

### Compassion 03

We are now into week 3 of our compassion series; we had an introduction and then last week I taught on the compassion God in the Old Testament. We looked various words in Hebrews that meant compassion and compassionate. They were rooted in love, talking about love as in cherishing the foetus. We saw pictures of God's compassion like the love of a mother and the love of a father, and this spoke to me of compassion coming from God's love toward us.

He loved us and cared for us, saw our need, and was moved with love and through Jesus He met our needs: and awesome picture of love. I was blessed looking at 1 John 4 (and I'm sure I will use that passage more in this series, especially when looking at us as believers and how we should be compassionate. It spoke of our love for one another, sandwiched around God's compassion and the compassion of Jesus.

This week I had been planning to move onto looking at the compassion Jesus, looking at various accounts in the Gospels when He was moved with compassion, and I had been meditating on that early on this last week. But then I went walk on the beach at Findhorn on Thursday, and the Lord led me on a slightly different direction. It is a similar topic though, also about Jesus, so I'll move onto His actual acts of compassion next week.

I want to try a little experiment with you as you read this essay. Think about the Gospels and come up with three of your favourite pre-cross stories/passages/accounts that involved Jesus. Either write them down or have them in your head. I would hazard a guess that these accounts involve other people.

When I asked this in the sermon, I was hoping to produce a list that contained many accounts of Jesus interacting with people. Most of the passages involving Jesus are Him healing people, eating with people, teaching people, freeing people, talking to people. Can you see a common factor? Yes, people.

We see Him with crowds, with individuals, with His disciples.

Jesus was a people person.

I did this experiment and came up with the following (I cheated and picked 5) –

1. Jesus turning water into wine
2. Jesus with the woman at the well
3. Jesus feeding the five thousand
4. Jesus with the woman taken in adultery
5. Jesus reaching out and healing the leper

Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding, a celebration of relationship. In His encounters with the woman at the well and the woman taken in adultery He was in close, caring, and intimate relationship with another human being in need. In feeding the 5 thousand He was helping the masses. And in His encounter with the leper (currently my favourite) we see Him throwing out the rule book and relating to someone that He should have had nothing to do with.

Jesus was a people person.

**Matthew 18 v 10 to 14**

**Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.**

**For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.**

**How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?**

**And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.**

**Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.**

Jesus here is described as the Son of man, who came for that which was lost. We should probably say He came for those who were last. And that describes us, mankind. Jesus came for the good of people, to find people, to help and save people.

Yes, we see Him on His own at times, but this was the exception to the rule.

**Matthew 14 v 23**

**And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.**

**Mark 1 v 35**

**And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.**

There are times when we see Jesus on own, away from other people, but even then, He is not alone, He is with His Father. We see Jesus, in my understanding, with His Father in a time of preparation. The verse quoted talk about Jesus being in prayer in these 'alone' times.

**John 5 v 19**

**Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.**

**John 5 v 30**

**I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.**

**John 8 v 29**

**And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.**

In these three scriptures we see Jesus saying He can do nothing except what He sees the Father do, He talks of not doing His will, but the will of the Father and He does what pleases the Father. He spends time alone with the Father to enable Him to do these things. He is finding out what to do next and where to go next for example, who to meet and who to help.

I think He is using his 'alone' time to work out who to relate to next. His 'next' was always about people. Even when He was alone it was for the good of other people.

You could say we see Him on His own at the cross, but even then, He had thieves either side Him, and people who loved Him and people who despised Him at the foot of the cross. Yes, hanging on cross He was alone, but that was for people and about people.

I know some of you have been watching The Chosen. It has a degree of artistic licence, I get that, but I really like what they are doing. I remember one episode from the first series when Jesus turned water into wine. We see Jesus laughing and joking, dancing, even making fun of someone's bad dancing. We see Him in relationship with people, relating to people, listening and talking, interacting with others.

Jesus was a people person.

I was thinking about this sermon while preparing for leading communion on Saturday morning, on our online meeting. Communion was instigated at the Passover meal, and a thought came me, "Jesus ate meals with many different people".

In the Gospel of Luke, there at least 10 accounts of Jesus eating food with different types of people. Sharing a meal in that society and culture was the ultimate expression of relationship. Jesus broke the rules by eating with sinners, tax collectors and strangers. You only ate with people you knew, loved and trusted; sharing a table was like saying, "I love and respect you".

Eating with someone was an expression of friendship and loyalty and trust; it was all about relationship.

So you could ask, "Why do we see Jesus eating with all those people"?

The first people who read the Bible knew about the importance of the meal and the table, that it was a picture of relationship. By eating with all types of people Jesus was saying, "I love all people, I want a relationship with all people, I came for all people and to save all people." This is something that we have lost in our society, where we eat just to live, eat alone, and eat quickly to get back to the important things we were doing.

Just think about that word communion for a moment. It comes for word to commune. That means about living together and about sharing. It is all about relationships, and in communion we remember our own relationship with God thru Jesus and His finished work. We hear about people communing with nature. That is about being in nature, having time in nature, spending time in nature. In a sense it is being in relationship with nature.

I believe that what we will see in coming sermons, is that being people person combined with love and care turns into compassion. And we will see Jesus with people, loving and caring, and meeting needs next week. And remember that we are created in His own image.

I remember when I left Diageo almost seven years ago, it was great, it was like being on a long holiday. Then after three to four months it started to feel strange. I was a bit low, just not right and I realised that I was lonely, and missing people from work. I was missing the relationships that I have become used to in daily life.

We are created for relationships, created for love and I believe, created for compassion.

I also realised recently that much to my amazement I had not been missing football that much. I had not seen my beloved Forres Mechanics play a competitive game in over a year, but was not missing

it that much if I'm honest. But I do know that I was missing my friends, missing standing with them at the game; I was missing the relationships.

Throughout lockdown I have been talking to pastors and chaplains during lockdown about this. Sean has been sharing, I've shared, and Evalyne shared in the Bible Study the other night about this very issue. When we cannot be with other people, when lose out on relationships, something is missing in our lives. We don't feel right, and people have done and are having mental health issues through the lack of human contact. Lots of different people, pastors included, are having mental health issues right now. Why? Because we are created in His image, He is a people person, and we are designed the same way.

Don't get me wrong, I love being on my own at times. I love walking on the beach and in the forest; I especially love being in amongst trees at moment. And I am finding more and more in these 'alone' times that I am communing with the Lord. I am meditating on His word, I am thinking about sermons, I am picturing passages in Bible, and I am praying. And when I analyse what's going on I think this is preparation for being with people and ministering to people.

We are created in His image, created for relationship, created to love and care, created for compassion. You may remember I shared in a sermon a while back (not in great detail) that I had been having difficult and dark times during lockdown. I analysed this coming from a perceived lack of purpose, where I got to thinking, "what is the point?" What was the point in me, the point in life?

God spoke to me and told me the point was to make a difference, a difference in lives of others. It was a realisation that I was to take part in Tikkun Olam, about doing my bit to repair and restore the earth. And we do that by helping people, that is the point. God said, "that is why you are here Vic, to make the world a better place because you are in it". That helped me, it lifted me up.

The passage from 1 John 4 that I used in the last sermon has been on my mind all week.

**1 John 4 v 7 to 11**

***Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.***

***He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.***

***In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.***

***Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.***

***Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.***

In verse 7 we are told to love one another; we are told this again in verse 11. And in between we read about the compassion of God made manifest in the finished work of Jesus.

**Mark 12 v 28 to 31**

***And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?***

***And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:***

***And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.***

***And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.***

This passage exhorts us to love, indeed it is a command from Jesus. We are to love God and then love everyone else, as I believe everyone in the world is our neighbour.

But Vic you keep telling us we don't have to do works, don't have things do; now you are telling us we have to love? That is a fair point.

***John 6 v 28 and 29***

***Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?***

***Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.***

I use this scripture a lot, telling you what your 'work' is; it is to believe on Jesus, who He was and is and forever will be, what He has done, what we have in Christ and thru Christ, on our true identity in Christ.

And do you know what happens as we learn more and more about this, as we understand it more? We love more, we care more, and I believe we become more compassionate.

This is what I have seen in my life and in the lives of others in this fellowship. I have known many of you for 10 or 15 years, even more years than this in some cases. The more we know and understand about Jesus, the more like Him we become, and He is love. That is what I have seen in other people, and seen in my own life.

I have been honest in this series, admitting to you that I am not as compassionate as I could be, but let me tell you another truth. I am more compassionate now than was 10, 15, or 20 years ago. Why is this? I believe it is because I have a greater understanding about grace, about Jesus, about New Covenant truths, about my righteousness and how much I have been forgiven, about His love for me, and that has transformed me in a good way. And I see the same thing in many of you.

So, how do we learn to be more compassionate?

How do we learn to become a people person?

We learn in the same way as I try and change us in other areas life. I teach about Jesus, focus on Him and His love, His goodness and mercy, His compassion, teaching about grace and righteousness and forgiveness. We are transformed by the renewing of our mind, and we use the Word of God for that. This is all about the love of God, and His compassion.

Jesus was a people person, and we are created in His image. We should be a people person, loving and caring, and the good news is that we can. And there is a Biblical process in place that can help us become that people person, more loving and caring, and therefore more compassionate.