

com·pas·sion *noun.*

A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.



WHAT IS COMPASSION?

- Does it have a cost?
- Give examples of when you feel sorry for people e.g. contestants on the X Factor. Give examples of any random acts of kindness you've done.
- Is this compassion? What does compassion mean?
- Look at the dictionary definition.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

The Greek word for 'compassion' is used 12 times in the New Testament and nine are attributable to Jesus.

The word compassion is translated in the original Greek as 'splanchnizomai', meaning to be moved as to one's bowels, hence to be moved with compassion (for the bowels were thought to be the source of love and pity).

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

LUKE 10:25-37 (NKJV)

In verse 33 of this parable, the Samaritan saw the half-dead Jew and had compassion (at least in the New King James Bible version he did!)

The Samaritan truly followed the commandment to 'love your neighbour as yourself' - he did exactly what he would have wanted if the same thing had happened to him.

The Samaritan risked his own life to give an unconscious Jew a voice.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF WHERE THE WORD COMPASSION IS USED:

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND MARK 6:30-37 (NIV)

Jesus taught the people and fed them even though it was late in the day. He had originally intended to take the disciples to a quiet place to get some rest but when he saw the people he had compassion on them and changed his plans!

HEALING THE LEPER MARK 1: 40-42 (NIV)

Jesus touched him and healed him. Touching lepers was not the thing to do! Jesus violated all Jewish cleanliness laws here and did something that would have seemed truly repulsive to the onlooking Jews.

RAISING THE WIDOW'S ONLY SON FROM THE DEAD

LUKE 7:11-17 (NKJV)

In bringing the widow's son back to life, Jesus did exactly what she wanted. He also violated established religious cleanliness laws yet again!

In all cases Jesus took action... sometimes costly action.

This is his nature, to act in love and not count the cost. In Jesus, love and action are freely given. James 2:18 says, 'Show me your faith without deeds and I will show you my faith by what I do.'

It's more than the internal emotions of sympathy or pity. It's a feeling so deep that there is an absolute need to do something, whatever the cost.

CONCLUSION

Let's go right back to the reason for the parable of the Good Samaritan. Why was it told? More importantly than to explain who our neighbours are, it followed on from the first question the expert in the law asked: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Could there be a more important question for any of us?

Read Matthew 25:31-43 - God will separate His obedient followers from pretenders and unbelievers. We are not saved by our deeds but...

The evidence of our belief will not be found in how often we attend church but in how we treat those we encounter - how we treat the poor and the poorest of the poor.

What we do for others and how we treat them is the real demonstration of our Christ-like heart.

So compassion is a conviction so deep that we cannot ignore it; our hearts break for the things that break God's heart.

Does it have a cost? Yes, whatever it takes. We know the cost Christ paid because of his love for all.



DVD IDEAS ON DISC

- Step Into My Life [10:38]
- Children speaking Bible verses [2:00]