

Becoming like Jesus in his compassion

(Based on Chapter 21 of *Costly Grace*)

The Big Idea

Jesus empowers and compels us to serve others.

Biblical Foundation

Jesus went around visiting all the towns and villages. He taught in the synagogues, preached the Good News about the Kingdom, and healed people with every kind of disease and sickness. As he saw the crowds, his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. So he said to his disciples, "The harvest is large, but there are few workers to gather it in. Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest." Matthew 9:35-38 (TEV)

Jesus saw all the harassed and helpless human-sheep and he was moved to extraordinary compassion; the text suggesting that it ripped at his guts. Their spiritual leaders (their shepherds) misused power and influence instead of serving the people God had sent them to serve.

In this passage, Jesus sees people so beaten down by life, facing so many problems, and so overwhelmed, that they didn't even know where to go for help (Matthew 9:36). Instead of trying to control them, he poured compassion on them. Instead of leading from a distance, they could look into his eyes, feel his warmth, smell his breath and hear him whisper, "You are healed. I am here. I will give you rest."

Talk about the humanness of Jesus – Have you ever thought of Jesus close enough to smell his breath or feel his sweat? Why is his humanness important to understand?

Jesus calls us to see others the way he sees them (Ephesians 1:18). He wants to develop in us the same mercy he has for others. As that happens to us, what will that look like?

Jesus says, in effect, "I'm not going to keep doing this ministry by myself. I want you to be able to do it too. So, come, work with me and see how the Father fills you with his compassion."

Talk about this statement: I will not allow my vision of what is possible in serving others to be limited by what I see as my own strength and resources.