

# Mark Chapter 6 v 30 - 34 The Compassion of Jesus

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Verse 30, Mark chapter 6 verse 30. The apostles gathered round Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.

Then because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest. So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place, but many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

Then if you just turn over to chapter 9 of Matthew, Matthew's Gospel chapter 9. Matthew chapter 9. Verse 35. Normally I preach expository sermons, but as a one-off I thought today we'd look at a topic, and the topic is going to be the compassion of Jesus.

So let's read this second passage now from Matthew chapter 9, verse 35. Matthew 9, verse 35. Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness.

[ 1 : 3 3 ] When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

Ask the Lord of the harvest therefore to send out workers into his harvest field. And finally, Matthew chapter 14, which is similar to Mark chapter 6.

Matthew chapter 14, verse 13. Matthew chapter 14, verse 13. When Jesus heard what had happened, that is the execution of John the Baptist, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.

Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Amen. Well, let's perhaps turn to the Mark passage, Mark chapter 6, which we read earlier.

[ 2 : 4 3 ] Amen. Mark chapter 6, verse 30. Let's pray.

Our Father, we thank you again for your word, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, and which is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Open our ears, open our hearts, move our wills. As we receive your word now, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, if you were asked to describe the character of Jesus in one word, I wonder what word you would choose.

Thankfully, we don't have to do that. It would be an impossible task. But if you had to, what would be the word that you would choose? I think a good case could be made out for the word compassion.

- [ 3 : 51 ] In fact, one commentator on Matthew's Gospel, R.T. France, says that the word compassion describes the Jesus of the Gospel stories in a nutshell.
- The word compassion describes the Jesus of the Gospel stories in a nutshell. So I want to begin by asking what we mean by compassion.
- The English word compassion means to feel with other people. To feel the sorrows and the sufferings of other people. The Greek word for compassion, the New Testament word, is an unashamedly emotional word.
- It means to be moved or stirred at the deepest level. To be moved inwardly. In fact, the Hebrew people located the emotions in the intestines.
- Or if you like, the gut. And it's interesting that we, today, still sometimes talk about being gutted. English footballers, in particular, tend to talk about being gutted.
- [ 5 : 18 ] Particularly after penalty shootout. The manager usually says something like, the lads were gutted. And with good reason, I might add.
- But compassion is to be gutted. Not because of something that's happened to yourself. But because of something that's happening or happened to somebody else or to other people.
- It's to be stirred at the deepest level of the sufferings of other people. The needs of other people. We tend to locate the emotions in the heart.
- And therefore, we might say something like, when it says that Jesus has moved with compassion, we might say something like, his heart went out. His heart went out to them.
- Only one person in the New Testament is described as being moved with compassion, and that's Jesus. And Jesus also uses this word compassion in at least three of his very significant parables.
- [ 6 : 29 ] So, that's what we mean by compassion. Secondly, I want to look this morning with you at the scope of Jesus' compassion. What aroused his compassion exactly?
- Well, sickness aroused his compassion. When people were ill, when people were sick, Jesus was moved with compassion for them.
- If you turn over to Matthew chapter 14, you'll find this. Matthew chapter 14. In fact, we read it. It was one of our readings.
- Matthew chapter 14. Verse 13.
- When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed the sick.
- [ 7 : 31 ] So, his compassion led him to heal the sick. People's handicaps move Jesus with compassion.
- In chapter 20 of Matthew, if we had time, we could turn to it. But believe me, in Matthew chapter 20, Jesus is accosted by two blind people. And they cry to him for mercy.
- And the crowd tell them to be quiet. But we read that Jesus had compassion on them and touched them. And they received their sight.
- So, Jesus was compassionate about blind people who the crowd were irritated by. The crowd responded with irritation.
- Jesus responded with compassion. In Mark chapter 1, you can find a leper who comes to Jesus.
- [ 8 : 35 ] And Jesus has compassion on him and touches him, which you weren't supposed to do. And, of course, the leper was healed. Lepers were normally treated with disgust.

They were normally isolated from other people. Nobody bothered with lepers. But Jesus, his heart went out to this leper.

Covered with leprosy, Luke said, in his account. So, someone that other people would normally respond to with disgust, Jesus responded to with compassion.

So, Jesus' compassion was aroused by the bodily needs of other people, by the physical needs of other people, by sickness, by disability. Yes, and even hunger as well.

Now, in Matthew chapter 15, there is another account of a feeding of the 5,000, or a feeding of the 7,000, I think it is.

[ 9 : 47 ] Or 4,000. 7,000? 4,000, isn't it? 4,000 with seven loads. 4,000 with seven loads. And, let's read it.

Matthew chapter 15, verse 32. Matthew 15, verse 32. Jesus called his disciples to him and said, I have compassion for these people.

They've already been with me for three days and have had nothing to eat. I don't want them, I don't want to send them away hungry or they may collapse on the way. And we're not talking life-threatening hunger here, are we?

Three days probably means something similar to the three days that Jesus was in the tomb, which was just Friday night until Sunday morning. We wouldn't call it three days.

But that's the way the Jews calculated their days. So it may well have been just something like a day and a half. Two bits of two days and one day in the middle.

[ 10 : 47 ] But they were hungry. And Jesus was concerned about that. His heart went out to these hungry people. And there were other reasons why he fed them, as we find in John's account.

But one of the reasons was just sheer compassion for the hungry. So people's physical needs arouse the compassion of Jesus.

Their bodily physical needs, sickness, disability, hunger. And what about emotional needs? In Luke chapter 7, we find that Jesus sees a funeral procession.

And it's a widow who has lost her only son. She's lost her husband. And she's now lost her only son. So there was no man to protect her anymore and to provide for her, which in that society was a complete disaster.

We don't read that the woman or anybody else came to Jesus and asked for help. We simply read in Luke chapter 7 that Jesus had compassion on her.

[ 12 : 02 ] Jesus had compassion on her. And he went, he took the initiative. He went to her. And he touched the, he touched the, the coffin and healed the man and gave him life.

So emotional needs arouse the compassion of Jesus. And then of course, spiritual needs. We read in Mark chapter 6 verses 13 and 34 how after the return of the 12 from their mission of preaching the kingdom, Jesus sent them out in twos.

They came back. They'd have been tired. John the Baptist had just been beheaded. And Jesus was a great admirer of John the Baptist and also a relative incidentally of John the Baptist.

So we're talking here about Jesus being personally bereaved. So he says, let's, we need a break. Let's go and rest somewhere.

Let's have a weekend in the Lake District or the equivalent by the Sea of Galilee. Somewhere night. On the other side of the Sea of Galilee. So off they go in a boat.

[ 13 : 20 ] You can imagine it, can't you? At last. A bit of peace and quiet. Somewhere night. They get there and the crowd has seen where Jesus is going and they get there before him.

And when Jesus arrives, there's a crowd there. How irritating is that? we read that Jesus had compassion on the crowd because he saw them as sheep without a shepherd.

He saw them as people who needed help, who needed direction, who needed protection, who needed salvation. And he began to teach them many things.

And as he taught them and saw the size of the crowd and thought of all the other crowds and all the other countries all over the world, he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful.

Look at the size of the harvest. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest.

[ 14 : 29 ] Look at the work there is to be done in this world. Ask God to send out people to do it. The scope of Jesus is compassion.

Jesus, his heart went out to people's physical needs, to their emotional needs, and to their spiritual needs.

Jesus never regarded anyone who was suffering with indifference, or with disgust, or with irritation, always with pity.

He never regarded somebody who was suffering as a nuisance. He always wanted to help them. He was always sorry for them. So that's the scope of Jesus' compassion.

And then I want to look thirdly at three examples of the way in which Jesus uses the idea of compassion in his parables. Three very significant and well-known parables.

[ 15 : 36 ] Parables you know very well. The first, of course, is the parable of the Good Samaritan. Unlike the priest and the Levite who passed by on the other side, who closed their hearts to the man who had fallen amongst thieves and was lying there half dead, a Samaritan passes by and Luke says he had compassion on her.

He had compassion on her. And he went to him and sorted him out. So that's the parable of the Good Samaritan. Then there's the parable of the prodigal son.

In the parable of the prodigal son, the son, the younger son, pushes off into a foreign land, spends his father's money and eventually, as you know, you know the story, ends up feeding pigs, which for a Jew was absolutely unthinkable.

And eventually he thinks, well, I better go back home. So he goes back home and his father saw him while he was a great way off, while he was at a distance and he ran.

He had compassion on him and he ran to meet him. Now, if you've read any of the books by Kenneth Bailey, who has spent many years working in cultures that in the Middle East have hardly changed since biblical time, he says Middle Eastern men don't run.

[ 17 : 19 ] This was a patriarchal society. Men were dignified. They were treated with respect. And furthermore, they didn't wear trousers, they wore not skirts, help me, gowns, they wore whatever, you know what they wore.

And it's not easy to run in whatever it was that they were wearing. and Middle Eastern men with long beards. You can't imagine them running.

They didn't run. Come to think of it, I don't run much either. In fact, I'd rather miss a bus than run, to be honest. But this father, when he saw his son in the distance, he ran to meet him.

And what impelled him to run to his son was compassion. His heart went out to him.

In spite of all the wrong that his son had done to him, his heart went out to him in compassion. And then, finally, thirdly, the parable of the unforgiving servant.

[ 18 : 35 ] A servant is guilty of serious, at least serious, mismanagement and probably deliberate criminal embarrassment. And he manages to get into massive debt to the tune of 10,000 talents, which one commentator says was more money than there was in circulation in Israel at the time.

It was just an unbelievable amount of money he owed. And he therefore faced a lifetime of slavery for himself and his children. He went to the king and asked for mercy, asked the king to just be patient with it.

And he said, I'll pay it back, which of course was rubbish. And it says that the king had compassion upon him and cancelled the debt.

Cancelled the debt. All of it. 10,000 talents. Cancelled the debt. What do we learn from these three examples in these three parables?

Well, from the parable of the Good Samaritan, we learn that compassion crosses all racial, national, and religious boundaries and barrier.

[ 19 : 51 ] You know that Jews and Samaritans hated each other. They hated each other for centuries. It's a bit like Shiites and Sunnis in the Middle East. Or Catholics and Protestants as it used to be sometimes in our society.

Or Israelis and Palestinians. They hated each other and had hated each other for centuries. The idea of a good Samaritan was a contradiction in terms for a Jew.

There was no such thing. But this Samaritan comes along and he doesn't ask whether the guy's a Jew or not or a Samaritan or not. He just sees a human being.

and he meets his need. Regardless of his religious background or his racial background or whatever.

So we learn that from the parable of the Good Samaritan. And from the other two parables we learn that compassion extends to those whose suffering is caused by their own folly and their own sin.

[ 20 : 55 ] The prodigal son brought all his suffering and shame upon himself. It was all his own fault. He actually said to his father words to this effect.

Father, Dad, I wish you were dead. You've taken such a long time to die. Can I have the inheritance now? I can't wait. It's absolutely unthinkable in a patriarchalism.

society for any son to talk to his father like that. Particularly a younger son. The father said, OK, son, if that's what you really want.

And off he went to the far country, wasted his substance on riotous living. The elder brother mentions prostitute. He was probably right. And he ends up feeding the pigs.

And he only goes home because he's desperate. He only goes home because he has to. And the father runs to him, embraces him, and without a word of condemnation, he says, come on, let's have the biggest party in our lifetime.

[ 22 : 17 ] Let's kill that fatted calf. The fatted calf was being fattened up for a huge party. Not a fatted turkey, or a fatted chicken, but a fatted calf.

This was a party for the whole village, in other words. Put a ring on his finger, put shoes on his feet, and look at that robe, it's disgusting.

You can't come to the party dressed like that. Give him the best robe. Whose best robe was it? It wasn't his, it wasn't the younger sons he pushed off to the far country.

I doubt if the father would have got the elder brother's best robe out of his wardrobe. Whose was it? I reckon it was dad's.

Dad's best robe. Put it on him. Let's have a party. I thought my son was dead, but he's alive.

[ 23 : 27 ] I thought he was lost, but he's far. Let's celebrate. And that wretched elder brother, standing, of course, for the religious people, the Pharisees, the scribes, wouldn't join the party.

They couldn't share the father's joy. They couldn't see what all the fuss was about. Compassion extends to those even whose sufferings are entirely their own doing.

And that applies also, of course, to the king who cancels the debt of that dishonest, probably corrupt servant.

good. He cancels the debt. He has compassion on him, even though he actually deserves to go into slavery. He should have paid the debt off, but the king cancels the debt without asking questions about how he managed to get into debt like that.

So can you see what I'm saying? Jesus in these parables shows us that compassion extends to all religions, all races, it crosses all religious and racial boundaries, and it even extends to those whose suffering has been caused by their own folly and sin.

[ 24 : 49 ] You don't begin by inquiring too closely about whether or not the suffering is deserved or undeserved. You might want to ask questions about that eventually, but you don't begin by asking questions like that.

So what does compassion mean? It means that the needs of sinful humanity do not annoy us or anger us or arouse our condemnation or our self-righteousness.

I don't know about you, but I know my own heart and I know that when I see society falling apart as it is doing and will do because I have rejected God and his law, there's something in my heart that says, okay, just what I've been saying for years, this is jolly what ought to happen, I told you so, and you can almost relish it.

Is that true? Is it just me? You can almost relish it. You can deprive some perverted satisfaction from it. Jesus is saying that the needs even of sinful society should arouse not our condemnation but our compassion.

I'm not saying that Jesus was never angry with sin, he was, you know he was and I know he was. And one of the things that aroused his compassion was the judgment that was going to come upon Israel.

[ 26 : 27 ] he wept over Jerusalem as did the prophets in the Old Testament when they preached judgment. They preached judgment with tears.

Jesus certainly warned of judgment but I'll tell you this, that if you look at the passages where he talks about judgment you'll find very often that the judgment is pronounced on those who are lacking in compassion.

The rich man who had to step over the poor man at his gate every morning and he managed to close his heart to him somehow.

The scribes, the religious experts in Matthew chapter 23 verse 5, verse 4 sorry, they tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to help them.

Uncompassionate religion. The elder brother in that parable who can't share the joy of the father on the repentance of that younger brother.

[ 27 : 44 ] The debtor in that other parable, the parable of the unforgiving servant who has his massive debt cancelled and then goes out and takes his brother by the neck and says pay me what you owe and that's when the king's wrath fell upon him and he was put in prison.

So the compassion of Jesus. I want to mention now another word which is very very closely associated with compassion in the New Testament.

In fact these two words are two sides of one coin. Two hinges on one door, two wings on one airplane if you like. And the other word is the word mercy. And mercy is simply the outward embodiment of compassion.

Mercy is action to relieve the sufferings of another person motivated by compassion. Compassion gives us the deep inward feelings.

If those deep inward feelings are genuine they will show themselves in some kind of outward action on behalf of the suffering person. A great example of this is the Samaritan on the Jericho Road.

[ 29 : 10 ] the priest and the Levite managed to find some way of closing their hearts to that man who had been mugged by rubble and left dying.

They managed to rationalize why they should not do anything about it. And I'm sure they came up with some good arguments. One was a priest and the other was a Levite for a start. So contact with the dead, not good for a priest or a Levite.

So this man might be dead or he might die on us and then we perhaps wouldn't be able to do what we're supposed to do at the temple as priests and Levites. So don't get involved.

Well let's be wise. You've got to be wise, haven't you? How many times have you heard that? You've got to be wise. Compassionate, yes, but wise as well. And well, you know, we know this is a dangerous place.

It's obvious, you know, there are really, really nasty robbers around here. There's no point in more of us getting mugged. So let's get out of here as quickly as possible.

[ 30 : 18 ] Let's be wise. I'm sure they came up with some really good reasons for closing their hearts to this man. The Samaritan had compassion on the man.

He saw the man, Luke says he had compassion on him and his compassion led him to take action and the action was costly. It cost him time, delay, he'd have been late for whatever he was heading for.

It cost him valuable goods, oil and wine. It cost him comfort and convenience, he put him on his own donkey. He presumably walked, it cost him money, he paid for the care of the man at the inn.

It could have cost him his life hanging around there with robbers in the vicinity. But his compassion led him to help the man physically, practically, medically, and financially.

And Jesus said, who was the neighbor? And the lawyer couldn't bring him, couldn't bring himself to pronounce that it was the Samaritan who had been the neighbor to this man.

[ 31 : 46 ] And he says, the one who had mercy on him. Compassion led to mercy. Compassion that doesn't lead to mercy is just sentimentality.

Jesus' compassion always led him to merciful action. He had compassion on the leper and he touched him and healed him.

He healed the sick. He raised the dead. He fed the hungry. He taught the crowd. even when he was physically exhausted and going through a time of personal bereavement.

And then he said, if you can't do anything else, at least pray. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into this harvest field. Okay, so that's the compassion of Jesus.

I want to make two points in closing. number one, the character of Jesus reflects the character of God.

[ 32 : 54 ] If Jesus is compassionate and merciful, then God is compassionate and merciful. Jesus is the perfect revelation of his father. He is the outshining of the father's glory.

He is the exact image of his father. he that has seen me has seen his father. All his works are divine works. All his words are divine words.

He is the revelation of the father. And so we find too that the father is the father of compassion and the God of all comfort. Is that how you think of God?

The father of compassion and the God of all comfort. His compassion, Lamentations 3, are new every morning. His compassions are new every morning.

Psalm 103, as a father has compassion upon his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him. Because he knows how we are made.

[ 33 : 54 ] He remembers that we are dust. There's a lovely verse in Luke, in that song of Zechariah.

And Zechariah sings about the birth of his son. which is, of course, the precursor to the birth of somebody even greater. And what does he put it all down to? Luke 1, verse 78.

The tender mercy of our God. The word tender, that is the word compassionate. Mercy, I've told you, is the other side of the coin to compassion.

Because of the tender mercy, the compassionate mercy of our God, by which to give his people the knowledge of salvation, through the forgiveness of sins, to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.

God's tender mercy, compassionate mercy, has provided salvation. That should be a huge encouragement to anyone here who hasn't come to God for the forgiveness of their sin.

[ 35 : 03 ] sin. You might be thinking, can I come? I'm a big sinner. You don't know how big a sinner I am. I've sinned for a long, long time. I've rejected God for a long, long time.

Can I come? Yes, you can. God is a God of tender mercy, compassionate mercy. It's reflected in the character of Jesus.

That's why he sent Jesus to die for you, because of his compassion for you, his love for you, his mercy. So the character of Jesus reflects the character of God.

God is the father in the parable of the prodigal son. God is the king in the parable of the unforgiving servant. And then secondly and finally, the church should reflect the character of Jesus.

The church should reflect the character of Jesus. If the character of Jesus can be summed up by this word compassion, so should the character and the conduct of the church be summed up by this one word, compassion.

[ 36 : 20 ] Christians are becoming like Jesus. The Holy Spirit is making us like Jesus. He is giving us the mind, the mindset, the mindset of Jesus Christ.

Let this mind be in you, this mindset, this mentality, let this mentality be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Think, respond like Jesus did.

that means that the church should be a compassionate place, a place where we're compassionate with each other, where if one member suffers the whole body feels the pain and responds in some way, in whatever way they can.

A church where no one is indifferent to the suffering of a fellow Christian, whether it be illness or frailty or isolation or bereavement or doubt or whatever.

We bear one another's burden and so fulfil the law of Christ. Is our compassion confined to those within the church? Well, not exactly if you take the parable of the Good Samaritan seriously.

[ 37 : 35 ] Jesus' compassion extended to the crowds and the compassion of the church will reflect the compassion of Jesus. It will reach out to all in need, whatever the need, spiritual need of course with the gospel, bodily, physical, material, emotional need as well if it's true compassion.

We love one another as God loves us, as Christ loves us. we love our neighbour as ourselves.

How do you love yourself? Oh, well, I'm only bothered about my spiritual needs. My spiritual needs are my only concern. Is that true? I have noticed that in many Christians.



Most Christians seem to be quite concerned about their other needs as well and therefore if we love our neighbours as we love ourselves, we will care for their spiritual needs, of course, but we also care for their other name if it's genuine compassion.

And evangelical Christianity is its best, has always done that. John Wesley, you couldn't keep him quiet about the gospel.

[ 38 : 58 ] He rode the length and breadth of this country from Cornwall to Newcastle and over to Ireland, scores of times on horseback, preaching, I don't know how many sermons a day, preaching the gospel of the grace of God.

But he was also writing tracts against the slave trade, long before most people had thought about doing that. Charles Spurgeon, you couldn't get a more committed gospel preacher than Charles Spurgeon, could you?

But he also ran an orphanage. It's always been true of proper evangelical Christianity, that they love people, full stop. And because they love people, because they're compassionate for people, they're compassionate for all the needs that people have.

Incidentally, that's why New Testament churches had elders and deacons. The elders cared for the spiritual needs of the church. the deacons, if you go by Acts chapter six, if you think that that is the beginning of deaconing in the church, and if you go by early writings in the second century, like Justin Martyr, the New Testament doesn't actually tell us much about deacons, but in the second century, the deacons were the social workers of the church.

Can I remind you that churches for the first 300 years did not have buildings? What on earth did they talk about at deacons' meeting? What did deacons do?

[ 40 : 41 ] What did deacons talk about? If they had deacons' meetings, which I'm not sure that they did, but if they had deacons' meeting, what did they talk about at deacons' meeting?

They did not talk about buildings, because they didn't have any. That means that they must have talked about people and their needs. Elders cared for spiritual needs, deacons cared for physical, material needs.

Can I close by reminding you that compassion was not a virtue in the ancient world? As I've been talking, you've probably been thinking, well everybody has compassion on the sick, don't they?

No. Absolutely not. In John chapter 9, they pass a blind man, and Jesus' disciples, the one question they ask about this blind man is, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?

It's hard to see, it could have been this man if he was born blind, so it must have been his parents. He deserves everything he's got. compassion. So, that was the more likely reaction to sickness in the ancient world.

[ 41 : 58 ] Compassion comes from Christ. And I'll tell you this, if society turns from Christ as it is doing, then the compassion will go, completely eventually, completely.

In the first century AD, when the church was born, unwanted newborn babies were simply left exposed to the elements.

Nobody thought twice about it, particularly if they were girls. And for your amusement, you could go to the arena and watch people kill each other, really.

Not just on video, or at the cinema, but actually kill people, kill each other, or be killed by wild animals, or watch wild animals kill each other.

That was the amusement in the arena in the first century AD when the church was born. Compassion is not a natural thing.

[ 43 : 09 ] All right, mums tend to feel the pain of their babies. their children and so on, but anything more than that, no. Because you see, compassion doesn't actually make sense in an atheistic world.

Evolution is the survival of the fittest. So where do you fit compassion into evolution? Why on earth should anybody have compassion on the failures of society?

The sick, the poor, the inadequate? people? Why should we care for them? Why should we have any compassion for them if the human race progresses through the survival of the fittest?

Christ? It doesn't make sense. That's what's going to happen. And you'll find more and more cases of neglect and cruelty in our care homes and our hospital.

More and more cases of the terrible abuse of children and neglect of children. The elderly will increasingly be seen as a nuisance, as a drain on society's resources.

[ 44 : 20 ] Doctors will increasingly be expected to kill people, which is what's going to be debated on September the 11th in our parliament, because compassion in an atheistic world doesn't make sense.

Christ is the author of compassion. It was his idea. His idea. And the church of Christ should be the obvious, massive, grace, centre of compassion in our society.

Not just compassionate individuals, but compassionate community, compassionate church. I'll leave that with you to think and pray about. I believe you're discussing it this week in house groups, is that right?

Well, that's something to discuss, isn't it? Yes, Lord, if we seek to win the lost without that beauty, that attractiveness of Jesus, then we'll just put people off.

so we pray, Lord, that your beauty, the beauty of Jesus would rest upon us, upon this place, upon the congregation that meets to worship you and to witness for you here.

[ 45 : 50 ] And we pray that as they seek to win the lost, it will be with that, that attractiveness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Part us now with your blessing, we pray.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God our Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.