

Follow Me, Pt. 6

Compassion

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“Follow Me” definition: *To be on the same road with Jesus, to learn from Him, imitate Him, and multiply Him in others.*

Cost of Discipleship —

- **Matthew 16:24-25**

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”

Prayer — is the root spiritual discipline we need to follow Jesus into, it serves as the source of power for all other disciplines to be lived out.

Last time Steve preached — Following Jesus into the Supernatural

- a life rooted in prayer, empowered by the Spirit, is key to walking in supernatural...
- in the anchor passage today, Jesus is reading from Isaiah 61:1-2
- **Luke 4:16-19**

So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: “THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR; HE HAS SENT ME TO HEAL THE BROKENHEARTED, TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET AT LIBERTY THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED; TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.”

 - Bring good news to poor — in resource, poor heard Him gladly; and spirit (*Beatitudes*)
 - Hope! — by power of the Holy Spirit
 - Heal the brokenhearted — regardless of source, came to heal brokenhearted!
 - Healing!
 - Proclaim liberty to captives — freedom to those bound in their spirits/in own circumstances!
 - Freedom!
 - Recovery of sight to blind — physically sightless, and those spiritually visionless!
 - Restoration!
 - Set at liberty the oppressed — freedom for crushed by society, deliverance to mistreated!
 - Justice!

“The church must announce Christian principles and point out where existing social order conflicts with them; and work to reshape the existing order to closer conformity to those principles.”¹

~ William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury 1942-44

“If someone doesn’t stir the pot, the folks on the bottom get burned.”

~ Denny Denson, Former Pastor, First Missionary Baptist Church, Natchez Street, Franklin, TN (*told to Pastor Steve as personal friend*)

- Proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord — basis in year of Jubilee, debts forgiven, justice, fairness, generosity, bound set free, capital was to be redistributed, etc.
- Favor!

Jesus instituted a time of Hope, Healing, Freedom, Restoration, Justice and Favor, all through the power of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, these things are the church’s marching orders. We MUST give ourselves to seeing these things worked into people’s lives.

Important observation- Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2(a). He stopped mid-verse, before, “the day of vengeance of our God.” Why? Surely that day is coming. But now, it’s time for the announcement of God’s Kingdom coming to bless and transform men — *so they don’t have to face God’s vengeance!*

Listen — God’s Kingdom coming to bless and transform people is summed up in one word- Compassion! The Church must follow Jesus into Compassion!

Compassion

Compassion Defined — *Feeling people’s pain, coupled with a determination to help them.*
“*Compaction*” is Compassionate Action!

Examples of compassion in Jesus’ life — so we can learn, imitate, and multiply it in others.

- **Matthew 9:36**

But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

- moved with compassion — felt their affliction in His bowels, guts.
- weary and scattered — sad, pitiful, mangled (as by a *Beast*), plundered, vexed, harassed, bewildered, burdened, cast down and mentally dejected.

Compassion sees past people’s immediate misery, to their future blessing, and then helps to see the blessing accomplished. *Jesus lived His life this way!*

- **Matthew 14:14**

And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them and healed their sick.

- His compassion never ran out

¹ John Atherton, *Christianity and the New Social Order* (SPCK, Apr 10, 2012)

- Jesus always had enough compassion to be stretched to be enough for *greater*

Compassion heals the innumerable. From multitudes to great multitudes, GROW!

- **Matthew 15:32**

Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

- The disciples were unable; the multitude was unable
- He was not angered by their condition, by their lack of preparation
- Unable may be from generational mindsets or generational poverty

Compassion cares for the unable.

- This fueled Martin Luther King's work of compassion and justice. There are folks who need a hand up, disadvantaged, underprivileged... "an act of congress gave millions of acres of property to whites, built land-grant colleges with government money to teach them how to farm, provided county agents to further education in farming, provided low-interest government loans to mechanize their farms, paid millions in subsidies not to farm- THEN- told African Americans to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps."²

- **Matthew 18:27**

Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

Compassion forgives and releases the unforgiveable. Just as God forgave us in Christ.

- **Matthew 20:32-34**

So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

Compassion restores the un-restorable.

- **Mark 1:40-41**

Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."

Compassion touches the untouchable.

- **Mark 5:18-19**

And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."

Compassion delivers the un-deliverable.

- **Luke 7:12-15**

And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

Compassions speaks to the unbearable and impossible.

² Michael Eric Dyson, David L. Jagerman, *I May Not Get There with You: The True Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Simon and Schuster, 2000) 12

SO IMPORTANT

Supernatural power and compassion go hand in hand.

If there is a lack of power in our lives...

...maybe it's because there's a lack of compassion for it to be expressed through.

Discussion Questions

1. Compassion alone is not enough. What is “Compaction”?
2. What moves you to compassion to follow Him closer?
3. What moves you to action to be conformed into His image?
4. What can you do to become His heart and His hands?
5. Where does compassion need to be released in your life? *If you are under conviction!*
6. Where does compassion need to be received in your life today? It's available!
7. How/where can your Life Group become involved in some “Compaction”?