

Character Through Mercy

Luke 10:30-37

Introduction:

1. Has this ever happened to you? -
 - a. You are at the cashier with a line of people behind you and the cashier asks, "Would you like to donate to 'Find a cure for childhood diabetes?'"
 - b. You are about to have a snack, or sit down to a meal as a family and then on the television a commercial comes on featuring a starving child in Africa?
 - c. Or during the Christmas season as parents are busy buying and wrapping presents a television commercial comes on about homelessness, hunger and pain? Or even, when you are cuddling with your pet a commercial about starving dogs, pets in animal shelters...comes on.
 - d. Do you change the channel or do you help? I know the commercials are presented in such a way as to make one feel guilty for being blessed. Their hope is that you will feel so guilty that you will send them some money.
 - e. **This is guilt, not compassion/mercy. Today's lesson has the aim to awaken our duties to mankind in the area of being merciful and compassionate.**
 2. Luke 10:30-37 - Explanation of the Good Samaritan
 3. We live in a society and time when life is just like the one described in the Good Samaritan parable.
 - a. our society lacks empathy
 - b. our culture has changed from serving to self-service
 - c. our families have evolved from respect to disrespect
 4. Have you ever wondered why we are not moved at the suffering of others? The simple answer is that we have lost our sense of compassion.
 5. Compassion=pity, a feeling of distress through the ills of others, mercy, the outward manifestation of pity, ability to feel sympathy.
 6. Four ways to build character through compassion and mercy.
- I. Compassion is the character of caring
- A. We have received compassion from God. It is only right that we pass on that compassion to others.
 1. John 3:16-17 - God's example of compassion shows us that it gives and it saves.
 2. Psalm 86:15 - David enumerates a list of reasons why his prayers are accompanied with confidence. One of those reasons is God's mercy.
 3. Psalm 145:8 - David here makes a list of why God is worthy of adoration: mercy, compassionate, slow to anger and forgiving.
 - B. We must be able to display compassion
 1. Hebrews 10:34 - "*Compassion on the prisoners* is an example of an active approach, while accepting *plundering* is an example of a passive approach. These Christians had experienced both. They had in fact shown sympathy, similar to that of our high priest (4:15), although on a lower level. As the Greek word (*synepathēsate*) shows, this Christian compassion consists in the ability to 'suffer with' those who suffer. They identified themselves in mind with the prisoners."¹
 2. 1 Peter 3:8 - "Peter has already encouraged the Christians of Asia Minor to love each other and get rid of malice, envy, and other attitudes that might undermine their relationships (1:22-2:1). In a situation in which they face a constant struggle

¹Guthrie, D. (1983). [*Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary*](#) (Vol. 15, p. 224). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

with outsiders, it is especially important for them to band together in love and compassion for each other.”²

- II. Compassion is the character of evangelism
 - A. Matthew 9:35-38 - Jesus’ custom was to worship in the synagogues, but in this occasion He was preaching about the Kingdom of heaven because He felt compassion for the people—they were lost and confused, in desperate need of a Shepherd who would heal them.
 - B. Luke 15:1-7 - Do we care to express compassion for those sheep of our number who are straying? There are some who are feeling discouraged and are looking elsewhere to fill the gap. Let’s care enough about our brethren and look for them, encourage them and help them get right with the Lord.
 - C. 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 - Paul’s attitude was such that he was willing to let go of some customs he held dear in order to consider the lost and show he cared. People will know we care when we meet them where they are without a judgmental attitude, but with an attitude of a doctor with the medicine that will cure the soul!
 - D. Acts 20:17-20 - Notice the apostle’s love and sympathy for those he served under the Gospel.
- III. Compassion is the character of forgiveness
 - A. Matthew 18:21-35 - 70 times 7! Forgive the debt completely!
 - B. Luke 6:27-28 - Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, pray for those who take advantage of you.
 - C. Luke 6:35-36 - ...be merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful.
 - D. Matthew 6:14-15 - How much compassion and mercy do we want extend to us? To the degree that I am willing to forgive others, that is the degree to which God will forgive me.
- IV. Compassion is helping the less fortunate
 - A. Mark 1:40-42 The leper who came to Jesus begging for healing. Jesus felt compassion.
 - B. Isaiah 1:16-17 - “...seek justice, rebuke the oppressor, defend the orphans, and plead for the widows.
 - C. Matthew 7:12 - the Golden Rule
 - D. Story of Johnathon McCain at a restaurant in downtown Indianapolis. (These two boys are John and Wiley. The man in the center is Carl, a homeless man in Indy. The boys come from good stock and big hearts. John saw Carl and was not able to eat his supper. He asked me if he could give Carl \$17.00, all the money he owns. We talked about the perils of giving money to strangers but John protested with teared up eyes and said, "I don't care if he is lying or not, he is homeless." Look at John and Wiley's contentment.)

Conclusion:

1. What kind of heart do we have?
2. Do we need to repent because compassion has not been a part of our Christian living?
3. Luke 10:37, “Go and do the same.” was the response to, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

² Black, A., & Black, M. C. (1998). [1 & 2 Peter](#) (1 Pe 3:8). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub.