

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Youth tonight, 6pm at church offices
- *Maybe talk about the change to the PDM event*

GM / Name / Onliners thanks for listening...

Today is Compassion Sunday at OHC.

So we are pushing pause in our sermon series this week.

I'll be preaching out of Mark chapter 6. [if you have Bible // good practice]

Compassion Sunday is a day where we stop to remember those in poverty around the world, and taking action to impact it.

But, why should we care about impacting poverty?

Well, the biggest reason is that God has a soft spot for the poor.

When he looks at us He sees spiritual poverty.

We are all in huge debt because of our own sin.

And we all need God to step in and rescue us.

But God's care for the spiritual poor, translates to his care for the vulnerable in society.

Back in the NT days those were the slaves, widows, orphans.

And NT church always made it a priority to care for these in the lowest rungs of society.

And today, the church carries on that tradition ...

Not b/c its part of the rules.

But b/c its the very heart of our Heavenly Father and our Savior Jesus Christ.

Today's reading shows how Jesus puts both His and the Father's love for the poor on full display.

Mark 6:30-44

30 The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. 31 And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. 32 And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. 33 Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. 35 And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. 36 Send them away to go into the surrounding

countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” 37 But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?” 38 And he said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” 39 Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. 41 And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. 42 And they all ate and were satisfied. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. 44 And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

This is a memorable story in the life of Jesus simply because how impossible it was to pull off.

It puts Jesus into a category all by himself.

Only someone with supernatural ability could multiply 5 loaves and 2 fish into a feast that feeds 5K men, plus women and children.

But there is a lot more to this story than just the miracle.

It starts with Jesus caring deeply for his disciples' physical welfare.

What does it say in V31?

Jesus invites them to get away from the crowds and rest.

We don't often think of Jesus this way.

He is Lord and Savior ...

He loves us b/c He died for us...

But there is another aspect to Jesus' love and care.

Jesus Sees And Cares About Our Physical Needs

The apostles had just returned from a short-term mission trip.

Jesus sent them out two by two to preach, and he gave them power to cast out demons and heal the sick.

And they're retelling their ministry success stories to Jesus.

What is interesting here is that it implies Jesus is listening.

Which means Jesus wants us to celebrate Kingdom wins with him and others.

Every disciple made, every sickness healed, is darkness being pushed back.

And so we see Jesus listening and celebrating the Kingdom wins.

But, what we can underappreciate is what Jesus does for his disciples in V31-32.

He isn't all about the ministry all the time ...

He cares about things like tiredness and hungry stomachs too.

We can get so overly-spiritual that we discount these as "lesser things".

But God cares deeply about our physical well-being.

And Jesus is the good shepherd that leads us to quiet streams and green pastures.

So we shouldn't feel guilty for taking rest.

Jesus leads us to rest.

The disciples followed him to rest ... away from the crowds ... away from ministry responsibilities.

Resting this way is good for us b/c it keeps our identity from being wrapped up in what we DO for God.

God wants us to be satisfied in BEING WITH HIM.

We should be intentional about "Doing Nothing For The Glory Of God."

Now, we can swing this too far the other way and start to think the monastic lifestyle is true religion.

But this story gives us some insight that “rest in Jesus” isn’t a rigid religious practice.

Resting in Jesus should be a healthy practice, but it can’t become a rigid demand.

This requires wisdom and being led by the Holy Spirit.

We should regularly schedule times of rest ... particularly times of isolation where we are simply WITH God, and WITH family.

And the reason it’s important is that sometimes it’s going to be interrupted.

But that’s what happens when compassion hits you...

You take on the interruption or disruption, or whatever is ructioning at the time.

Compassion is why Jesus leads his disciples to rest, and also why he postpones their rest.

Mark 6:33-34

33 Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When he went ashore **he saw a great crowd, and **he had compassion on them**, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.**

Man, it's like the disciples were just about to check into the hotel ...

Out of nowhere the crowds mob them.

There is probably nothing more deflating than having your vacation or rest time interrupted by unwanted people.

[What About Bob?]

But Jesus doesn't send them away ...

He pushes pause on rest and begins to minister to them.

But notice what Jesus is doing just before it says he has compassion on them...

It says, "he saw."

Which teaches us something important about compassion.

Looking Leads To Compassion

One of the names God gives himself is "The God Who Sees".

That is sobering in a lot of ways.

He is like the eye of Sauron ... nothing escapes his gaze.

But this “God Who Sees” isn’t malevolent...

He is merciful, gracious, and good.

Which means his unceasing looking makes his heart an unending fountain of compassion.

And like we see in this story ... his compassion moves him to action.

Mark 6:34b-37a

And he began to teach them many things. 35 And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. 36 Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” 37 But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.”

The disciples want to send them away.

They lack compassion B/C they see a problem and inconvenience...

A disruption to their well-laid plans to rest.

But Jesus, filled with compassion, sees people in need, and is ready and willing to intervene.

Compassion Drives Us To Intervene And Help

The surprising thing is that Jesus doesn’t start with food ...

He starts with teaching.

Which shows us that God's compassion is always ultimately after the heart.

It will minister to the stomach too, but it never neglects the heart.

He sees a crowd of sheep that haven't been cared for well.

In the prophetic writings of the OT, God often referred to Israel's leaders as shepherds.

Good shepherds led Israel to obedience and faithfulness to God.

Bad shepherds looked out only for themselves.

They dealt unjustly with the poor and needy.

They were greedy for all kinds of gain.

They didn't stand up for God's truth and stand against idolatry.

They forsook the teaching of the law and forgot God's mighty acts that made them into a great nation.

That is why Jesus begins with teaching.

He is giving them spiritual food.

Godly compassion must address spiritual poverty.

But we mustn't think it stops there.

You can see the disciples' fatigue start to manifest when they recommend that Jesus send the crowds away to fend for themselves.

It's kind of like the “take responsibility for your own actions argument.”

That may well be true in many cases, but it lacks the nuance the Gospel accounts for.

Poverty is a complex combination of people's nature, decisions ... but it also accounts for their environment.

**Everyone doesn't grow up in the same context, culture...
We don't all have the same opportunities and resources.**

So, Jesus rebuffs their “recommended solution” with his own command, “You give them something to eat.”

Don't pass off their need on to someone else.

You take the initiative.

Now, I can empathize with Jesus' disciples.

Because they recognize the magnitude of what Jesus told them to do.

It seems like they already got the math figured out in their heads.

Mark 6:37b

And they said to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?”

That is a practical response to an impossible problem.

What is going to cost to feed 5,000 men plus women and children?

About half-a-years salary.

This approach to mission often keeps mission from moving forward.

If we can't solve everyone's problem ... let's solve nobody's problem.

But Jesus gives us a different approach to impossible tasks.

Stop thinking so big ...

Think small and simple.

Mark 6:38

38 And he said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.”

Jesus doesn't say wait until you have everything you need to start helping...

He says use what you got.

B/C ...

Jesus Only Needs A Little To Do A Lot

I like this about Jesus.

He didn't use an army of angels to change the world.

He started with 12 nobodies ...

He used what he had.

When Peter and John saw the lame man begging at the temple ...

They used what they had ...

Peter looked at him and said ... "I do not have silver or gold, but what I do have I give to you."

And they healed him in the name and power of Jesus.

Jesus can do a lot with a little bit of your faithfulness.

And that's what it took for this miracle to happen.

They listened and trusted Jesus in that moment.

And through the hands of his disciples Jesus fed a multitude.

Mark 6:39-44

39 Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. 41 And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. 42 And they all ate and were satisfied. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. 44 And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

Jesus still works this way today, but we have to be willing to let him use us.

We need to be looking, eyes open, to see where Jesus is working and where he is calling us to get involved.

He doesn't call us to end poverty.

He doesn't call us to save our whole city.

But he does call us to be faithful.

Faithful to open our eyes and look for those in spiritual and material poverty.

And when we do that ... our hearts will fill up the same compassion as our Savior.

And he will call us to act in small simple ways.

So be faithful to give him the little you have, B/C He can do so much with it.

Here is a story of how God can use a little faithfulness to make an eternal impact...

BUMPER VIDEO

VIDEO OF KREZI

RESPONSE

There are so many things to love about Kennedy's story.

And it highlights so well both the burden and the privilege we have at this moment.

I've talked about this burden already.

Helping the poor is not an optional extra in Christianity -- it is a burden we carry because it is God's burden.

We care because he cares.

But there is also this incredible privilege.

What do you think Kennedy's sponsor feels all these year's later?

You can get the privilege of sharing in that... of totally changing someone's life.

You can do the same thing for someone.

And Compassion opens up this amazing opportunity for you and I to do that.

You see, helping the poor is complicated.

It's not easy to do it well, especially if you want to do more than meet someone's immediate need.

It's extraordinarily challenging to effectively change someone's life if they are locked in cycles of poverty.

And yet that's what Compassion exists to do.

It is important you know that Compassion isn't a welfare ministry.

It is a child-advocacy and discipleship ministry that rescues and releases children from spiritual, economic, social, and physical poverty, with the goal being that each child becomes a responsible and fulfilled adult through the gospel of Jesus.

Every child that is sponsored will be given medical care, educational opportunities, basic provisions, and taught life skills.

They will be prepared to become a functional citizen, a leader in their community.

But it's more than that... they are introduced to Jesus Christ.

In fact, all of this ministry Compassion does is done through local churches.

When a child is sponsored, he or she gets all of those things, the discipleship, the meals, the clothes, the immunizations through the Compassion project that is located in the church.

They are making the church of Jesus in each of these countries the face of this ministry to these kids!

That's a huge part of why they grow up loving Jesus and loving his church.

A couple of OHC pastors traveled to Ethiopia 3 years ago to check it out first hand.

They reported back that the people on the ground are pastors and leaders.

They know these kids, their families, everyone in their neighborhood.

And they met, at random, people like Kennedy... Former compassion kids who are now leaders in their communities.

What stood out was what the kids valued most through this ministry...

They will tell you the greatest thing that happened to them was not necessarily getting to go to college, learn a trade, or break out of physical poverty ...

Over and over again we hear them say that the greatest thing about Compassion was that they were introduced to Jesus.

Another thing that was very clear is that Compassion takes these kids seriously.

In fact, if you sponsor a child, when you write a letter, it goes through an intense screening process before the child sees it, to protect them from child-predators.

They aren't so desperate for help that they'll risk a kid's safety. They do it right.

Now, our pastors only saw a few kids and a few compassion projects.

Compassion currently sponsors over 2M children in 25 countries (!!)

We're talking about exceptional quality of care at massive scale.

But if 2M sounds like a lot, the need is orders of magnitude bigger. And getting bigger every day.

In fact, for the last 25 years, global poverty rates have gotten smaller and smaller.

But COVID reversed that. For the first time in a quarter century, extreme poverty is increasing.

The number of people who live on less than \$2 per day is increasing.

It's true that 2020 was hard on all of us.

But in nations that don't have things like economic stimulus plans, the last two years haven't just been hard, they've been lethal.

Those who live in extreme poverty are increasingly vulnerable to infant mortality, hunger, disease, illiteracy and child labor, among other things.

So here is the ask: Flip that script for someone. Sponsor a child. Or two. Or three. You can sponsor as many as you want. Your business can even sponsor a child.

It will cost you only cost \$38 a month per child, all of which is tax deductible.

That's the equivalent of 10 lattes a month to open a door that will totally change the trajectory of another human being's life.

Of every dollar you give, 85 cents goes directly to the child. Yes, Compassion has overhead, but they only use 15% or less of your donation to cover that.

Please consider the opportunity before you. If you are already sponsoring a child, consider sponsoring another one.

Remember, this is an opportunity for us.

We might only give \$38, but remember, Jesus can do a lot with just a little.

Through years of pouring into the life of another person, of writing them letters and hearing from them, perhaps even going overseas to meet them, we will come to the end of this have received more than we've given.

So let's get practical:

FIRST, If you are listening online, you can still sponsor a child by texting the letters OHC to 83393.

For those of us in the room, we have packets at tables [point to tables].

These children are all from Nicaragua, Haiti and Kenya.

Two quick things about these packets...

First, why don't the children look poor?

Compassion wants to give these children dignity, and so they make sure that the children are clean, well dressed and presentable for photos.

But every one of this is living in poverty.

Second, You cannot take your packets with you unless you sponsor the child.

That packet is the only one that exists for that child in the world. If you aren't sure, we don't want to risk it getting lost.

Each packet looks like this. [pull out sample packet]

It is unique to this child, the only packet in the world for this child.

The top two sections are for you to keep.

They have info about the child and also what your donation pays for.

The bottom part is what you fill out and turn in. If sponsoring more than one child, fill out one card completely, and then the remaining cards will be stapled to it.

And Yes ... When doing multiples, you can complete one and staple the others to the completed card.

If you put your debit card on the back, it defaults to bank draft.

If you would rather write a check and draft from that account, write the check, we will staple to card and write bank draft on the memo line. You can also note when you want it drafted.

If you have questions I haven't answered, I'm here or Scott Limerick who is Compassion's Southeast Church Relations Manager is in MHC. [You can call me and get an answer to help you.)

Our church exists to make disciples and push back darkness, all for the sake of the gospel.

Today we're pushing back darkness by rescuing children from poverty for the sake of the gospel. Let's change the world for a lotta' kids. May God bless you.