

Compassion 07

We are moving on in our sermon series looking at compassion. We have seen that God the Father is compassionate, and seen examples of Jesus being compassionate. Last week we looked at some typology unearthed in this series of sermons. Typology pointing to Jesus and His finished works, seeing Him as our sacrificial lamb and High Priest in one. We saw Jesus' outstretched arms being a picture of love and welcome, the ultimate act of forgiveness.

This week we will change the direction of this series and look at part we play. It is great looking at what God does, Jesus does, but the aim of all teaching, of all study of the Word is for us to be changed. I trust you agree with this point.

Romans 12 v 1 and 2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

2 Peter 1 v 3

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

We are transformed through mind renewal, transformed through knowledge of Him. Mind renewal comes about through understanding the Word of God. If our aim is to manifest more Godliness, we need to become more Christ like. That is why we accept Biblical teaching and why some of us teach; the aim is transformation.

And in this context to be transformed to show more compassion. So, what do we need to learn from the Word of God this week?

We have spent time in the previous sermons looking to Jesus as the ultimate example of compassion. He cleansed the leper, He healed the 10 lepers, He forgave the woman taken in adultery, and He had His encounter with the woman at the well. We also studied out the account of the Good Samaritan.

What did they tell us? That Jesus was compassionate, and that Jesus was moved with compassion, to anyone and everyone, including His enemies. That was Jesus, our example.

John 14 is the great and final discourse Jesus was with His disciples before His death. His disciples were believers, followers of Jesus, and in that sense we are the same as them. So I believe that what Jesus says to his disciples then, He says to us as His disciples now.

John 14 v 8 to 14

Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Now I want to look specifically at verse 12 today. It says that if we believe on Jesus, we can do the same deeds and acts as He did, in fact we can do greater. I read verse 12 again yesterday morning, and something hit me.

You've heard me teaching on this before, and I have heard others teach in the same way. The word greater can mean more, so we can do what Jesus did, that is heal the sick, raise the dead and can see more of this because there are millions, indeed billions of us, while there was only one of Him. My understanding has been that collectively we can do greater works, as in greater numbers.

But read that verse again, and see if you can see what I spotted yesterday.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Can you see the huge truth in that verse?

It is in the singular, it talks of he, not them and not us. It does not talk about all of you, but he, in the singular. One single person is what Jesus is talking about when He says he will do also, and then greater will he do.

And who is Jesus talking about in this passage? He means someone who believes upon Him. So that means you, and it also means me. That's what I thought yesterday, that he mentioned in this verse was me. And that realisation blew me away. I have to say I sat there dumbfounded for a long time, not able take it in.

In that state I went to make a coffee, and Nunsy was just getting ready to head off to work. I told her that I was struggling with a verse, not able to take it in. I spoke about greater things, how I teach about numbers and about us as group, then said but verse is singular, and talks about he.

And Nunsy said "Oh, how can that be". I said, but that's what the Word says, Jesus said same works he will do, and greater works he will do. And something happened as I was speaking out those words As I was saying them, I saw the words in my mind at same time and he had a capital H.

And I had a flash of inspiration, something I knew already but this time I got a deeper revelation, one that went further down into my heart. Yes, we can do the same and greater, we do this but we don't do it. Now that sounds stupid, but Lord was telling me something.

He was saying, yes, you do it Vic, but really, I am doing it, you are using my authority and my power. Your 'job, your works is to believe, and it is my power and authority working through you that gets things done.

Michelle used this scripture in communion yesterday, and it helped me grasp this truth.

Colossians 2 v 9 and 10
For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

This verse is talking about Jesus and us a believer. All the fulness of God dwelt in Jesus, and we are complete in Him. If we believe in and on Him, we have the fulness of the Godhead dwelling within us. Which means we can do anything that we see Jesus doing.

Jesus said He could only do what the Father did, only do the will of the Father. That should be our way of working as well; to only want to do what we see Jesus do, only want to do the will of Jesus.

And that was a real comfort to me, when thinking about those supernatural and miraculous things that Jesus did. But God spoke to me again about this, saying don't fret about the supernatural just now.

We are studying compassion at the moment. Now this not supernatural in my opinion. It is a Godly character that we see in Father and Jesus, but we are made in His image. Compassion is and can be a human character trait too. We can and should do that same thing as He did, in other words, be compassionate.

I think we get hung up on John 14 v 12 and think it is impossible for us, as we look at that word greater. Let's park the greater things for today, and look at the same things. And even in that let's park, raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, opening blind eyes, although of course all those are great and we can do them, but park them for now.

On this list of doing the same things we can of course put compassion because we see that He did do that, He was compassionate.

Jesus loved his fellow men, He was in relationship with them, He cared for them and loved them. And He was moved to meet their needs. Now yes, some of that was miraculous, but not always. Think back to the parable of the good Samaritan.

The Samaritan did not supernaturally heal the man, he tended his wounds by roadside and used his money to look after him. He physical helped him and used his own resources to aid the man's recovery. That was an example used by Jesus to tell us about compassion.

Jesus Himself made time for people out of His compassion.

Think back to the woman at the well. He never laid hands on her and healed her or removed the demonic. He went to be with her, made a detour to see her, made time for her, spoke to her, and answered her questions. And that encounter came out from His compassion.

Sometimes the greatest thing you can do for a person is listen to them. I had a long phone call with someone recently, and at the end they said, "thanks for listening Vic, thanks for letting me get that out", and they have said that to me a few times now.

Love thy neighbour was what Jesus said in the Gospels. We also saw that written in OT recently, and we also see it in Romans 13 v 9, Gal 5 v 14, James 2 v 8. This is a theme throughout the whole of the Word, and that is what compassion is all about. Loving thy neighbour, that is what the parable of good Samaritan is all about.

If we are asked to do it, we will have been equipped to do it. And we have been equipped, with the indwelling Holy Spirit. We can do the same that Jesus did.

Acts 1 v 1 and 2

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

This verse talks about a work began by Jesus. It talks of that carrying on with the apostles that he had chosen. I cannot see a verse in the New Covenant that says this work began by Jesus and continued by His apostles has ceased.

Yes, there are cessationist doctrines out there, but I cannot see evidence in Word to back that view. I see Jesus starting something, see the apostles, disciples and believers in the New Covenant carry that on and I see nothing in Scripture to see that cease.

In fact I see verses that indicate we are to carry on that work; carry on what Jesus started.

You know that I teach that all things in the Christian life takes time to develop. Yes, we are born again and created new in an instant in our spirit, but once that's done it takes time to 'work out' into our lives. There is no such thing as 'microwave Christianity'. We are transformed through mind renewal, and that takes time. We grow and mature as a believer, and that takes time. We become more Christ like, and that takes time.

Mark 4 v 26 to 29

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

Things in the Kingdom take time, and becoming more compassionate takes time. The way I see it, is that we can be compassionate on a purely human level first. We see non-believers being compassionate. We have non-believers meeting the needs orphans and widows through our Indian feeding program for example.

We can then 'move on' to be compassionate through His strength, loving our enemies, and being compassionate to our enemies.

We can then move on further to meet needs in a supernatural way. I believe as fellowship of our size, building the feeding station at a cost of £50k was supernatural.

What am I trying to say here?

We are all called to be compassionate, to do the same as Jesus. We should all be thinking big, but we may have to start small. Jesus made time for people, and I would suggest that we can do that. Jesus listened to people and spoke to people, and I would suggest that we can do that. The Good Samaritan met the physical need of one person, and I would suggest that we can do that too.

We can live out John 14 v 12 today, maybe not in it's fullness but in part. We can do some of the smaller things He did, and work towards the greater.

If you are raising dead and cleansing lepers hallelujah, please don't stop. But if you are not, don't be discouraged, start with the blade, move onto ear, then full corn in the ear.

Look around you for the small acts of simple human compassion that you can do right now. What's the small simple need on your doorstep that you can meet right now? Who near you needs a shoulder to lean on and an ear to listen? Who can you have a meal with? Jesus did that, and we can do the same thing He did. Who can you go for a walk and talk with? Jesus did that, and we can do the same thing he did.

We can and should do the same things He did right now.

AMEN