

LEAD-IN DEVOTIONAL READING:

Compassion

When a need stirs your compassion, what do you do next?

Jesus was frequently moved with compassion, and whenever He was, He always took immediate action to meet the need before Him.

- When Jesus felt compassion for the crowds, harassed and tossed about like sheep without a shepherd, He taught them. He healed them. Then He sent His disciples out to do the same. (Matthew 9:36 – 10:8)
- When Jesus felt compassion for the hungry crowds, He miraculously fed them. (Matthew 14:14; 15:32; Mark 6:34; 8:2)
- Moved with compassion toward two blind men, He gave them their sight. (Matthew 20:34)
- When Jesus felt compassion toward a leper, He touched the untouchable one and healed him. (Mark 1:41)
- In the middle of a funeral, Jesus felt compassion for a widow left alone by the death of her son. He immediately raised the man from the dead. (Luke 7:13)

All that is fine for the Son of God, but what about us? We can't just speak a word and feed thousands with a boy's lunch, or give blind men their sight, or heal all the sick, or raise the dead. What are we to do when we are moved with compassion?

Jesus answered this question through three of His most poignant, memorable parables. In each, a human being like us is moved with compassion and takes action in response. These parables point the way for us.

- We can use what we have to help the needy as we encounter them. In the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), the title character is moved with compassion toward a needy person of a different race. He used his own time, energy, and resources to give the man the help he desperately needed.
- In mercy, we can help restore those who are trying to rebuild their broken lives. In the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), while the lost son was still far away, the father saw him, felt compassion for him, and ran to him. He kissed and embraced him, then restored him to his former relationship by giving him a robe, a ring, and sandals. Then he threw a lavish party to celebrate his return.
- We can show those who have wronged us the same compassion and forgiveness that God has shown us. In the story of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:21-35), the master

completely forgave the overwhelming debt of his servant. Then he expected the servant to do the same toward his own debtors.

God moves us with compassion for a reason. Don't be satisfied with simply feeling the sentiment. Use what the Lord has given you and reach out to help the one in need.

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