

The Fashion of Compassion – Matthew 9:27-34

Matthew 9:36 (NIV) *“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”*

Introduction: Once a Sunday School class was reading about the crowds that always followed Jesus during His ministry. The teacher asked the class, *“Why do you think so many people wanted to be around Jesus?”* One boy answered, *“Because Jesus was rich?”* “No,” the teacher replied, *“Jesus didn’t even have a place to lay His head at night.”* A girl then said, *“Because He was handsome?”* “Well,” said the teacher, *“We don’t really know what Jesus looked like, but that wasn’t the reason either.”* Finally, a boy raised his hand and said, *“Because people had lots of questions, and He always had the right answers.”*

That is so true. People were and still are attracted to Jesus because He has the answers to life’s questions. And one question people are asking is, *“Does anyone care about me?”*

Of course, the short answer to that question is, *“Yes, Jesus cares.”* But folks want to know how He cares. When they look around and see others who seeming only care about themselves and what they can get out of life, it’s easy to see why people feel lonely and isolated.

But the reality is that the Lord does care for us and He shows it every day. In fact, every minute we live, every breath we take is a tribute to the care and compassion of God. He provides for our every need. He gives us life, health, family, and our abilities. The Scriptures are true when the writers said.

“The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.” **Psalms 145:8-9 (NIV).**

“Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” **Lamentations 3:22-23 (NIV).**

Jesus was the most compassionate person to ever live. He consistently demonstrated His compassion as He healed, forgave, encouraged, mourned and shared His love with everyone He met. Of course, in His greatest act of compassion was when He died for our sins and rose again.

In our text this morning, Matthew gives us a further glimpse of the compassion of Jesus as He encountered people who had questions. Today, we’re going to learn how the compassion of Jesus not only transcended

obstacles, but how we can follow His example and fashion a compassionate heart toward our the people we encounter in life. First, let's notice:

1. Compassion in Spite of Disobedience (27-31).

In the crowd that followed Jesus were two blind men who were continually crying out for mercy. They couldn't see Jesus, but somehow they had heard of His mighty acts of healing, and they were hoping to get His attention.

They were screaming, *"Have mercy on us, Son of David!"* Now the title, *"Son of David"* was a title of the Messiah. So, addressing Jesus as *"Son of David"* meant that these blind men understood that that Jesus was the Son of God. And because of this belief, they were begging for mercy and appealing to His compassion. They believed that Jesus was the answer to their question, *"Does anyone really care about us?"*

In vs. 28, Jesus asks them a question, *"Do you believe that I am able to do this?"* Now obviously, these men had to believe Jesus was the Son of God, or else they wouldn't have addressed Him as the Son of David. So why would Jesus ask them this question? Well, if you recall, when we studied the episode where the four men brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus, and He first told the man, *"Your sins are forgiven,"* we said that Jesus was first and foremost interested in healing the soul and spirit of people before He healed their physical infirmities.

That is what Jesus is doing here. Jesus was asking these men to make a public profession of their faith. For He said in **Mt. 10:32 (NIV)** *"Whoever acknowledges me **before men**, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven."*

And Paul said in **Rom. 10:9 (NIV)** *"That if you confess with your **mouth**, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*

Now, walking an aisle, or making a public profession does not save anyone. But clearly, it is an important aspect of one's sincerity and seriousness of one's commitment to Christ is not being ashamed to call Him Lord. These men were not ashamed. They said, *"Yes Lord."* And with that, they made their public profession of faith in Jesus.

And with that, Jesus reached out His hands and said, *"According to your faith it will be to you."* And He *"touched their eyes."* And instantly, those eyes that had known nothing but darkness were able to see for the first time!

Now at this point, Jesus did something a little puzzling. Vs. 30 says He *"warned them sternly"* that no one was to know of this. But vs. 31 says, *"But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region."*

Most scholars believe that the reason Jesus didn't want the news of this incident spread at this time was because at this point in His ministry, Jesus didn't want the fact of His Messiahship to be proclaimed prematurely. He was already being dogged by the Pharisees, and if they heard of this news, they'd ratchet up their hatred for Him and hound Him even more.

Jesus had so much more to do than to be constantly harassed by the nay-sayers and those out to get Him.

However, the point I'm trying to make here is the fact that as the all-knowing Son of God, Jesus knew full well that these men wouldn't be able to keep their joy to themselves. He knew they would disobey Him. But still, He healed them.

And that's the thing about the compassion of Jesus. Even when He knows that we will fail Him, that we will sin, that we will rebel, and fail Him, He still shows us His compassion!

As Lam. 3:22 says, His mercies are *"new every morning."*

- God created Adam and Eve, knowing they would sin.
- God saved Noah, knowing he would be shamed in old age.
- God called Abraham, knowing He would lie.
- God chose David, knowing he would commit adultery.
- God picked Jonah, knowing he would run away.
- God chose Peter, knowing he would deny Him.
- When Jesus told the adulterous woman, *"Go and sin no more,"* He knew she would sin some more.

And in mercy and compassion, God loves us and calls us in spite of our disobedience and failures.

That ought to tell us something about the way we treat others. If we are going to have the *"mind of Christ"* (1 Cor. 9:16), and if our *"attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus,"* as the Apostle Paul said

in **Phil. 2:5 (NIV)**, we ought to fashion the same kind of compassion when people are caught in a lie; when people make bad decisions; when people let us down.

Now, am I saying that people should be let off the hook for their sin? No! However, but as they are being restored, let us not be guilty of hindering the process. Let us not continue to keep the wound open by our lack of compassion for them during their time of restoration. Let us fashion to others the same kind of compassion Christ demonstrated to us when we were in our sins.

Secondly, let's notice:

2. Compassion in Spite of Disrespect (32-34).

Vs. 32. says that as Jesus and the crowds left the house where the two blind men were healed, a demoniac was brought to Jesus to be healed. Matthew doesn't give the details of this healing, but simply says that "*the demon was driven out.*" Vs. 33 says that the man spoke, and "*The crowd was amazed and said, 'Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.'*" They were "*blown away!*"

Now, remember these are the people whose ancestors had crossed the Red Sea on dry ground. Their forefathers knew of God's giving of the law on Mt. Sinai and writing them on stone tablets with His finger. They had heard the story about the walls of Jericho tumbling down at the mere blowing of a trumpet. They knew about Elijah's dramatic sacrifice on Mt. Carmel. They knew about David and Goliath. They knew about the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace and about Daniel in the lion's den and Jonah in the belly of the whale. But when they compared what Jesus had done in less than a year's time, they exclaimed that His power was unequalled in history.

But while the common people considered these awesome demonstrations of the power and compassion of Jesus as amazing, according to vs. 34, the "*Pharisees*" saw it differently. They saw Jesus as a rebel who turned the people away from their traditional Judaism. To them, He was an enemy to their traditions and in their thinking; He was an enemy of God.

Of course, they were left with the question of how Jesus could do all these amazing things. They couldn't deny what they saw Him do. His supernatural power was indisputable. In their warped way of thinking, because

they refused to acknowledge Him as the Son of God, they began to circulate a lie. They said *"It is by the prince of demons, that He drives out demons."*

Now, if you think about it, that's a pretty dumb thing to say. In Mt. 12:22-26, in almost the same scenario, the Pharisees said Jesus cast out demons by *"Beelzebub."* *"Beelzebub"* (lord of the flies) was a Philistine deity considered to be the *"ruler of the demons"* or Satan. Jesus says in vs. 26, *"If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself."* In other words, *"You guys are so determined to be against me you don't even make sense!"*

Jesus knew the Pharisees would disrespect Him and use this man's healing to spread lies about Him. Yet, His compassion still moved Him to heal this man.

Jesus faced the ultimate disrespect and humiliation at the cross. But because of His compassion and mercy for us, He bore our sins and shame. **Heb. 12:2 (NIV)** speaks of *"...Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* Because He loves us and has compassion on us, Jesus faced the disrespect of the cross.

Conclusion: Jesus' love and compassion for people motivated Him to go beyond the normal reach of mercy. He demonstrated His compassion knowing there would be disobedience. He demonstrated His compassion even in the face of disrespect and defiance. And He calls for us to fashion the same kind of love and compassion for those around us.

If you are here today, and you're blinded to the notion that someone actually does care for you for you today. I want to introduce you to the only man who can open blinded eyes. Won't you call out to Him today for mercy? Reach out to Jesus and let Him touch you with His tender hands of love and compassion. He'll do more than restore your sight. He'll give you a brand new life. He'll give you a peace that surpasses all understanding. He'll give you an assurance of a heavenly home. Someone does care about you today, and His name is Jesus. Won't you accept His offer of eternal life?