



Healing # 12 - Compassion

Hello everyone. Welcome to “Notes from the Presence.” We have been exploring the subject of healing for the past few weeks. One of the most resplendent aspects of Jesus was the way He healed the sick. We have been working our way through some key points in Jesus' ministry when it comes to healing. Today we will talk about compassion.

The multiple descriptions of the compassion of Jesus fill me with constant wonder. They are found throughout the gospels in many different contexts. You don't have to look far to realize that the description of compassion we have today is much different from that of our Master. Here are a few examples:

*Matthew 9:35-36 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Seeing the people, He felt **compassion** for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.*

*Matthew 14:14 When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt **compassion** for them and healed their sick.*

*Matthew 20:34 Moved with **compassion**, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.*

*Mark 1:41 Moved with **compassion**, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.”*

*Luke 7:12-14 Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He felt **compassion** for her, and said to her, “Do*

not weep.” And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise!”

In these passages we see the compassion of Jesus manifested in the realms of healing and raising the dead. In addition, the bible records Jesus utilizing compassion to feed a multitude of five thousand and there is also a reference to Him releasing compassion in the form of teaching.

Today, we are used to hearing the word "compassion" in the context of helping people in need of aid. However, when Jesus was moved by compassion, it resulted in miracles of various kinds. There is definitely a practical human side to compassion. In other words, if we see a hungry person, we feed them. However, if we only do what is humanly possible to meet a need, we fall short of releasing the kingdom of God here on earth as it is in heaven. Kingdom compassion draws on the resources of heaven. It makes a demand on the miraculous.

I am fascinated by the way Jesus interacted with compassion. Somehow, there was an inner connection between His feelings of compassion and the miraculous realm. It often says He was "moved" with compassion. He felt compassion, an emotion all of us are familiar with, but then the compassion compelled Him towards the miraculous. Actually, I am not sure that compassion is really an emotion. Here is a brief description of three common human reactions to need:

Sympathy - sympathy is an emotion that we feel when we see a situation that is hurtful to another person. It might move us to try and help in some way but for the most part it is a human reaction allowing us to feel the same thing someone else is feeling. As a result we feel sorry for them. If we are moved to help someone out of sympathy, it is rarely more than placing a bandage on the problem. Unfortunately, much of the aid that we see being distributed in the world is done out of sympathy. It allows us to contribute from a distance and feel good about ourselves. However, many times there is only temporary relief from the pain. Lasting solutions are rarely found in the realm of sympathy. Also, sympathy can easily be done out of pride.

Empathy - empathy is a bit stronger than sympathy. Empathy requires us to come along side the hurting person and share emotional pain. In the process of empathy, we endeavour to lift some of the burden by placing ourselves in the same pain and providing comfort. We must get a bit closer to the situation. It involves personal sacrifice and emotional investment. However, with empathy, we are still acting in the realm of human capability.

Compassion - compassion takes us outside the realm of human possibility. In the ministry of Jesus, it was a deep inner groaning. It was an inner sign that the invasion of heaven on earth was necessary. I am of the opinion that the compassion of Jesus was actually intercession. I have often wondered at the phrase "moved with compassion." Somehow compassion moved Jesus. The question is, what happens when we move? Obviously, moving requires going to a different place. Compassion moved Jesus from human response to a miraculous response. Biblical compassion can't be done without a miraculous response.

One thing I have noticed about the miraculous is that most people think it is impractical. The reason for this response may be that many simply do not believe it is a reliable solution to a problem. We pray for the miraculous with little hope of anything substantial happening. Because of this, our first response to human need is to try to meet it with human strength. However, with Jesus, compassion moved Him towards the miraculous, and the miraculous was always practical, reliable, and consistent.

I am far from this reality in my life. However, I am on a quest to understand the inner connection between compassion and the miraculous. I am also exploring the correlation between compassion and intercession. Jesus didn't come to set an unreachable standard. He came to model a practical kingdom lifestyle. If I honestly ask the question, "What would Jesus do?" then when it comes to compassion, I will let it move me to a place where I put a demand on heaven for solutions to human need. This includes the realm of healing, something I am very much passionate about.

Holy Spirit, teach me this compassion. Show me how to feel the compassion of heaven, be moved, and as a result heal. Amen.

Thanks for reading. Jesus is real and He is gracious, and compassionate.