

Compassion of Christ

August 31, 2014

Do you feel as if you are lost in this huge world? Do you feel left out? Do you feel like no one cares much about you?

It is easy to feel that way in our world. For one thing there are too many people. There are over 7 billion people in the world. The current population of the United States is approaching 323,000,000. Maryland will hit 6 million this next year. Anne Arundel County has over one half million (557,000) people. Just the area of Odenton, Gambrills, and Crofton has almost 69,000 people. You can feel lost among so many people. You can feel insignificant.

Too many people makes a place less personable, less friendly. In a setting with a few people, we tend to be friendlier. In my neighborhood, if I am working out in my yard and a stranger walks past, we will usually greet each other.

However, when we are surrounded by people, say at the shopping center down here, we are less likely to greet strangers. Otherwise, you would be too busy greeting people to do what you went there to do. Instead, we ignore each other. We are less friendly. We notice people less.

Even if you do not want to be ignored, you may be. Even if you greet someone, that person may not reciprocate. Too many people makes a place less personable, less friendly.

Another reason for feeling ignored is everyone is so busy. The last couple of decades our lives have gotten busier than ever. There is so much more we try to do. During these decades many books and articles have been written that addressed the need to try to get more done. These have focused on time management, better organization, and multitasking. But in the last couple of years a shift has started taking place. A growing trend is towards books and articles about doing less of all the things we are now trying to do. In doing less, we have more time to do better the important things.

We can't do it all. But many people are trying. We are overextended and likely nothing is being done well. Our relationships are important, yet how many of us are shortchanging the people we care about most because we are trying to do too many things with our time? TV, reading, social media, web browsing, music, and more, fill up the spaces in our days and keep us from building our relationships with the people in our lives.

If you found yourself dying tonight, are you going to wish you spent more time doing all the things you are trying to do? Or are you going to wish you spent more time on relationships? I don't think I am dying today, but I'm wishing I spent more time in the past working on relationships. I hope to do better in the future.

Everyone is too busy. They are too busy to notice you. People don't call you. People who love you don't keep up. Everyone is overscheduled, overburdened, overworked, even overplayed. People don't have time for us and we don't have time for others. It is no wonder we feel left out, even ignored. It is no wonder people feel uncared for.

Maybe you feel like no one cares enough to get to know the real you. This morning I want to talk about someone who does care for you, Jesus. Jesus cares a lot about you. I know He does because caring is in His character.

Jesus showed great compassion for people when He was on earth. We are told several times of His compassion for others. That's not surprising when you realize that Jesus was the perfect human representative of God. Jesus is like God in every aspect of God's perfect character. All the quality characteristics of God were lived out perfectly in Jesus.

God has perfect compassion. Perfect compassion is compassion for all people, friend and foe alike. God has such compassion on everyone because He made us and loves every one of us individually. God doesn't just love people in general. He loves you specifically. God loves you as an individual. God cares for you. Jesus does too. Jesus has compassion on you, individually, one-on-one.

Jesus has God's compassion for all people too. Whenever Jesus saw a crowd of people He had compassion for them.

Matthew 9:36 (NIV) When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Sheep without a shepherd are in danger from wild animals and wild men. These people were like that. They felt much like us, lost in a big world, wondering if even God cared. Jesus had compassion on them. Maybe you are feeling harassed by life today. You feel helpless against the changes taking place in the world. Jesus has compassion on you, too.

The Greek word meaning compassion came from the word for gut. In-other-words compassion or sympathy wasn't just a thought about someone. It was a hurting for them inside, a gut hurt for them. The English word compassion comes from two Latin words meaning "together" and "suffer". Compassion is suffering with the another person, identifying with the other's pain, feeling the other's pain to some extent.

To feel compassion for someone is to identify with their hurt, their need. It is to imagine what they are feeling, knowing what they are going through. This is what Jesus feels for you in your hurt. Jesus feels your pain.

The Bible gives us a brief glimpse of the life of Jesus. Yet, you can see in your outline how many times we see the compassion of Jesus. Whenever Jesus was confronted by someone in need He felt the person's pain. This is true compassion. This is true sympathy. Jesus always took the time to notice people, to truly see them. And seeing them in their pain, even invisible inside pain, He had compassion on them. He sees your pain today too.

Let me describe the compassion of Jesus for you.

Jesus' compassion is an all-knowing compassion. Jesus fully knows your situation, your heartache, your pain. Jesus knows this about you because Jesus knows the real you.

There may be no one else on the planet who knows the real you. Maybe you haven't shared the real you with anyone else. Your hurt may be too painful to tell anyone else. Your disappointments maybe to discouraging to talk through with anyone else. Your sins may be too embarrassing to admit to anyone else.

You may feel like you can't tell Jesus either. But He already knows them all. Jesus knows all your hurts. He knows all the times that someone hurt you. He knows all the instances when someone did something or said something against you. He knows all the times that people misunderstood you. He knows each instance of someone accusing you of something you did not do. He knows all the times people have falsely accused you of wrong motives. Jesus knows all this about you.

He knows your fears. He knows your dreams. He knows your disappointments. There is nothing you can tell Jesus that He doesn't already know. And He still has compassion towards you. Jesus feels your pain.

He identifies with your pain because Jesus has experienced similar things to you. He has been accused of lies, of idolatry, of ill motives. Jesus has been betrayed by friends. Jesus has been railroaded by enemies. Jesus knows what these things feel like. And Jesus has compassion on you when they happen to you.

Because Jesus has experienced pain like yours, you can pour out your feelings to Jesus. Jesus will listen. Jesus will comfort.

You can turn to Jesus for compassion, but also for help. For **His is a kind compassion**. Kindness is not a feeling, but an action. In His compassion for you, Jesus acts to help you. He does something to ease your pain.

When you have true compassion for someone and feel their pain, you want to help end the other person's suffering. You want to help. You want to do something.

Jesus will do something. He may end the cause of your pain. He will walk through the pain with you. He may lessen the effects of the pain. He may prevent further pain. But Jesus will do something to help. He is not one to just say, "Oh, that's too bad." and do nothing. Jesus will act. Jesus will show kindness to you.

Many years ago I was at my wit's end with one of our sons. He needed a help that my wife and I were not able to supply with outside help. I came to Jesus in my pain. Jesus filled me with His Spirit and comforted me at the moment, helping me to go on. He acted to help me. But He also acted behind the scenes, in the context of my son's life. Jesus manipulated the process we were going through so that at just the right moment, things fell into place for my son to get the help he needed. For several dark months, I did not see this taking place, but Jesus was working on the problem. We did not know it, but He was working the details out behind the scene for a solution. Up until the moment it showed itself, we had no clue He was working. What relief to see His compassion when it showed itself on our behalf.

Jesus can minister physical healing. Jesus can provide resources. Jesus can guard you in the world. Jesus has real power. He does not always use it like we hope for. But He always helps. He may heal your physical body this time. But one day He will give

His followers new bodies. He will replace this mortal, perishable body, with an immortal, imperishable body.

Jesus has compassion for you in your need of friends. That is what the church is to be for Christians, a family of caring friends who share in Jesus Christ. He wants you to be a part of a church family, to care and be cared for.

Jesus also has compassion for you in your spiritual need. You need to know Jesus as your Creator, Sustainer, Savior, and Lord. Jesus has compassion for you in your lostness. Jesus has compassion for you in your sinfulness.

He knows all your sins. He knows the sinful things you have done, the sinful things you have said, and every sinful thing you have thought. He knows your lusts and your resentments. And He still feels the spiritual pain these sins cause you. He hurts for you even when you do not hurt for yourself because of these things.

Jesus knows your sins and still has compassion on you because **His is a merciful compassion.**

You don't deserve His compassion because of your sin. But He has compassion for you anyway. Jesus loves you. He loves you so much that He died for you.

Come to Jesus today. Trust in Him, in His death for you. Trust in His resurrection for you. God so accepts Jesus' death for sin that He raised Jesus from the dead as proof.

Put your faith in Jesus today. Receive Him as your Savior and Lord, and God will apply the perfect righteousness of Jesus to you.

Jesus never refused those who came to Him on earth. He will not refuse you either. He has great compassion on you. He welcomes you today.

Turn to the one who has perfect compassion on you today. Turn to Jesus.

Call on Jesus for the help you need.

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Jesus has compassion on others:

Matthew 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:40-42; James 5:11