

HELPING THE HURTING WITH HOPE

LESSON 1: Who is God Bringing to Our Church?

OPENING PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

Jesus, the God of love, was moved with compassion when he saw people in difficult circumstances. The Bible tells us he had compassion for a widowed woman whose only son had died. Jesus had compassion for a large multitude that had followed him for three days to hear him teach, and now they were hungry. He was moved and had compassion for those who were blind and those who had horrible skin diseases. People needed help, and Jesus wanted to help. In each instance where he had compassion for someone, Jesus acted and put his love into practice to help them. What situation in a person's life tugs at your heart so much that you really feel for them? Is it a particular illness? A death? An abuse? A lack of something? A life situation? Something the person destroyed?

1.) Finish this sentence, "It really hits me in the heart when I see someone who ..."?

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Let's look at some New Testament examples of hurting people and the help they received. Group up with those nearby. Each group will be given an episode of Scripture ("The Samaritan Woman" John 4:4-30,39-42; "Saul's Conversion" Acts 9:1- 19,26,27; "Zacchaeus" Luke 19:1-10). Complete a case study of someone who was hurting and needing compassion. Fill in the chart for your case study. We'll hear samples from the groups. What we see from these case studies will help us recognize the need for compassion in our own congregation.

The person needing compassion was...	
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What were things the person needed help with? For what did they need the grace of God?	
How do you think that what they had been doing made a kind of sense to them before?	
Where in the account is a self-acknowledgement that something bad was done?	
What do you suppose were the feelings of the person who needed help?	
In what way(s) were they shown compassion (in action)?	
Give examples of similar situations that we may encounter at our church.	
What needs to be done to show compassion for that person?	

BRINGING IT HOME

- **John 13:34** “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”
- **Ephesians 4:32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
- **Ephesians 5:21** Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

- **Romans 12:10** Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.
- **Romans 12:16** Live in harmony with one another.
- **Romans 15:7** Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you.

1. List two or more dangers for us and the hurting person if we don't recognize that because Christ has paid for their sins on the cross God has forgiven them and in addition many have "paid" additionally (by a tortured conscience, prison time, rehab, something taken away from them, etc.).

a.) Danger for us:

b.) Danger for the hurting person:

2. Reflecting on the "one another" passages above, give a specific example of an action that demonstrates each type of compassion.

a.) There is a time when punishment ends, and we express love and support and a new direction.

b.) We aren't to see ourselves as better than someone else.

c.) The hurting need to be turned toward Jesus' forgiveness.

4. How will the impact of what we do in being compassionate be different for us, the hurting, and others in our congregation? In what ways will it be the same?

a.) For us?

b.) For the hurting?

c.) For others in the congregation?

LIVING MY FAITH

Compassion involves action. Jesus acted for those for whom he had compassion. He lived a life of perfect compassion. His cross was the greatest act of compassion.

- Look for a way to be compassionate with someone hurting this week.
- Identify one or more people in your life that might be hurting right now.
- List one or more specific action(s) you will take to help one of these hurting ones whom Christ loves.

CLOSING PRAYER

John 4:4-30, 39-42

⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹ Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him. [...]

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers.

⁴² They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

Acts 9:1-19, 26-27

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus.⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem.¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength. [...]

²⁶ When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.

Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through.² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd.⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a ‘sinner.’ ”

⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”

Publicans (tax collector) is from the Greek word, *telones*; collector of public revenue; tax collector. One who farmed the taxes (e.g., Zacchaeus, Luke 19:2) to be levied from a town or district, and thus undertook to pay to the supreme government a certain amount. In order to collect the taxes, the publicans employed subordinates (Luke 5:27; 15:1; 18:10), who, for their own profit, were often guilty of extortion and embezzlement. In New Testament times these taxes were paid to the Romans, and hence were regarded by the Jews as a heavy burden. Tax collectors were frequently Jews and were hated and usually spoken of scornfully. Jesus was accused of being a “friend of publicans and sinners” (Luke 7:34).¹

Chief publican (ἀρχιτελωνης). The word occurs nowhere else apparently but the meaning is clear from the other words with ἀρχι- like ἀρχιερευσ (chief priest) ἀρχιποιμην (chief shepherd). Jericho was an important trading point for balsam and other things and so Zacchaeus was the head of the tax collections in this region, a sort of commissioner of taxes who probably had other publicans serving under him.²

¹ Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. (1998). [Manners & customs of the Bible](#) (pp. 423–424). Bridge-Logos Publishers.

² Robertson, A. T. (1933). [Word Pictures in the New Testament](#) (Lk 19:2). Broadman Press.