

On the Other Side

by K.P. Yohannan

The sermon calls for believers to extend grace and compassion to others, reflecting on their own failures and the love of Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 18:23

Topics: "Compassion", "Grace"

Description

K.P. Yohannan shares a transformative story of a lawyer whose life changed after a tragic accident that forced him to confront his own imperfections. Through his journey of relearning basic skills, he developed compassion and grace towards others, especially his daughter, who he once would have criticized. Yohannan emphasizes that we often impose unrealistic standards on others, forgetting our own struggles, and calls for a shift towards understanding and supporting one another. He illustrates this with biblical examples, including Jesus' interactions with sinners, urging us to embody Christ's compassion and be a source of support for those in need. Ultimately, the sermon encourages us to recognize our shared humanity and extend grace as we walk together in faith.

Transcript

He was a lawyer--a good one. He demanded the best of himself, and nothing less was acceptable. But he didn't stop there. He also required the best from everyone else. Unfortunately, few could meet his standards. The truth is, there was little joy in being around him, because tension seemed to shadow him. Then a day came when everything changed. In the wrong place at the wrong time, he was accidentally shot. He lived, but lost many of the simple skills most people take for granted.

He had to relearn how to tie his shoes and even how to talk. As he was forced to practice basic tasks over and over again, his personality began to change. One day while sitting at the breakfast table, his young daughter accidentally spilled her orange juice. She looked up fearfully at her father. Before, he never would have tolerated such clumsiness. This time, however, he looked kindly at her and asked, "What's wrong?" Instead of being upset, he purposely knocked over his own orange juice and said, "It's okay.

Look. I do it all the time." Then the father and his daughter laughed together. What a story. What a change in this man's makeup. But what happened? When his own performance standards were so high, he had little patience for others. But constantly faced with his own mistakes, he afforded others the same grace he so badly needed. Of the Same Cloth Whether or not we realize it, we all have our own set of standards by which we tend to measure others. How many times do we shake our heads at people and think, "What is

wrong with this guy anyway?

Why is she struggling with that? Why don't they just . . ." In our heads, we impose a perfection that they aren't measuring up to. We can be especially critical about matters with which we don't struggle, the areas of our own strength. We behave like the man in Scripture who was forgiven a great sum yet was unwilling to show mercy to a fellow servant who by comparison owed only a few pennies (see Matthew 18:23-34). God forbid that we would have to get shot in order to learn how to be gracious.

Who rejoices over a cure that's worse than the disease? But how do we get to the place at which we initially respond to others out of compassion? This is an issue with which I myself have a great struggle. Do you ever find yourself complaining about a co-worker for an extended period of time? Do you rake family members over the coals for the obvious ways they are failing? How often do you catch yourself in these patterns before you even realize what you're doing? Jesus said, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7).

You know this story: A young lady was dragged before Jesus by the religious crowd. She had failed big time. She was caught in adultery, and now by law she must be stoned to death. Jesus was challenged to give His judgment. The tension was thick. Christ answered, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone." What do you think He was saying to that smug group of people? Did He say, "He who has not committed adultery like this woman can cast the first stone"?

No. He said, "If any one of you is without sin . . ." (emphasis mine). If none of us can say we are without sin, then Jesus must want us to take a different approach. How does this sound? "I understand that you struggle. Guess what? I struggle too. But we will get there. We will get there together. So let's help one another." Even the greatest saints and the most successful workers in God's kingdom have experienced discouragement and failure in their lives. Charles Spurgeon one time confessed, "I am the subject of depression of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you ever gets to such extreme of wretchedness as I go through."

Believe it or not, we are all pretty much cut from the same piece of cloth. Some of us are clever and are able to hide our problems, but we are still much the same on the inside. And within that realization lies our answer. Christ who knew no sin showed compassion to this woman, saying, "Neither do I condemn you" (John 8:11). How much more should we, who know all too well the sting of sin and failure, show compassion to our brothers and sisters? God expects this of us. He assumes we will use the experience of our failures and His restoration to aid in helping others who have fallen.

It only makes sense. In 2 Corinthians 1:4 (NASB) Paul says, "[God] comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." You Be My Jesus Sometime back, a friend shared with me some of his burdens. I listened prayerfully, asking the Lord to help me understand what he was going through. One after another he talked about discouragements and failures that seemed to have gotten the best of him.

He said he still read his Bible and prayed, but it all seemed so lifeless; what he felt was that God Himself had forsaken him. His wish was that he could quit everything and just run away. "I am in a fast-moving train, and I am so tired. I just want to get off, but this train isn't stopping for me." Tears fell unchecked. His whole body seemed to bend under a staggering load. I sensed the Lord asking me if I would represent the compassionate, caring, restoring person of Jesus in my words to this man.

Thank God the story ends well. After listening for a long time, I shared my heart and laid my hands on him and prayed. He left the room a changed individual. This prayer on behalf of the Lord brought recovery, and a month later he was serving the Lord with the excitement and energy he had before. Right after he left my room, the words, "You be my Jesus," came to my mind. I realized how we all need that physical touch of someone who will be the ministry of Jesus to us. The following is the poem I wrote from that encounter: The night is darker than the darkest night not a star in the sky.

Cruel storm howls in distance creating piercing silence. Nonstop downpour. It seems this night is forever. My lamp is empty only left the smoking wick hurting my eyes forcing me to shut them in the dark. Is there anyone who cares to understand to say a kind word to lend a helping hand? Yes, I know Jesus cares Jesus understands. But I don't see Him can't touch Him Where is He? Till I find Him Please stay with me Please take my hand. It is so dark. YOU BE MY JESUS I am all alone.

Alone.¹ The Lord wants us to take on this ministry to others during such dark times--to be His ears, to be His hands, to be His mouth, to represent Him. Maybe you will meet someone today who, without words, is saying to you, "You be my Jesus." The Picture of Compassion Some years ago, when I described to my wife my frustration about a given individual--a very difficult person to deal with--she said to me, "You are forgetting something: God wants him to succeed. We must cooperate with God and work toward that end."

The Lord used her words to change my thinking. Jesus is a picture we can look at of what God our Father is like (see John 14:9). Through His example, we can learn how to be the "ministry of Jesus" to others. This way we can cooperate with what God our Father wants to do in our world. One example from Jesus' life is the encounter He had with the Samaritan woman (see John 4:5-42). She had been the object of town gossip, and to even be remotely associated with her was a public disgrace.

I am sure she spent her days trying to ignore her various "judges" around the village as well as her inner struggle with the sin in which she kept finding herself--five failed marriages and now she was living with a man. But Jesus, a Jew, talked graciously to her. (It was not appropriate for Jews to speak to Samaritans because they were considered the low caste.) Our Lord, however, did not talk down to her. He didn't make her feel small like everyone else probably did. Yes, He brought up the matter of her sin.

But in spite of this, she didn't defend herself or leave. Apparently she felt welcome in His presence. If she sensed in Him any disdain toward her, even if she had "discerned" Him a prophet by His word of knowledge, I don't believe she would have lingered for very long. Jesus did not preach a three-point sermon about the wrong turns she had made in life and what she needed to do differently. Instead, He welcomed her into the kingdom--transforming and restoring her by His love.

When He sensed her need, His response was an overwhelming tide of compassion. So much so that He wasn't even hungry anymore. Later we see Jesus at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-15). Here He learned there was a man who had been ill for a long time. Upon hearing this news, Jesus reached out and healed him instantly. Because of sin, this man had been sick for 38 years. Yet the Lord granted him a new beginning and a new life. Our Lord could very well have exposed his sin to those who stood around and made it into a great sermon illustration.

Only later, when Jesus was alone with him, did He tell him, "Stop sinning or something worse may happen" (John 5:14). Through these examples, we see Christ's respect for the dignity of others, His unconditional forgiveness and His loving honesty. Galatians 6:1 (NKJV) says, ". . . restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness." Paul says in Philippians 2:5 (NKJV), "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ

Jesus." So we are called to be partakers of the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These are the same characteristics God wants us to use as we minister to those who have failed. Again, we are challenged to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. He is our example. No matter where we go, we are surrounded by people who have failed and are still hurting. Most of them are desperately lonely. Let us extend Christ's compassion to them. What these people need is the Lord. Together, let us learn to say, "I struggle too. But we can get there together."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/kp-yohannan/on-the-other-side/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net