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The Compassion of Christ

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The Compassion of Christ

Day 9

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 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 9:35–36)

When we see Jesus going about His life on earth, we see the Father's *compassion*. Jesus said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son does in like manner" (John 5:19). When we see Jesus, we see God dressed in the flesh and blood of a man; we see love flowing out of a human like ourselves.

The miracles Jesus did demonstrate the amazing power of God. Spectacular events—like opening blind eyes, healing lepers, and raising the dead—are eye-catching. But Jesus didn't do miracles to attract attention or draw crowds. *Compassion* compelled Jesus to act as He did. Behind every miracle, sensational as it may have been, was the quiet, steadfast, uncompromising, unconditional love of God.

One day a crowd was following Jesus as He walked to Jericho. Two poor, blind beggars were sitting in the dust beside the road. When they heard that Jesus was coming, they began calling out "Have mercy on us." Those in the crowd rebuked them. They felt Jesus had more important things to do than pay attention to these worthless men.

But still the men cried out. "Have mercy on us O Lord." And Jesus' heart of mercy went out to them. He stopped and bent down.

"'What do you want Me to do for you?' They said to Him, 'Lord, that our eyes may be opened.' So Jesus had *compassion* and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him" (Matthew 20:32–34).

The blind beggars weren't made to see in a blast of holy lightening from heaven. They received their sight when Jesus disregarded the crowd's rebuke, paused in His journey, stooped down beside the dusty road and touched their blind eyes.

Feel the compassion behind that touch.

On another occasion, Jesus was preaching and casting out demons when a man with leprosy came to Him. In Jesus' day, lepers were outcast from families and society. People feared to touch or associate with them for fear of getting the flesh-eating disease.

"A leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, 'If You are willing, you can make me clean.' Then Jesus, moved with *compassion*, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him" (Mark 1:40-42).

Leprosy didn't stop the love of God. Jesus stretched out His hand.

Feel the compassion behind that touch.

Yet another time, Jesus and some of His disciples were entering a city when a funeral procession was leaving through the gate. The dead man was the only son of a widow. Without a husband or a son, women in that culture had no respect or means of support. It was like the woman's life too was ending with the death of her treasured only son. He had been everything to her and he was gone. And so she wept. Jesus saw the woman's deep pain and His heart went out to her.

"When the Lord saw her, He had *compassion* on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.' Then He came and touched the coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.' So he who was dead sat up and began to speak" (Luke 7:13-15).

Jesus felt the widow's grief. God knew her pain. His only Son too would die. And so, God reached down through Jesus' hands.

Feel the compassion behind that touch.

Ponder for a Moment

Pretend you have no preconceived ideas about God and you are seeing Him for the first time in these events. Describe God as you see Him in these situations.

Just as it was over 2,000 years ago, Jesus' touch of compassion is here for you now.
What do you need compassion for today?