

Discipleship Questions

What does it mean to be moved with compassion?

What pattern can be seen in Jesus's life concerning human need and Jesus's compassion?

What were some situations in which Jesus demonstrated compassion for people physically?

What were some situations in which Jesus demonstrated compassion for people spiritually?

How did Jesus see the people who came to Him, and how did it impact His compassion for them?

What does Jesus's example teach you about showing compassion for others physically?

What does Jesus's example teach you about showing compassion for others spiritually?

What are some practical ways you can show compassion to others?



Those who desire to be Jesus's disciples must endeavor to learn Jesus's teachings and ways and imitate Him by walking as He walked (1 John 2:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:1). One aspect of Jesus's life that must be imitated is the way Jesus was compassionate. Therefore, we must consider the Scriptures that give us insight into the way Jesus was compassionate so we can learn how to walk in His footsteps in the way that we show compassion.

Mark 1:39-42

Jesus was moved with compassion for this leper (some Greek manuscripts/translations say Jesus was moved with indignation instead). To be moved with compassion is to have sympathy/pity/sorrow for someone who is experiencing some kind of misfortune and to have a desire to relieve the source of suffering. Throughout Jesus's life, He demonstrated the pattern of seeing a need, being moved with compassion, and then acting to alleviate the source of suffering. Here, Jesus saw the suffering of this man who had a serious skin disease that also made him a social outcast (Leviticus 13-14). The man recognized that Jesus could change his life and begged Jesus to act. Jesus's compassion for the man resulted in Jesus doing what He could by healing him, which would have given him a completely new lease on life!

Luke 7:11-17

Jesus encountered a funeral procession around the town of Nain. The procession was for a widow's only son. Jesus saw the situation and was again moved with compassion for this widow. There are likely several reasons why. There was the obvious grief over the death of her son (perhaps increased because it was her only son). Furthermore, she had already

endured the grief of her husband's death. And, since widows would often be financially supported by children in that culture (1 Timothy 5:3-16), the death of her only son may have also left her in a dire financial situation. Recognizing her pain and being moved with compassion for her, Jesus did what He could and raised her son from the dead!

Mark 6:30-44

Although Jesus and His disciples were trying to be alone (perhaps grieving the death of John the Baptist, Matthew 14:13) after being swamped with people, the people wanted to be near Jesus. Jesus saw the large crowd of people and had compassion on them, seeing them like sheep without a shepherd (in need of guidance, care, protection, etc.). Jesus, though, did not just see their condition and move on without doing anything. Instead, Jesus healed (Matthew 14:14), taught (v. 34), and provided them with physical food (vv. 35-44)! Physically, Jesus showed compassion for many needs through His healings and by providing physical food for survival in the deserted place (compare with Mark 8:1-3). Spiritually, Jesus showed compassion by trying to teach the people so they could partake in the Bread of Life (John 6:22-59).

Mark 9:14-27

As people were upset about Jesus's disciples failing to heal this boy of an evil spirit, the child's father spoke with Jesus about his son, who had been devastated by this spirit. It would throw him down and make him convulse, foam at the mouth, grind his teeth, and become rigid. It had even tried to destroy him by throwing him into fire or water. In fact, the spirit caused him to convulse in front of Jesus. The pain of both this son and his father was plainly evident, and the father pleaded for Jesus to have compassion on them. So, despite others failing to alleviate this need, Jesus addressed it by rebuking the unclean spirit so that it came out of the boy to never enter him again!

Matthew 20:29-34

Two blind men heard a crowd of people passing by and wanted to know what was happening (Luke 18:35-36). One of these was a beggar named Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46). Their blindness impacted more than just the ability to see and experience the world normally. It also impacted the ability to make a living. They refused to be quiet and continued calling out to Jesus for mercy, wanting to see and trusting Jesus's ability to make that happen (Mark 10:51-52). Jesus had compassion on them and did what He could by healing them! Although you cannot work a miracle, you can still

learn from and imitate Jesus's compassion by doing whatever you can for others (e.g. pray for, spend time with, listen to, serve, give, etc.).

Matthew 9:35-38

Jesus saw the needs of people while He walked this earth and was moved with compassion for those who lived in this world and were devastated by sin's effects. This included compassion for those dealing with the pain, suffering, and death brought into the world through sin. But, His greatest demonstration of compassion concerned the spiritual lostness of this world due to sin (Romans 6:23)! Jesus saw this as the greatest need people had and came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), teaching the good news of God's kingdom and providing Himself as the sacrifice to set people free from sin and bring them to God (John 8:31-32; 14:1-6)! So, as Jesus walked the earth, He could see the needs of the people for what they truly were: That people were living like sheep in need of a Shepherd. He became that Shepherd for those interested in following His voice (John 10:1-30). Now, people would no longer have to struggle in the desert of sorrow and sin but could come to Him and find rest for their souls (Matthew 11:28-30)! Jesus's instruction then pointed His disciples to have this spiritually-focused compassion on others as well, praying that God would send workers into the harvest of lost souls in this world and implying that His disciples should also be doing what they can to help point people to Jesus and out of their lost condition (Matthew 28:18-20). Certainly, Jesus's followers who know the spiritual devastation of sin and the solution to it should be moved with compassion to help the lost escape their lostness (Jude 1:22-23; 2 Timothy 2:24-26)!

Conclusion

Imitating Jesus requires that you be compassionate like Jesus demonstrated compassion. Although there is much more that could be discussed, we have seen Jesus's compassion being shown in different ways throughout His earthly life. Ultimately, Jesus demonstrated His compassion through His willingness to provide the only sacrifice that could bring about salvation from sin. Therefore, disciples of Jesus must learn to have compassion on the physical and spiritual needs of others that results in doing whatever is possible to alleviate them!

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