



Peninsula City Church

Jesus Said...

How do you see things?

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How do you see things?

An Introduction

Q. What is the right perspective of doing God's work?

Perspective is everything, especially when Jesus is involved. He saw things from a heavenly perspective. But we can tend to see things from our earthly perspective. Just like someone has said,

"You can't soar like an eagle when you hang out with turkeys."¹

1. Jesus sees the true state of things

Q. What was it that drove Jesus to obediently do the Father's will?

Jesus was a driven and passionate person while here on earth. But what was it that drove Him to obediently do the Father's will? It was more than just His passion, obedience and it was more than love (although it was these). Matthew in chapter nine of his gospel gives us some perspective as to what it was that drove Him on to do what He did while fulfilling His earthly ministry. That is, we read in Matt 9:35-11:1; cf. Mk 6:6b

³⁵ "Jesus travelled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And He healed every kind of disease and illness. ³⁶ When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were confused (harassed) and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ He said to His disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. ³⁸ So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask Him to send more workers into His fields" (Matt 9:35-38 NLT (esp. vv37-38)).

Out of the four gospels, this part of the story was only mentioned by Matthew. Mark does mention, "Then Jesus went from village to village, teaching the people" (Mk 6:6b NLT), but that is it. He did not mention anything else about this incident and Luke and John did not raise it. So we really only have Matthews account. He used the word compassion some five times that is, Matt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 18:27 and 20:34. While Mark used it 3 times Mk 6:34; 8:2; and 9:22 Luke four Lk 1:78; 7:13; 10:33; and 15:20 and John did not use it at all. However, each time it is used it is used in the context of Jesus having compassion in a certain situation.

So, here we do not read that Jesus had passion for the people, i.e. a "Strong and barely controllable emotion."² But Matthew highlighted the fact that, Jesus' heart overflowed with compassion when He saw the confused (harassed) and helpless. Jesus was moved or grabbed by compassion at this moment. That is, He was moved deeply; this was not just an emotional whim. He was concerned for the sufferings or misfortunes of them.³ This was a deep gripping ache that took hold of Jesus Christ, prompting Him to do something about the situation out of concern and not merely an emotion. Jesus Christ was overcome for them and this drove Him to react with the appropriate action in response to their condition and pain. So, this compassion actually energised Him to do something intentionally. Jesus realised that He could change the course of their life. This could change the course of their eternal life. In fact, He was driven to act with the appropriate Kingdom action in response to their condition and pain. Was this due to Jesus finding and calling Matthew out of compassion "As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and He said to him, 'Follow Me.'" And he rose and followed Him" (Matt 9:9 ESV).

¹ <http://www.iliketquote.com/you-cant-soar-like-an-eagle-when-you-hang-out-with-turkeys/> (9th March 2017).

² "Passion." <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/passion> (9th March 2017).

³ "Compassion." <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/compassion> (9th March 2017).

What needs to be remembered here is that, it is not only Jesus who was compassionate, but so was the God of the Old Testament. There is a false teaching around that proclaims that the God of the Old Testament is a God of anger, while Jesus is a God of love and peace. This is not true, as God is immutable (unchangeable within His nature and attributes). This is not a new lie, it was touted by a false teacher called Marcion. The God of the Old Testament is the same God in the New; He is in fact, our Heavenly Father. This God in responding to Moses asking God to show him His glory (Ex 33:18), said,

^{33:19} “The LORD replied, ‘I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will call out My name, Yahweh, before you. For I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose...’ ^{34:6} The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out, ‘Yahweh! The LORD! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. ⁷ I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected-- even children in the third and fourth generations” (Ex 33:19; 34:6-7 NLT). Also see Ps 51:1; 103:13; 116:5; 119:77,156; 145:9; Is 30:18; 49:10,13; 54:10; 63:7; Lam 3:32; see also reference to this in the New Testament in Rom 9:15; 2 Cor 1:3-4; Jas 5:11.

Therefore, He was moved deeply; by His concern for the state of the people who were like sheep without a shepherd. This had an effect on what He said and did next to His followers. This still has an impact to this day.

2. The enormousness of it all

Q. How big is too big?

So, if it is the case that, Jesus was gripped by compassion what did He say to His followers as a result of this? He said,

“So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask Him to send more workers into His fields” (Matt 9:38 NLT).

The harvest is great, so pray for more to be sent out. That is it is an enormous task that is too big for one or two or a few. A lot of help is needed to be able to get the job done. So, you need to go straight to the One who is in charge and ask for more help.

Jesus went on and made use of what can be called the internship model. That is, He showed the disciples what to do and then had them do it themselves. So, first He prayed and sought the Father’s will. That is to say, He took His own advice and prayed to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask the Father to send more workers into His fields.

¹² “One day soon afterward Jesus went up on a mountain to pray, and He prayed to God all night. ¹³ At daybreak He called together all of His disciples and chose twelve of them to be apostles” (Lk 6:12-13 NLT).

Then Jesus chose and sent 12 workers out into His fields,

¹ “Jesus called His twelve disciples together and gave them the authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness... ⁵ Jesus sent out the twelve apostles with these instructions...” (Matt 10:1,5 NLT).

Jesus then went out Himself to continue the work that He had begun,

“When Jesus had finished giving these instructions to His twelve disciples, He went out to teach and preach in towns throughout the region” (Matt 11:1 NLT)

So, Christ-followers were meant to continue to respond to what was said here. Paul picked up this truth when writing to the local church at Colossae years later when he said,

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience” (Col 3:12 ESV).

Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

Q. What is the right perspective of doing God’s work?

Jesus taught and modelled the right perspective for this in His life. We have seen that it was compassion that drove Jesus to obediently do the Father’s will. What is it that drives you to do God’s work were you have already been deploy? You know, we have all been deployed into our family, street, workplace, uni, school, and sports club, etc. to share the Good News regarding Jesus Christ. So, why do we go? Is it compassion or simply passion that compels us as the community of sent ones? If it is merely passion it will soon run out, but if it is Christ’s compassion, then we are more likely to continue doing God’s work.

So how can we respond? As a local church we have been sent (deployed). As individuals we have been sent. But are we making the best of the opportunities that come along? Today is a day of checking and if need be readjusting our perspective on doing God’s work. If we stop here all that has been said to this point will just be academic. We need to bring the message from there and then of Jesus’ day to the here and now our day by way of application. Remember, we are looking for an application from the teaching and theology of what we have just read. Any application will come from the passage itself. Do not read into it. Respond in light of what we have just read. Then we need to respond to what the Holy Spirit has said to us here and now from the there and then of Jesus’ day and words.

Attempt the following:

- i. What is God saying to me?
- ii. What are you going to do about it? “How should I respond to what is being said?” or, “so what?”
- iii. What do you need to do to respond?
- iv. Pray and respond