

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**Sunday June 13, 2021. "Does church still matter? Compassion for each other. Can NCC thrive as a community again...again? Why church matters and what our values are."**

### **I Intro.**

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We're roughly halfway through 2021 and fully committed to gathering in person. A growing group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. Our children's and youth areas have been fully open also and are seeing a good response. We're so encouraged with your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

### **II Recap.**

This is our second Sunday of our look at what church is, has been, and can be. It's an honest self-evaluation to help the church get 'it' right. And by 'it', we mean being the force for good and being for others it was commissioned to be. This is also where the church gets it tragically wrong. Many of the ways the church gets it wrong can be summed up in two ways. One, the tendency to drift towards institutionalization. This just means like most organizations, once it reaches a certain size then in order to run more smoothly and effectively it creates a structure and systems that are more concerned with protecting the organization than sticking to the original vision. Two, churches tend to turn inward, because that's where the finances come from, those are the people whose complaints you will hear, and honestly those are the people you know and love. This is not necessarily a bad thing. You want to take care of your people. But if not managed well, this inward turn is almost always at the expense of the vision and people not in the group. Which of course in the church world is the opposite of the purpose of the church.

So, last week we looked at what it means to be 'devoted' to each other. Both inside and outside of the church. And there are lots of notes and ideas around this idea of being devoted. It's such an essential element in the health and vitality of the church. If you have not checked it out yet, go back and review that message.

### **III Sunday.**

Sunday we hit our second topic. What does it mean to be a church that matters...to practice compassion. Before we drill down into that topic, let's just wrestle with the idea of compassion.

**What does compassion mean to you?**

**What does compassion look like in action?**

**What hurts our ability to practice and show compassion?**

The overall theme passage will be the same for this entire series. **Acts 2:42-47**. Feel free to revisit it. However, for this specific topic, there is another passage we used to help us build an understanding of what it takes to show real compassion. Read **Matthew 9:35-36**, a super short passage.

**What jumped out to you about this passage?**

**What specific elements did you notice that spoke about compassion to you?**

Kal led us through an examination of four specific elements that can be seen in the life of Jesus that could help us grow our ability to practice true compassion.

**1. He entered their world.** *“Traveled through all the towns and villages”.*

Entering can be but isn't always a physical thing. Sometimes it's putting yourself in another person's place. Completely entering another's world, and experiencing their life as them. Compassion means fully entering the world of another person, in order to understand what it is actually like to BE them. Compassion is to **choose** to go out of my way, go where you are, enter your world, not to judge/condemn, but to understand, so I can experience what it's like to be you.

**2. He discovered what their needs were.** *“He healed every kind of disease and illness”.*

Compassion is, after stepping into their world, experiencing life as they do, then understanding what THEY need. This was the heart and mission of the early church. True compassion **moves towards others, enters their world**, then discovers what **their situation, and needs are**.

**3. He framed their situation in the most compassionate, least judgmental way possible.** The most **compassionate** way to speak real truth, identify people's situations, how badly their lives were going, and still give, and extended grace, is in this difficult balance of practicing **“Truth and Grace”**. *“Yes...they're in a bad place. Can see choices they've made to get where they are. But they're in a bad place because they've had no one to guide them, show them better places, so their lives are a sign of people who are helpless and therefore hopeless”.*

They didn't choose poorly because they wanted to end up where they did. They chose poorly because there was no one in their life to help them choose more wisely.

**Jesus showed us THE better way.** In practicing compassion for others, and to do this as a church to relieve suffering, we have to frame their situation like Jesus did. *“These people are confused, lost, struggling, in a bad place”*. **Giving grace** has to be at the heart of our relationships and the work of the church. This is how true compassion is grown, what feeds healthy relationships, and will lead us to relieve suffering by extending grace because we reframe their situation by not judging them.

**4. He had compassion “ON” them.**

The Message translation says; *“see them as they were, broke his heart”*. Understanding others are living out of being lost, there is action, movement, towards compassion stirred by your ability to hurt with them. Compassion then moves us to more than simply feeling badly for them, or even feeling what they're feeling. It's actively engaging in another person's life to bring relief for their suffering.

#### **IV Challenge.**

**IMAGINE A CHURCH, BODY OF JESUS FOLLOWERS, WHO CREATED A PLACE THAT FULLY ACCEPTED EVERYBODY NO MATTER WHERE THEY WERE IN LIFE. AND THEN MOVES TOWARDS THEM TO RELIEVE THAT SUFFERING OR HURT.**

This is true compassion.

#### **Compassion is 'understanding in love'.**

True "*compassion on*", "*have your heart broken*", is to **suffer together**. Because I chose to enter into your world for the purpose of **feeling your suffering and walking alongside you to relieve it. I am literally feeling what it's like to be you...in all you're dealing with.**

**I am so moved by your struggle, even if you probably had something to do with it, I've never been through that, I hurt WITH, not just FOR, you.**

Without judgment of why, how, rightness or wrongness of it, I care about and for you. And in that compassion he was able to meet their needs and relieve their suffering.

**So, how will you incorporate into your daily life opportunities to practice compassion ON others?**