

(Radical Jesus) 22 Radical Passion

by Glenn Meldrum

We are obligated to show compassion and mercy to others, just as Jesus has shown compassion and mercy to us, and this is a reflection of our love for God.

Duration: 30:03

Scripture: Luke 10:25

Topics: "Passion"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of showing mercy and compassion to others as a reflection of our love for God. He shares two parables of Jesus to illustrate this point, including the well-known parable of the good Samaritan. The preacher highlights the high cost involved in showing compassion and urges the listeners to go and do likewise. He also shares a personal story of a pastoral couple facing difficulties and emphasizes the need for compassion towards abused pastors. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the obligation to love God and others through acts of mercy and compassion.

Transcript

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For the last two weeks, we have been studying the radical nature of divine compassion. I do not know if you have enjoyed these studies, but I sure have. I love digging into God's Word to learn the wonder of who He is, and His compassion has overwhelmed me, convicted me, and I hope it has equally affected you.

This week I want to bring the practical application of how Christ's radical compassion should define the life of every true believer. To have a knowledge of God's love and compassion, and then to do nothing with that knowledge is reprehensible. It's sinful.

The more we learn about God, the more we become accountable to Him for applying that knowledge to our everyday lives. One of the astounding things about God's compassion is that we not only are granted the privilege to experience that love, but we are commanded to live out that same love through the power of the Holy Spirit. In other words, when we love Jesus like we should, He will help us to show compassion in ways that would have otherwise been impossible for us.

I want to begin by delving into a fact that is interwoven with divine compassion. This truth is not very popular today in American Christianity because it makes us very uncomfortable. Nonetheless, I want to speak for a little while on the obligation we have to Jesus and how that obligation affects the subject of compassion.

There are two primary reasons why we are obligated to Jesus. First, we are obligated to Him because He created us, and as Creator, He has the right to demand of us anything that He deems fit. Second, we are obligated to Him as Redeemer.

He paid the ultimate price to purchase our salvation, and that should produce in us such gratitude that we should serve Him with reckless abandon. So the Lord not only owns us by right as Creator, but by right as Redeemer. Our obligation to Jesus also extends to our fellow man.

Jesus said it this way in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus obligates us to show mercy to others because He has shown mercy to us. After the Lord demonstrates His mercy to us, He then ties our continued reception of mercy to whether or not we will show mercy to others. We cannot expect to receive mercy from God if we will not show mercy to others.

So our obligation to Christ then obligates us to others. Showing mercy to others is part of compassion, so we could say that as we have received compassion from God, so we are to show compassion to others. And if we refuse to show compassion to others, then the Lord will not show compassion to us.

The Lord has obligated us to this spiritual principle, and there is no way that we can escape from it. Yet we persistently try to find loopholes so that we do not have to show mercy and compassion to others. The Apostle James told us in his epistle, chapter 2, verses 12 through 13, Speak and act like those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful.

Mercy triumphs over judgment. What law is James referring to here? The Mosaic Law? No. He is speaking about the Gospel Law.

This idea of Gospel Law irritates lukewarm Christians and those that promote a false teaching of cheap grace. Anyone that will honestly read the Sermon on the Mount will clearly see that there is such a thing as Gospel Law. You will find then that the Gospel Law gives freedom, while the Mosaic Law enslaves and condemns us because we cannot live up to its standards of perfection.

James is giving us some tremendous advice in the verses I just read. He is warning us to live in light of the fact that we will give an account before God. If we want mercy on our judgment day, then we must live a life of showing mercy to others.

Mercy triumphs over judgment, not because we did some good works and so earned a place in heaven, but because the fruit of a transformed life is clearly seen through the heart of compassion that is demonstrated towards others. Though we are thoroughly obligated by God to show mercy and compassion to others, the only way that we can live such a life is through the transforming power of the Spirit. Let me briefly share two of Christ's parables on our obligation to show mercy and compassion to others.

The first one I want to mention is the historical account of Jesus speaking with an expert in the Mosaic Law. In this dialogue, Jesus gives the parable of the Good Samaritan. The account is found in Luke 10,

verses 25-37.

An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus, saying, What must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus asked a question in return, What is written in the law? The lawyer answered correctly, stating that we are to love God with every fiber of our being and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus then obligated the man by saying, Do this and you will live. But the lawyer wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, And who is my neighbor? Jesus then gave the parable of the Good Samaritan.

I do not want to take the time to outline the parable, but only to present one of its principal lessons, that there is a very high cost involved in showing compassion to others. Jesus then obligated the man by saying, Go and do likewise. Jesus presented this parable in light of the fact that we are obligated to love the Lord with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and as a result, we are obligated to love others compassionately.

Let me give an illustration of the compassion we are obligated to give, but most often miserably fail. My wife, Jessica, recently received a phone call from a pastoral couple that we were very concerned over. This couple pastored a church for nearly 20 years, but due to poor health and wanting to be near their children, they resigned the church.

In the meantime, they accepted a small church in another state. The pastor's wife informed Jesse that they had just resigned this new church. We know that their personal finances are not very good.

The church rose up against the pastor and drove him out. My heart was broken over this. It is just another account of a long list of abused pastors that I have known.

Since I have known such pain myself, I knew that they were hurting very bad. What happens so often under such circumstances is that the leadership gives the pastor and his family the angry foot of disfellowship. They kick them right out the front door of the church without the least concern that the family will survive.

I have seen when the church has been beautiful and loving one another, where they are filled with compassion for each other. I have also seen the church extremely ugly when selfishness rules and compassion is abandoned. Early in the day that I received the news from the pastoral couple that I am speaking about, I was listening to a worship song called Song of the Lamb.

The music I use on the Radical Truth podcast has always been original music, so I don't have to deal with copyright issues. But today I want to share with you a portion of the song by Harvest Basta, Song of the Lamb. You alone are holy, Lord God Almighty.

Great and marvelous are your works. You have delivered us. You alone are holy, Lord God Almighty.

Great and marvelous are your works. You have delivered us from death. Now we live with you, now we reign with you forever.

Join with me. For the Lamb is worthy. Oh, for the Lamb is worthy.

Oh, for the Lamb is worthy. Great and marvelous are your works. You have delivered us.

You alone are holy, Lord God Almighty. Great and marvelous are your works. You have delivered us from death.

Now we live with you, now we reign with you forever. Join with me. For the Lamb is worthy.

What a phenomenal song. The chorus of the song is a phrase that I have known and used in preaching for many, many years. And if I'm not mistaken, it came out of the Moravian Revival of the 1700s.

The chorus goes, May the Lamb receive the reward of His suffering. After hearing of the story of the pastor being booted out of the church, I went to prayer and was crying out to the Lord for them. The thought kept going through my head.

May the Lamb receive the reward of His suffering. I then began to dwell upon the idea of what it means that Jesus deserves the reward of His suffering. He deserves that the church loves each other, has compassion for each other.

Jesus, you do not deserve to have your church filled with contention and fighting, with congregations destroying the lives of pastors, or with sin and compromise defining the church. Jesus, you deserve the reward of your suffering, which speaks of our obligation to be Christ-like, to be compassionate and loving like Jesus. The world is not impressed with the contention, strife, gossip, and rebellion in the church.

They are not impressed when the church practices sin or is living out a lukewarm religion of the Laodicean church. They are not impressed when professing Christians can suck down beers just like them, when supposed Christians are getting divorced just like them. They are not impressed with a fornicating church.

The world often knows how the church should live, even when the church does not. When we fail to be like Jesus, to be compassionate to one another, then we disgrace Christ before the world and slander His holy name. The unsaved already have lives filled with contention and strife.

Why would they want to go to church only to suffer through more of it? Jesus commands us to be compassionate. This is not an option, but an absolute obligation. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Lord commanded the lawyer to go and do likewise, and this command is given to us as well.

If we cannot be compassionate to our own families, to our fellow servants in Christ, how will we ever be compassionate to a world rushing to hell? May the Lamb receive the reward of His suffering, and let it begin with you and me. The second parable I want to briefly address on the issue of our obligations to Jesus is found in Matthew 18, verses 23 through 35. This is a parable of the unmerciful servant.

Jesus gave this parable after Peter asked how many times we are obligated to forgive people. Peter asked if he could stop forgiving after seven offenses, but Jesus responded with either 7 times 70, which is 490 times, or 7 plus 70, which is 77 times. The different interpretations have to do with how the translators read the original text, but both translations are plausible.

The primary teaching point of the parable is that we are obligated to forgive others because we have been forgiven ourselves. In other words, we are to be compassionate to others because God has been infinitely compassionate to us. The parable is about a king that was settling accounts with his servants, which means he was examining how his servants handled the king's money and were forced to give an account of their actions.

The servant in question is a bond slave. What is a bond slave? It is a man that could not pay the debt he incurred, so was forced to serve the man he owed the debt to until the debt was paid. After his time of servitude was finished, the servant had grown to love the master and found his life much better under the

master's rule.

So he decided of his own free will to give himself as a slave for life. The testimony of a bond slave is that he loves his master. After the king looked at the books, he found that the unmerciful servant was unfaithful.

He had stolen 10,000 talents, which in today's currency would be about \$8.3 trillion. The man could not pay back such a humongous debt, so the king ordered that he and his wife and his children be sold to repay the debt. We are told that the servant fell on his knees and begged the king, Be patient with me and I will pay you back everything.

The king knew that it was impossible for the man to pay the debt, but the master took pity on him, canceled the debt, and let him go. This unmerciful servant finds a fellow servant that owed him a hundred denarii, or about \$15,000 in today's currency. He grabbed the man and began to choke him, demanding, Pay back what you owe me.

This fellow servant fell to his knees and begged, Be patient with me and I will pay you back. The unmerciful servant refused to forgive his fellow servant and had him thrown in jail until he could pay his debt. We have to see that the unmerciful servant could not pay back \$8.3 trillion.

It was absolutely impossible. But the fellow servant could have paid back the \$15,000 that he had borrowed. Our debt to God is beyond our ability to ever pay, but our debts to one another are repayable.

When the king found out what the unmerciful servant did to his fellow servant, he commanded the man to stand before him and give an account. The king calls his servant a wicked servant, not because he lived a debauched life, but because he would not show compassion to others. You wicked servant, I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.

Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had mercy on you? Though the principal lesson of this parable is about forgiving others, it correlates with the issue of showing compassion and mercy which is what forgiving others is all about. We are obligated to show compassion to others, or we will end up being called wicked by God and then face a judgment that is fitting of the crime. When we look at Luke 19.10, we see that Jesus clearly defined his mission.

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. Anyone that was a bona fide follower of Jesus was at one time alienated from God due to their willful rebellion. Peter told us, But in his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Then the apostle said in 1 Peter 2.10, By the sheer aspect that we have received mercy, we are thoroughly obligated to give mercy to others. There is no excuse to not show mercy and compassion. There's none.

Since Christ's mission was to seek and to save what was lost, every follower of Jesus is obligated to do the same. To refuse to show compassion to others, whether in the church or without, is a rebellious act of selfishness. Jesus deserves the reward of his suffering, and that is the total devotion of the entire human race.

So it is our personal and corporate responsibility to take to the world the message of reconciliation. While under the anointing of the Spirit, the prophet Amos prophesied, Woe to you who are complacent in Zion.

You do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph.

Woe to the heartless Christians that refuse to show compassion to the body of Christ or to a perishing world. Zion here refers to the people of God, and they failed their calling and obligation put upon them by the Lord himself to be compassionate, especially to fellow servants of Jesus. There is no legitimate way that we can justify our lack of compassion.

We blaspheme Christ before the world by our heartlessness, bitterness, and unforgiveness. We put on a facade of being loving when in truth we are so contentious that we abuse each other in a host of ways and rebel against the authorities God has placed over us. Of course, we always blame others for the sin we practice and our lack of compassion, but I don't think we have yet convinced the Lord.

In our minds we have separated love from compassion, so we can claim that we are loving even though we do not show compassion to others. By divorcing compassion from love, we have convinced ourselves that we can love God without being compassionate to others. But that is a strong delusion because it is breaking Christ's commands to love God supremely and to love others as ourselves.

Many have referred to the apostle John as the apostle of love for what he wrote in his epistles on the subject of love. It is important to know that John does not advance a wimpy, humanistic, selfish love that is preached around the country today. He actually preaches a radical love that resembles that of Jesus.

Through strong exhortations and reproof, John teaches us what real love is and what it is not. It would do us much good to do an in-depth, personal study of John's teachings. Let me share a few of his verses from the first epistle in the third chapter in the tenth verse.

This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are. Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God, nor is anyone who does not love his brother. This verse is all about fruit inspection, and it comes out of Christ's own teaching that states that a tree is known by its fruit.

People that practice sin do not know Jesus, and when their fruit is bad, then we have the right to state that they are not true followers of Jesus. It's not man that judges. It is God that judges.

It is the word that reveals the reality of people's hearts. John declares that there is an obvious difference between the good fruit of God's children and the bad fruit of the children of the devil. To be called a child of the devil is a serious, serious accusation.

In 1 John 3, verses 16-18, the apostle states, this is how we know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth.

A whole podcast could be taken up teaching the truth in these three verses that are very rich and profound, but I will only make a couple of passing points. John clearly tells us that if we want to know what real love is, then we must look at Jesus, then we must emulate Jesus. The Lord is commanding his followers to lay down their lives for each other like he did for us.

That is what Christianity really is all about, being like Jesus, sacrificing ourselves like Jesus. If self-professing Christians lived this way, there would be no church members getting a divorce, no infighting and strife, no acts of rebellion against godly pastors, and no fornication, adultery, or

pornography, and the list goes on. The call is to love with action, not mere words.

Divine compassion reveals itself through action, and the same is true when it is working in us. In 1 John chapter 4, verses 20-21, if anyone says, I love God, yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

And he has given us this command, whoever loves God must also love his brother. John is making a very serious point here. If we do not love the family of God, it is because we do not love God.

People can act all spiritual, but if they do not love others, then they do not love God. Period. Now, if you do not like what I'm saying here, then you need to take up this issue with the author of the book, because I'm only the mailman delivering God's mail to you.

Many churchgoers and religious people will spend an eternity in hell because they did not show compassion to others. Since they gave no mercy, they will receive no mercy. This is a terrifying thought.

Paul told us in 2 Corinthians 5-20 that we are ambassadors for Christ as though God were making his appeal through us. This privilege is only given to genuine followers of Jesus. To be Christ's ambassadors to the world is an obligation for we are all commanded to fulfill this high calling without exception.

Imagine a president, prime minister, or king that sends an ambassador to another country to represent the will of that nation's ruler. But the ambassador proves himself a very proud, stubborn rebellious man that gets drunk at public dinners, swears like a skid row bum, and is constantly making sexual advances to women, whether married or not. When news of this man's actions reached the sending nation's ruler, the ambassador would be quickly recalled and disciplined.

Then damage control would be set in motion. The ambassador disgraced the ruler before a foreign nation. Are we as Christ's ambassadors faithfully delivering the message he has commanded us to give? Or are we more like the wicked ambassador that slandered the king and nation through the practice of evil? Sin and compromise always slanders Christ of the world.

The practice of sin makes us heartless because we would rather practice our sin that is hurting people than to repent. An example of this common situation is a teenage alcoholic or drug addict that is going for treatment. The counselor tells the parents that they need to get all the liquor out of the house to help protect their child.

But the parents go ballistic, saying that they will not stop drinking and they will not take the alcohol out of the house. Why do they act like this? Because they love themselves more than their child. They are heartless and uncompassionate, even though they might say words that they love their child.

The Christian calling to be ambassadors obligates us to faithfully communicate his perfect love to mankind. If we are not faithful ambassadors in life and word, then we present a false message that Jesus does not care about their sin or suffering. Christ is then disgraced before the world and made to look like an uncaring mythical deity.

If we do not live out lives of compassion, then there's nobody to blame but ourselves. Peter taught us that the Lord has given us everything necessary so we may participate in the divine nature. For those that are truly in Christ, his infinite power is freely made available to us so that we can be filled with his compassion and love.

The Lord wants his holy nature to deeply permeate our lives, transforming us from being self-absorbed individuals into compassionate, loving saints. Whenever we fail to be Christ-like, it is because we have not drawn near enough to the radical Jesus so that his character fully defines us. People who call themselves Christian and don't exemplify Christ's holy compassionate character are either not authentic Christians, or they are still full of themselves because they are blind to what it means to be a genuine Christian.

When Christ's character defines our character, people will see the reality of the faith and Christ will be exalted through us. When the Savior's radical compassion becomes our compassion, then we too will be radical. Where is the first place that such compassion should be shown? To our spouse and children.

If we cannot be compassionate to them, we must admit that something is terribly wrong with our spiritual life. When we fail to love like Jesus in the home, then we will certainly fail to properly love people outside of the home. A person may be successful from a worldly point of view, while being an absolute failure from God's point of view.

I guarantee you that God's point of view is the right view, and the only one that really matters. Next, we should be demonstrating Christ's compassion to the family of God. Jesus clearly told us in John chapter 13, verse 35, By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

A lot of people prove that they are not one of Christ's disciples because they do not show compassion to Christ's body, the Church. When people are not compassionate to fellow servants of the Lord, then they are actually being unloving to Christ, who is the head of the Church body. We cannot abuse pastors and be innocent, because by doing so, we are actually fighting against Jesus, who is the head of His Church.

And we cannot abuse members of Christ's body and not be guilty before God. We are also commanded to show love and compassion to a lost and dying world by sharing with them the good news that there is a Savior that can rescue them from their blatant rebellion. Compassion will cause us to go and make disciples.

How can we know that there is a hell, that unrepentant sinners will forever suffer and keep silent? Compassion gives us a voice to proclaim to perishing, immortal souls, that there is a Savior that is longing to save them. Through our compassion for the lost, they will see Christ's compassion for them. How are we ever going to love our enemies like Jesus commanded when we cannot rightly love our natural family, our Church family, or even a perishing world? I'm not going to lie to you.

Compassion is very costly. When it grabs hold of your heart, it will take you to places you never thought you would go and do things you never thought you could do. In a very good way, of course.

More often than not, we want an easy, comfortable faith, but such a faith is not biblical, but selfish and humanistic. Let me share with you an example of the cost of compassion. I have preached at many Victory Outreach churches, mainly in the Southwest.

They are commonly referred to as VO. VO is a denomination defined by compassion for the lost and are, to my knowledge, the most aggressive church planners I have ever seen. From first-hand experience, I have seen the cost VO pastors pay to build a church.

The pioneering pastor gets a house in a community that he wants to reach. Most of the time, this is in very rough areas immersed in drugs and gangs. They are out to win the worst of the worst.

Then, with the help of the sending church, the pastor does street evangelism and outreach. When drug addicts and gang members get saved, the pastor moves them into his home to disciple them and help them out of their drug addiction. This then becomes what they call the men's home or the woman's home, which is a discipleship rehab.

This is the environment where the church is birthed and built, and as a result, they have raised up many radical leaders in their churches. This is then the model that new believers will live out. I have known pastors who have lived in one room in their house with their wife and children because all the other bedrooms were filled with former addicts and gang members.

Compassion is costly, very costly, but it's also wonderfully rewarding. To see the lost saved, to see addicts set free from their addictions, is worth it all. How many other denominations have that kind of compassion? How many pastors are willing to pay that kind of price to win the loss to Christ and to raise up radical disciples? Not many.

Actually, hardly any. You can imagine when this example is set before them, the new converts will believe that radical compassion is normal Christianity, and that is absolutely true. Without Jesus and the radical transformation that comes through genuine conversion, we will love like the world, with a selfish, taking kind of love, for that is all we will have to offer others.

The natural fall in love has limits. It will only go so far. It is a selfish love that will love only when loved in return.

If you think I'm wrong, then explain to me the extreme divorce rate that is both in the world and in the visible church. People do not get divorced because they love each other, but because they love themselves, and that love is very, very selfish and very limited. That selfish self-love never gives us what we originally desired.

It cannot authentically meet our needs. Rather than producing the happiness we yearn for, our selfishness inflicts despair and alienation upon ourselves and others. Compassion can only be expressed through self-emptying, the giving away of ourselves for the well-being of others.

Jesus is our perfect example of what such a life looks like. He perfectly modeled it, and then made himself the standard of what it means to be Christian. His compassion is radical, and it is his compassion that should define every follower of Jesus.

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