

Compassion

Jesus' Compassion on the Crowds

Foundation

Bible passage : Mark 6.30-34

There are a few places in the Gospels which talk about Jesus' compassion for others. For example, in Matthew 14 when Jesus heard that John the Baptist had been beheaded, He withdrew to a desolate place by Himself. However, when the crowds heard about this, they went looking for Him. Many people might have been annoyed at this invasion of privacy but instead we are told that that Jesus had compassion on them and healed their sick. When

“he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.”

Mark narrates the event, he adds that Jesus also taught the crowds. Because the crowds had come unprepared for the journey by later on they were hungry, had no food, and yet had a distance to go to their homes. What followed was the feeding of the 5,000.

These passages therefore show us Jesus' concern for the physical and spiritual needs of people but both Matthew and Mark also say that

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Compassion means to show concern for those in need. The word is Latin in origin and means to “suffer with” it is like sympathy which comes from a Greek word. However, in the New Testament the Greek word used in the verses mentioned on this page is the much more vivid - *splagchnizomai* - which means to have our bowels yearn for something - it is feeling deep within us of compassion for those in need.



Jesus had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. This is not a very flattering picture of people and indeed sometimes people are offended by the way the Bible describes people as sheep. Yet as we look at the world today, we can see that many seem to be wandering aimlessly through life without any meaning of purpose. Even those who are seen as very successful in worldly terms can find that their success does not lead to fulfilment and they fall into despair.

Being inspired by Christ should mean wanting to have compassion on others as Jesus did. But we should also recognise that people can be like sheep without a shepherd and that Jesus is the Good Shepherd (John 10.11 & 14) who laid

“I am the Good Shepherd”

down His life for the sheep. This is why Jesus did not merely heal those who were sick, but He also taught people and called people to follow Him. When we do so we are no longer sheep without a shepherd, but sheep know the Good Shepherd and are part of His flock.



Being inspired by Christ should mean wanting to have compassion on others. He even laid down his life for others.