

**Compassion For All**  
**Mark 8:1-10**

Well, in addition to studying the gospel of Mark, Gerry has been taking us through Acts as well, and in Acts, we've had the joy of just seeing the gospel spread and spread and the early church expand and expand, geographically speaking, well into the Gentile portion of the spread of the gospel in the book of Acts. But it makes you wonder as you go back and recall some of the amazing events in the book of Acts when Peter was first faced with the task of taking the good news to Cornelius, not a Jewish man but a Gentile; Peter the Jewish fisherman taking the gospel to a Gentile man Cornelius. And when the gospel continued to spread beyond Israel, beyond the Jewish people, and started to go to Gentiles, it reminds us, how did the Jews do that? That was not an easy thing for them. That was no small task for them, being Jewish, being so separated from the world; they identified themselves as such. They were purists in the sense. They were completely separated from those Gentiles, now being the founders of the church. The ones who would take this good news of Jesus that they witnessed and go to these Gentiles. How was it that they were able to do that? No doubt it was because of their own eye-witness testimony of Jesus, their own ability to recall what Jesus had done and what He said and even ultimately how He defeated the grave and rose again.

But I think this morning's account is a great indicator of how these Jewish men, these ordinary disciples, were able to take this good news beyond themselves, beyond their nation and to the remote parts of the earth, to the Gentiles. That's where we come in, in Mark 8:1-10, this morning. We really find the end of a sequence of events. We've been looking at a sequence of building of events that started back in chapter 7. Back in 7:24 is where it began, and the reason why it begins there is because of the location. It was no longer in Israel. It was no longer in Galilee that Jesus and the disciples were interacting, and Jesus was ministering. It was then as we see in Mark 7:24; Tyre and Sidon way north, north along the coast of the Mediterranean, out of Galilee, out of Israel and into Gentile territory, that's where that interaction took place. And then, we jump down into verse 31, and the next phase, the next event in the sequence, we saw they returned from the region of Tyre, went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee and the region of the Decapolis. This next phase, this next event, took place in another Gentile

area in this Decapolis, the ten cities region under Roman rule, east of the Sea of Galilee. So, this kind of buildup is happening here where Jesus is interacting with His disciples in Tyre and Sidon in Gentile territory and the Decapolis in Gentile territory.

And now, to see the end of these events in chapter 8:1-10, we continue in the Decapolis in this Gentile territory, and it's in this, and it's through this event, that we have to conclude that this made an indelible mark upon the disciples. It made an impact upon them, such that they would be confident and able to take the good news to more than just Jewish people, but they'd be able to take the good news to Gentiles as well, as we've seen in the book of Acts. Let's look at our text this morning. Mark 8:1-10; "In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, 'I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away.' And his disciples answered him, 'How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?' And he asked them, 'How many loaves do you have?' They said, 'Seven.' And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha." ...this second feeding that we find.

If you remember not too long ago in Mark 6, we had a feeding that took place; the more common one (the one that was actually in all four of the gospels), the feeding of the five thousand. And now, we come to this event, and if you actually are careful in your study, you see only in Mark and Matthew this feeding of the four thousand. So, it's to this event that we turn, and we will learn why this event is actually significant and how it's different from what we've already studied, and why we're not just going to skip over it and say, aw, this is pretty much the same thing. Don't worry about it. You don't need it. This is an imperative and significant event.

And the first reason why this is so significant is because of what we really see of Christ's attitude in verses 1-3, and that is the compassion of Christ - the compassion of Christ in verses 1-3. So important, can't be missed. So obvious but also so necessary for the disciples considering their future, considering how they would be used by God for the establishment and the beginnings of the church and the expansion of the church. In verse 1, we see "In those days..." ... "In those days..." This connects our passage to the previous passages because you might look at this and say he's saying they're in Gentile territory and the Decapolis, but it doesn't say that in our verses. And you think, in my Bible I have a big, number 8, so that must mean that chapter 8 is totally separate, completely different, from where we've been looking before in chapter 7. And that's not the case. This really flows right out of where we've just been, which was in the Decapolis. So, with that in mind, we're really in the same location. We're in that same region in the Gentile place, this Decapolis, ten-city-region, east of the Sea of Galilee. This is where they are.

And notice our text goes on and says, "...when again a great crowd had gathered..." ... "...when again a great crowd had gathered..." and then, it goes on to talk about Jesus' desire and His compassion to feed this great crowd. But at this point, it's interesting to know and it's worth actually looking at what Matthew says here in Matthew 15. It's a parallel account. As I mentioned, Matthew also records this, and he gives us a little more information here to just help us see the scene and what's happening, what's taking place. So, look at this in Matthew 15:29-31; "Jesus went on from there and walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there. And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel." While our text in Mark doesn't have this detail, this helps us. Alright? All we have in Mark is that it's that same time frame. It's that same, in general, kind of vicinity even, and there's "...a great crowd..." and that's it, but this helps us understand what's been taking place.

Because as we see in our text and down in verse 2, we see that they'd been there at least three days. Well, what had been happening over those three days? This. This is what had been happening over the course of those three

days, healings. Jesus there and people coming streaming to Jesus. So, you start to now picture the scene, and you picture it in your mind, and even with this you might be tempted to think, okay, we've seen a lot of this before. I think I understand what's taking place here. Maybe not, because, once again, remember that this is distinct because it's Gentiles. It's not Jewish people. This scene was really a setting of rejoicing and jubilation. People are just ecstatic to meet this Jewish, miracle-worker Jesus. They don't know much about Him, really. All we've seen so far in Mark in regards to Jewish interacting with this region, the Decapolis, is Him healing the demoniac, and that was one guy. One guy He told to go tell everyone about Him. It's not much, and so these people, they don't have the Old Testament Scriptures, at least not knowledgeable of them like the Jews would be, and so they're meeting this Jewish man in their region, and He's healing people, and they're coming and they're getting their diseases healed, and they're going and recruiting family members and friends and bringing them to this man, and they're amazed. As Matthew says, they're wondering. They're in awe of this taking place. This isn't the typical business and ministry as usual in Galilee. This is in Gentile territory. This is something that they've never experienced. This is just amazing to them.

It's kind of like that scene where you just kind of stop, and you go and recruit people once you hear of something like this. And kind of like when I was in college and being poor and not having a lot. And people say, hey, there's free food in room number... Okay, I'm there, and you stop what you're doing. You end your studies, and you go for the free food because this is amazing. I've got to really see this. Is this true? And so, on a much greater level, you have Gentile people not familiar with the Jewish Messiah, not familiar with this concept of God in human form, not familiar with healing and miracles to this extent; and now, they're hearing of it, and then they're even coming and experiencing it for themselves and witnessing it and seeing it take place. This is amazing for them. It's all brand new. The Jews in the region of Galilee had been exposed to the light of Christ and the Messiah, but this is a first. This is foreign to these Gentiles. This is surprising for them, so much so, the end of what we see in what Matthew says, "And they glorified the God of Israel."

Now, we don't know for sure if that means they were getting saved because some people could just be giving lip-service and saying, oh, wow, the God of Israel's amazing. Look what happened! Your Jewish Messiah is

incredible. And then the next day, they could go, and they never really believed and repented in the first place. But some of them very well could've been believing. They could've been turning their back on their pagan gods and pagan deities and what Rome set forth as worship and the Greek mythology that was before them. Some of them could've been turning against all of this and embracing what they were witnessing right in front of them. These people had to put their lives on hold to come and behold this scene of what's taking place with Jesus, this Jewish man, this Jewish Messiah.

So, how would Jesus respond to this popularity? As we see in our text, it's been a few days. It's been some time. This isn't just a couple hours. This isn't a morning. This is a few days of this nonstop, kind of, healing ministry taking place in this Gentile region. Well, if you start to compare this account with the one we saw in Mark 6, where there was the feeding of the five thousand which was in Jewish Galilee, you might start to think, okay, umm, let's see. What happened? There was the disciples came to Jesus, and they initiated it. They said, Jesus, ahh, let's get these people out of here. They've got to go eat; send them away. Ahh, that's not exactly what happens here. The people are staying. They don't want to leave, and they're staying through the night, through the day, and they want more of this, and so Jesus is the one now that initiates this scene. This is Jesus taking the initiative, and He is the one who decides to continue to minister to these Gentiles.

This is where we have to take a break and remind ourselves, what was it like to be a disciple in this scene? What is it like to be a Jewish fisherman in this scene? What are they doing right now? How are they responding to all this? Odds are, they're really uncomfortable. They had an upbringing. They had a culture. They had a way of life of how they interacted with, or failed to do so, with the Gentiles. They were basically accustomed to this. They were raised this way; that you don't interact with Gentiles. It's weird. It's different. It's wrong even. There's this kind of moral infringement that's taking place in their conscience where they're thinking this isn't what we're supposed to do. We shouldn't be here right now. We're waiting; any moment now Jesus will wrap it up, and we can get out of here because this is just, like, awkward. We don't like this. They're on the sidelines. They're probably amazed at Jesus's even doing this. Why is He spending so much time with these people? It's not just the moral side of it, but it's uncomfortable. When you're in a different culture, there's a different way of

doing things and preparing food and dressing and everything, and it just becomes uncomfortable. This is how it feels. You probably experienced this if you'd traveled to different cultures from time to time. I know I did.

When I was able to study in Israel for a few months, for a semester. During that time, we actually had a spring break where we got to travel to other countries. So, Chris Williams and a couple other guys and myself decided, well, let's go to Greece. That'll be great, and then after that, we'll go to Egypt because, you know, pyramids and stuff, and everyone's doing it, might as well. So, we'll do that. We kind of picked the wrong order. It was kind of ending the trip on a bad note so to speak. Going to Greece was great; Greece was western. It was modernized. It was, even though we weren't fluent in Greek or anything like that... we were comfortable. I could go to the city square, and I saw a donut, and I could buy a donut. There was a McDonalds. Alright. I know what I'm getting here. Right? Everything was just so familiar even though it was my first time there, no problem, so we spent four days there, had a great time seeing the sights and being in Athens and things like that. And then, we flew down to Egypt. We'd originally planned to stay in Egypt for four days and then head back to Israel. We cut that in half and went for two; just shows you how much we loved our time. Really, I think somewhere along the way we got tired of people looking at us like they hated us, and people trying to cheat us and kind of steal money from us. We just said I think we're good. I think we saw the pyramids. I think we can move on now, and we made our way back to Israel. It was uncomfortable. You just... at some point certain cultures and certain travel experiences... you're, like, I don't want to be here right now. I don't like this.

Think of the disciples; this divide that was in place at this time between Jews and Gentiles was massive, and we fail to remember that. This was how the disciples felt. This is uncomfortable for them. This is awkward. They don't like this. They don't like that Jesus is taking time with these people. They're kind of ready to leave and go back to Jewish territory. Now, what does Jesus say? He has compassion on these people. That is not what the disciples wanted or expected. In verse 2, Jesus states, "I have compassion on the crowd..." ... "I have compassion on the crowd..." What are the disciples thinking? I'm ready to go. Right? I'm ready to do the Jewish custom where we leave this place; we shake the dust off our feet because we Jews don't associate with these Gentiles, and we go back and go home as quickly as

possible. That's not what Jesus says. He has compassion on these people. Not only is He willing to spend this time with them, now He's feeling for them. He has compassion.

He understands what's at play. He sees the circumstances, and He spells it out in the rest of verses 2-3, "...because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away." Jesus understood all these things that are at play. The region of the Decapolis, the ten cities, is large, and so people are coming from all over. Some people have traveled farther than others, and Jesus knows this. This isn't to say that they didn't eat for the full three days, it's just probably that they ran out of the snacks and things that they already had on them. So, whatever sack lunch or things they had as they were traveling and going, that ran out pretty quick, so they had some food, but eventually, it all kind of ran out. And three days have now gone by, and they're thinking, oh, man, we really don't have food anymore. Everyone's out of their snacks, and Jesus feels for the people, and this is where we learn an important aspect the disciples needed to see; that true compassion is not about self, and true compassion is not about convenience, it's about others. True compassion focuses on others. Even though these people were Gentiles, Jesus had compassion on them. It didn't matter.

Compassion is not about convenience it's about others. It's like the father who had his prodigal son come back after taking his share of the inheritance, squandering it in his filth and immoral living, now running back to his father; and the father, rather than rejecting him and saying you're dead to me, has compassion, runs towards his son and embraces him. So, too, Jesus has compassion on these Gentiles. And we have to ask ourselves is this our heart towards the lost? Is this how we treat them? Is this how we treat them? Are we compassionate towards the lost like our Savior was, or are we on the sideline like the disciples saying this is just uncomfortable? I'm kind of looking at my watch and waiting for the time when we can kind of get out of here because I don't really like this situation. This feels weird. I'd rather go back and kind of be in my Christian circle with my Christian people and my Christian music and these things like that, and I kind of want to get out of all this. Which one are we? We have to realize we have to have the compassion of Christ's burden for others. True compassion does not focus on self. It focuses on those around us, on others.

Jesus' compassion as we see here was ultimately His desire to feed these people. So, for the disciples, this not only meant more time with them, prolonged interaction with the Gentiles, this means now eating a meal with someone, an intimate setting of sitting down, eating a meal, interacting, engaging with someone, not something that probably the disciples wanted. Let's look at their response in verses 4-5 where we see the dullness - the dullness of the disciples - the dullness of the disciples. Verses 4-5; "And his disciples answered him, 'How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?' And he asked them, 'How many loaves do you have?' They said, 'Seven.'" Look at this question. How do the disciples respond? Do they say whatever you say Jesus, let's do it? No. They ask this question, how? "How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?" That's amazing. How? That's the question you ask?

Jesus expresses His desire to feed this group, and you ask, how? It's not really that hard. I mean, it's really easy for you and I. We can turn in our Bible and go back to Mark 6:30-34. Wow! Five thousand besides the women and children, probably around twenty thousand people, yeah, He fed all of them, a great picnic. And you think, okay, we'll give them a break. Maybe that was like ten years ago, or like twenty years ago, it's been a long time since Jesus pulled out that trick. Not quite. Jesus' public ministry was three years, His Galilean ministry only a year and a half. So, somewhere in there, a year and a half time frame, this took place, and now here they are, and they're question is how? That's legitimately what they have to say? How? How is this possible? We all go through crazy moments in life. We have wild stories with friends when we were younger. We have funny things that we share with our family and things like that, and it really doesn't take much for us to recall those to mind and tell those stories again, but we're not going to easily forget those things, those moments happened, and they stick in our brain, and we're excited to share them again at holidays or whenever we get together with these familiar faces. So, when these incredible events take place, they kind of are stuck in our head.

Now, Jesus feeding around twenty thousand people, is that something that might stick in your head? You think that the disciples might remember that one, just might, and especially when you kind of get prompted by similar things. For us, it's kind of like word association. We're in a conversation with someone, and someone brings up a topic, and we go, you know what? I

have a story about that you'd never believe. Like, I think earlier today, someone mentioned Egypt. So, I have a story. When I was in Egypt one time, it's pretty crazy... We were going to see the pyramids, and we were on horses, not camels, unfortunately. But horses were fun because at the end, our tour guide who was younger than all of us said you guys want to go fast? Of course, we want to go fast. We're four college guys, like, let's go fast! That's what we want. So, we start going fast, and my horse is in the back, and all of a sudden I feel this, kind of like this slipping and turning, and the world is... the horizon's becoming different, and I'm like ninety degrees, still going fast, thinking what's happening right now? And luckily, my horse slowed down and everything got solved and figured out, but I pretty much could've died I guess you could say. We were going pretty fast. But that was my Egyptian experience. Right? I got to see the pyramids, but let me tell you about when I rode a horse and almost died. Alright? It's a great story. It doesn't take much for me to remember that story, a little word association. Right?

And so, here are the disciples with a crowd of people in a desolate place, just like in Mark 6, and Jesus has this desire to feed them, just like in Mark 6, and you might think, okay, they'll catch on here. They'll definitely catch on, but they don't. Their question is, man, Jesus, how are we going to do this? Are You serious? Are You for real? Is that exactly what they have to say, is how? Jesus responds with some patience, well, "How many loaves do you have?" And you think, okay, now they'll get it. When He says, "How many loaves...?", they'll go, oh, ho! Bread - people - I know what You're going to do. Alright. I'll tell them to sit down, get this thing going. I know what's going to happen. No, "They said, 'Seven.'" Yeah, seven. I don't know what you're going to do with that. Seriously, how do you not recall what took place not that long ago? It's at this moment that it's so easy for us (and I've modeled this) to find the disciples to be dull of heart and just to be failures at this point, an epic fail. Right? How do you not remember this? We think, you just saw the power and provision of Christ over and over again and specifically in a scenario like this; how are you forgetting that?

They completely have forgotten, and what was the result of it? Because of their forgetfulness, because they had become almost like these Pharisees and other unbelieving Jews that are running the risk of completely forfeiting their faith because they see miracle after miracle, and they don't put it together, and they still fail to say, oh, this is the Messiah. This is the Son of

God. This is God in human form. They still go I'm not sure how this is going to happen. Ah, I'm not sure who this guy really is. Because of that, they've missed out on such an easy and massive opportunity to show compassion to the lost, their forgetfulness - their forgetfulness of God's power while God's compassion for the nations is perfectly demonstrated in Jesus, perfectly seen in Jesus, the disciples are still hung up on how to feed the crowd. Here's Jesus taking advantage of a beautiful moment to show God's heart for all, Jew or Gentile, and the disciples are over there trying to do the calculation, seven loaves, umm, four thousand, I don't know; completely missing it.

You see their neglect, the disciples neglect of God's power cost them the chance to be compassionate towards these people; the lesson they needed, the lesson that would be tremendous in impact in their life and propel them in the future when it was time for them to take the gospel to the nations. And while it's easy for us to sit here as a spectator, to read this and to stand on the outside and say, ah, disciples, there you go again, totally missing it. And we do the same thing in the Old Testament. We read about Israel, and we think, there you go again grumbling and complaining, tsk, tsk, tsk, Israel. If only I were in Israel, man, I would show them. Right? This is what we do; we stand outside the text and act like the people in it are morons. The reality is you and I do the same thing. We are also obvious failures in this regard. We, too, forget the power of God, and we miss out on showing compassion to the lost. We do it all the time. You don't believe me? Think of how much time we spend highlighting the depravity of the world, rather than focusing on God's power to save. We know both are true, don't we? We know this world is depraved. It's a sinful and wicked place, but we also know that God has power and ability to save. I mean, He saved you, didn't He? He saved me.

We know that, but what do we spend more time talking about? What dominates Christian conversations? Oh, you wouldn't believe what they're doing now. Oh, did you see this happened on the news? Oh, let me tell you about this article. Man, someone posted this on Facebook, and then this social media thing happened, and I can't believe what the celebrities are saying. I can't believe what politics... And we love to just dwell on the depravity of man; that's what we do. We think all about the problem, and we spend no time meditating on the solution, God's power to save. And what do we lose? We completely lose and miss the opportunity to show compassion

on these people, to show compassion for the very souls that need to be saved, just like God was compassionate towards us and saved us. You see, we spend more time trying to, even, keep ourselves far away from the world, rather than asking for God's power to transform people's lives. We want to hold ourselves in. We want to hunker down and make sure us and our family and everyone in our church group is far away from that outside, ugly world, and we spend so much time thinking about how we can be so different and try to stay far away in that, we lose the opportunity to see God transform people's lives because they are trying to stay away from them.

How does God save the world? How does He transform lives? It's through the gospel. It's as Paul said in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..." We spend more time talking about the sinfulness of man than we do about the good news, the power of God. And what happens when you do that? You have no compassion for the lost. You have no desire to see them saved, and if you do, it's apart from you and apart from your doing. It's, yeah, God better... Yeah, God, help this world. Huh! Huh! Let me tell you, It's so bad. You have no desire yourself to move towards them with compassion because you, too, were once sinful and wicked, depraved. You see, when we remember the power of God and the gospel, we will be moved with compassion toward the lost; those things go hand in hand. The disciples, they were not reflecting and meditating on the power of Christ in front of them, so what happened? They're on the sidelines - no desire to show compassion to these people, and same thing happens to you and I. And if you're not moved with compassion toward the lost, if that's not you, you don't feel this burden, this desire to move towards the lost with the good news, then you're just like the disciples; you have forgotten the power of God and the good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ - a dangerous place to be especially as a member of the body of Christ.

In verses 6-10, what we find is a very similar telling of what took place back in Mark 6. We see this miraculous meal - this miraculous meal, and surely as we read through it, you thought, yeah, this sounds very familiar, very familiar to Mark 6, the feeding of the five thousand. Once again, starting in verse 6; "And he asked them, 'How many loaves do you have?' They said, 'Seven.' And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd.

And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.”

If you were to look back at Mark 6 and kind of do the flipping back and forth and start to do a little comparison of these two feedings, you'll notice several similarities. In both accounts, Jesus is directing the crowd to sit down in this desolate place. In both accounts, you see Him starting with a very small portion of food, a few loaves, a few fish, not much. In both accounts, Jesus Himself is giving thanks for the food, breaking the bread and distributing it to the disciples. In both accounts, it's the disciples who then take it and distribute it to the people. In both accounts, the people are eating until they're satisfied. And in both accounts, you have a number given for how much leftover baskets, baskets of leftover food. All this taking place in both accounts. So, why? Why this repeated miracle? Some commentators like to speculate and say Mark's a simple guy; he kind of messed up. He didn't realize he already said it, and he said it again, and he got some of the details wrong and changed it the second time. Others say Mark was intentional in recording this event again, but it's the same exact event, and he just gave you a different perspective. Well, we know that both those responses are not quite adequate, especially when we believe that God produces His Word through His Spirit in a truthful manner, not lying, not mistaking, not missing the details, but purposeful and intentional and truthful. So, why? Why this repeated miracle?

The key really comes in the audience. In Mark 6, the feeding of the five thousand, probably twenty thousand, you have Jewish audience in Galilee. And this miracle before us, the feeding of the four thousand, potentially around sixteen thousand, we're in the Decapolis with a Gentile audience. It's so similar. It's so parallel in so many ways. Jesus intentionally did this for you, for the disciples, for us, to see that God does not show partiality. God's heart is for the whole world. He doesn't go over here and treat the Jews one particular way and lavish them in luxurious living, and then go over here to the Gentiles and say, ah, here you go; you can have this. He treats them both the same. God doesn't discriminate. He doesn't show partiality in His compassion toward the lost. He's equally compassionate toward all the lost,

and it's as Paul says in Romans 2:11, "For God shows no partiality" ... "For God shows no partiality"

It's not just this that the disciples would have to come to terms with, which they would. That's why they would have such a hard time in the book of Acts. That's why they would have the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, and that's why they would have to come together again as the gospels spreading and say, what is the exact message we're taking, and what does it mean for Gentiles and Jews to come together? They had to continue to come back to this and dwell on this, and their conclusion is the same as Jesus' conclusion, which is God has compassion on all, and that's what these Jewish men eventually concluded. We also see the definition of compassion really come through in these verses. Really, God-like compassion, Christ-like compassion you could say, it follows through. It's action. It's not good enough to say, man, I really feel for someone. I just feel so bad for them. I feel bad in what they're going through. My heart goes out to them. And we say these expressions all the time, and I'm not saying those are bad things, but we feel emotional for people. And this's what happens when you watch a commercial or TV show or when we interact with each other, we feel for each other. We shed a tear. These things happen. But if it just stops there, what was it really, just an emotion, just a feeling?

Imagine our account if that was Jesus. Verse 2; "I have compassion on the crowd..." Oh, I feel for them. Look, we're in the middle of nowhere. They don't have anything to eat. They have to go a long way back. Man, I really feel for these guys. Well, disciples, let's get in the boat, head on across, and, ahh, we'll see them later. That's not at all what Jesus does. His compassion, His stirring in His stomach, in His bowels even, this compassion that He has for the people shows itself. There's action. There's follow-through. This is what true compassion looks like. Genuine compassion isn't just feeling bad for someone, it's actually doing something about it, acting upon it. That's exactly what we find Jesus doing here. This is what the disciples needed. This is what they needed, and in this understanding and in this interaction, not just with Jesus and the Syrophenician woman, not just in how He healed the deaf man and the mute man, but now even in this context, in this context to see Jesus having compassion upon these Gentiles, Jesus being willing to fixate and focus on others. Jesus who has the power, and the disciples who forget that power, the very power that allows for the

compassion to be moved through Christ to these people and actually act as it does here.

Compassion, so necessary for the disciples in the development of the early church, and so necessary for you and I still two thousand years later. There's no way around it. There's no question to it. We all know we've experienced and we've heard what people say when the church tries to reach out with the message of the good news, and there's no compassion; how much it backfires. It's a terrible affect that takes place. The reality is we can only show such compassion to the lost when we ourselves have understood God's compassion on us. And that's the case. There's some of you here today that feel like, yeah, I understand this idea of compassion and feeling for someone and wanting to act on it, but that's just not me. I'm not a compassionate person. I don't feel for people. I don't kind of feel that way, and I don't really get moved to do things for them. I think that's kind of other people; they do that really well. That's not really me.

I think I just want to warn you and give you a heads up that it's very possible that if you don't show compassion, and you don't desire to, it's very possible that you yourself haven't experienced the compassion of our Lord. It's possible that you are still here blinded to the gospel. You are still here, and you are not saved. You have not put your faith in Christ. God hasn't allowed you to see the truth, the fact that He came down and walked in your shoes, and He lived the life that you could never live in perfection, and He was obedient to the point of death on a cross. He died a criminal's death that was not for Him but for you in your place, and He rose again to verify all of it and to give you hope for the future,

But unfortunately, there are some here that still don't see that. They still don't believe that. They still don't understand that. And if that's the case, you will never show compassion legitimately. It won't be a true compassion. You're going to have a hard time ever being like Christ towards the world. You haven't understood the compassion that has been shown to you in the gospel. But still, there are others here that have a hard time with being compassionate with one another. Even in our relationships, even though you may understand, and at times you show that compassion because you understand the gospel. You believe the truth of Jesus, and you want to live this out, but you still struggle. I just want to encourage you that these estranged relationships, these difficulties, these conflicts, that happen, a key

component in this conflict, in these relationships, is a lack of compassion. There needs to be compassion towards one another. You wonder, why is there so much strife in my family? Why are me and this friend just at odds, and we keep hitting a wall with each other? Why does this keep happening? Perhaps there's no compassion. Perhaps neither side has taken a moment to step back and recognize, God has the power to save this person. God has the power to change this person. So, maybe, instead of sitting back - and me thinking they'll always do that; they'll never get over that; they'll never stop sinning in that way; that's just who they are - and judging them in that way, maybe I could actually start to show compassion and think, God is powerful. He saved me. I was dead, a corpse spiritually, and He brought me to life. How easy it would be for God to change this person. How easy it would be for God to change me and give me the compassion that I need when I interact with them.

Because we know that when we fail and we fall short in displaying compassion to one another, it looks terrible to the world and the testimony of Christ becomes an abomination. Instead, we need to live out what Paul said, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." That's the key. You understand the good news. You understand the amazing gift of salvation through Christ from God. You live differently. You yourself have this compassion. You no longer sit on the sideline like the disciples and feel uncomfortable with the world and feel uncomfortable with situations; instead you then are moved. You don't just feel for people, you act with compassion, compassion that has been sourced in Jesus Christ and the good news. May this be the response, may this be the characteristic of our church towards the lost and towards one another for the sake of our testimony and glorifying Christ.