "I'll never be as good as *her*." Paul says that kind of measuring is a trap: people who are "comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12). There is only one Person worth comparing ourselves to, and that is Jesus.

So today we are going to look closely at His heart. Seven times the Gospels stop and tell us that Jesus was "moved with compassion." Each time, something He saw stirred Him deep inside, and each time He *did something about it*. That second part matters, because James reminds us that "faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17). Real compassion always gets up and moves.

BACKGROUND FOR THE LEADER

The Greek word behind "moved with compassion" is *splagchnizomai*. It comes from *splanchna*, the inner organs: heart, lungs, stomach. It describes a gut-level ache, the kind you feel in your stomach when you see someone hurting. In the Gospels it is used of Jesus Himself, and in three of His parables of a person who pictures God's mercy (the master who forgives a huge debt, the Good Samaritan, and the father of the prodigal son). It is not polite sympathy. It is love that hurts and then helps.

1 He saw people who were lost and alone

"He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd." **MATTHEW 9:36**

Jesus looked at the crowds and saw people who were worried, pushed around, helpless, and on their own. Sheep without a shepherd don't know where to find food or water, and they can't protect themselves.

Look around your school. Some of your classmates are exactly like that: anxious, scattered, and without anyone to guide them. Jesus doesn't see a crowd; He sees sheep who need a Shepherd. He invites them, "Come to Me... learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:28-29).

2 He saw the sick and healed them

"And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick." **MATTHEW 14:14**

Jesus had just heard that John the Baptist had been killed. He went away to be alone, but the crowds followed Him. Instead of sending them away, He healed their sick. Later that day He fed more than five thousand people with five loaves and two fish.

Notice: Jesus was grieving, tired, and looking for rest, and He still made room for people in need. Compassion is not convenient. It shows up anyway.

3 He saw that they were hungry

"I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat." **MATTHEW 15:32**

A different crowd had stayed with Jesus for three days, and they had run out of food. Jesus did not want to send them away hungry, "lest they faint on the way" (Matthew 15:32). So He fed four thousand men, plus women and children.

Jesus cared about people's souls *and* their stomachs. God provides. One way He does that is through His people sharing what they have. In Malachi 3:10 God asked His people to bring their giving into the storehouse "that there may be food in My house." Get to know people who are in need, and help them.

4 He stopped for the people everyone ignored

"So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him." **MATTHEW 20:34**

On the road out of Jericho, two blind men shouted for Jesus. The crowd told them to be quiet. In those days many people assumed blindness was a punishment from God (see John 9:2), so these men were pushed to the edge of everything. But "Jesus stood still." He called them over, touched their eyes, and they could see.

A huge crowd was moving, and Jesus stopped everything for two people nobody else wanted to hear. Are you willing to stop for the person everyone else walks past?

5 He touched the untouchable

"Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed.'" **MARK 1:41**

A man with leprosy begged Jesus, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." The Law required people with leprosy to live alone outside the town and to call out "Unclean!" so others would stay away (Leviticus 13:45-46). This man may not have felt a human touch in years. Jesus reached out, touched him, and said, "I am willing; be cleansed."

Jesus could have healed him with a word. He chose to touch him first. Today God still touches people, and very often He does it through us: a hand on a shoulder, a seat saved at lunch, a text that says "I'm praying for you."

ILLUSTRATION

Ask the group: "When was the last time someone noticed you on a bad day?" Let one or two share. Then point out that the person who noticed probably didn't do anything big. They just paid attention and acted. That is what Jesus did, and that is what He asks of us.

6 He answered a desperate father

"But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." **MARK 9:22**

A father brought his son, who had been tormented by an evil spirit since childhood. The disciples couldn't help. The father pleaded with Jesus to have compassion and help. Jesus answered, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23), and He set the boy free.

Some people around you are trapped by things they cannot break on their own: addiction, pornography, self-harm, rage, despair. Jesus has compassion on them and power to free them. Reach out, pray, and point them to Jesus and to grown-ups who can help.

7 He brought life where everything seemed dead

"When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.'" **LUKE 7:13**

At the gate of the village of Nain, Jesus met a funeral. A widow was burying her only son. Without a husband or son, she had lost her family and her only means of support. Jesus told her, "Do not weep." Then He touched the coffin and raised the young man to life.

When a situation looks hopeless, when a friendship, a family, or a person seems dead, Jesus still has the power to bring it back to life.

So what do we do with this?

Look back at the seven. Jesus **saw** people (lost, sick, hungry, ignored, untouchable, desperate, grieving). He **felt** deeply for them. And He always **acted**: He taught, healed, fed, stopped, touched, delivered, and restored.

We cannot manufacture that kind of love on our own. It grows as we stay close to Jesus. "Abide in Me," He said (John 15:4). Spend time with Him, learn His heart, and then let His compassion move through you. "Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

TALK IT OVER

1. Which of the seven stories stands out to you most? Why?
2. Jesus stopped for people the crowd ignored. Who is "ignored" at your school, team, or job?
3. What is the difference between feeling sorry for someone and having compassion?
4. Jesus often touched people before He healed them. What are some ways we can "touch" people with God's love this week?
5. What keeps us from acting when we see someone hurting (busyness, fear, what friends think)? How can we push past that?

TAKE IT HOME

Write the seven references on seven cards and read one each day this week. Each day, ask Jesus to show you one person who needs His compassion, then do one small, concrete thing for that person before you go to bed.

Abide with Jesus, learn compassion from Him, and love others.

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