

# Not Your Sacrifice but Compassion

by Erlo Stegen

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*Erlo Stegen's sermon emphasizes the importance of compassion and mercy in the Christian faith over mere sacrifices.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 9:13, Luke 5:31

**Topics:** "Compassion", "Mercy"

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## Description

Erlo Stegen emphasizes that God desires mercy and compassion over mere sacrifices, as illustrated by Jesus' interactions with sinners and the Pharisees. He highlights Matthew's act of inviting his fellow tax collectors to a feast, demonstrating the importance of reaching out to those in need of healing. Stegen contrasts the compassion of Jesus with the critical nature of the Pharisees, urging believers to embody a heart of compassion rather than judgment. He reminds us that true faith leads to action and that we must be sensitive to the needs of others, reflecting God's love in our interactions. Ultimately, the sermon calls for self-examination regarding our own compassion and mercy towards others.

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## Transcript

Summary of sermon by Erlo Stegen, 19 Aug 2012

Matt 9

13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

In this chapter we find Jesus calling Matthew the tax collector. He left his career and followed Jesus.

The first thing he did in following Jesus was to have a great feast at his home where all his friends, fellow tax collectors and sinners were invited. Jesus too was invited and saw all the people in his house.

Since Jesus was closely watched by the pharisees they observed that he mixed and associated with these people and they criticized it.

This does not imply that you can smoke with the smokers, drink with the drinkers, take drugs with the druggies etc.

No Jesus wasn't partaking in their sin. He came to save them from their sin.

The Bible clearly says we must not partake with those who say they're children of God but live in these grievous sins.

Ps 1 also clearly tells us not to partake in the sins of sinners, but rather find our joy in the law of the Lord, day and night.

However, the pharisees saw Jesus' association in this light as if He partook in their sin. But the Bible clearly says that it's impossible not to deal with the people of this world, else we would have to live in another world.

There was an enormous difference between Jesus and the scribes and pharisees. Jesus answered their objection and said to them that the healthy do not need a doctor, but the sick need a physician.

The pharisees saw these people of the world as depraved and wouldn't associate with them. Little did they realise that they too were wicked and depraved. These people at least realised their depravity and knew their need of healing. The pharisees did not think themselves sick and therefore in need of a physician.

Matthew did an astonishing thing by bringing together all his old friends, in showing to them where they too can get help and be healed.

Maybe you've been a Christian for years but you've never done what Matthew did by inviting others sick in their sin so they too can find help and deliverance from their sin.

They also brought a man paralysed and let him down through the roof in front of Jesus so He could heal him.

Jesus then first said to the man, "your sins are forgiven"; and the pharisees criticised Him for that. But Jesus has power to forgive sins for He is the second Person of the Trinity.

Jesus saw the faith of the paralytic and those that brought him and then He said to him, "take courage, take up your bed and walk". And so Jesus healed him physically too. He took up his bed in front of them all and went his way.

Faith is the victory over whatever problems you are facing. Some when they are faced with problems want to flee and not face them. But Jesus is the answer to your problems. You must take courage and trust in Him for victory. Faith and victory are inseparable. Faith is victory and make us more than conquerors.

But the pharisees criticised. There are some people who are critics through and through and even if something cannot be criticised they still find a way to criticise it.

These pharisees held themselves aloof and couldn't be touched by others' needs, but Jesus was different and was touched by others' needs and infirmities.

There might be things destroying your physical and spiritual life and you don't know what to do. But seek out the Heavenly Physician for He has the cure even if nothing else works.

Jesus said to these scribes and pharisees to read and study the law. They thought they knew the law and could instruct others, but they had need of learning.

What was it that they needed to learn? The law clearly stated that God wanted pity, mercy and compassion and not sacrifice. Have you learned this? Are you a real Christian?

Are we walking on the corpses of people or reach out with compassion to those in need? Do you have a heart of compassion? Are you known for your compassion?

Remember when the disciples wanted to send the people away, Jesus had compassion on them and said to them, "you give them something to eat"; and then He multiplied the bread and fish and fed the multitude.

When a scribe asked Jesus who his neighbour was, Jesus answered with an illustration and a question. He told the story of the good Samaritan who helped the needy man whereas the Levite and priest passed the other way. Jesus then asked him who of the three was a neighbour to the man fallen amongst the robbers. Clearly the despised Samaritan.

We tend to be so spiritual that we're not with our feet upon the ground to help those in need.

The apostle asks us how can God's love abide in a person who sees his brother in need and shut up his heart of compassion from him. James says that those who showed no mercy to others will be judged without mercy (James 2:13)

By what characteristic are you known?

A certain mother begged for mercy for her son from Napoleon. Her son was a repeat offender and condemned to die. Napoleon replied that he didn't deserve mercy. But she answered him wisely, that if he deserved mercy it would not be mercy to forgive him. So she begged Napoleon to show him true mercy, which he didn't deserve. Her request was granted and her son set free!

Do we know what it means to show mercy to others?

When your children make a mistake, do you blow your top and get angry or teach them the correct way with patience?

Maybe someone from another background than yours doesn't understand things that's obvious to you and you have no patience with them. I remember Pastor Nicolas Bhengu (a man who was blessed of God) how, as an ignorant young person from a rural area, he got a job in a white person's home. Once, when they were not there, he was inquisitive as to how the "fire" got into the light bulb. He pulled it out and stuck his finger into the socket. He said that he woke up on the floor having receiving the biggest shock of his life. We need to be sensitive to people like him who simply do not have the knowledge which we "civilised" people have. Go easy on an employee who lacks knowledge. If you blow your top you are showing that you do not have the Spirit of God who is "compassionate".

Do you know what it means to show compassion?

The pharisees brought a woman caught red handed in adultery and they demanded her execution. But Jesus wrote in the sand and told them that those without sin can cast the first stone. They were convicted by their consciences and departed.

Examine yourself if you have this heart of compassion? Ask those around you to tell you.

This is what God requires from us. God is not interested in your sacrifices but desires mercy and compassion.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/erlo-stegen/not-your-sacrifice-but-compassion/>

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