

# God's Special Love For Those Who Fall Short And Need Help

by Sandeep Poonen

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*This sermon delves into the profound meaning behind Jesus' words in Matthew 9:13, emphasizing the importance of understanding and embodying compassion over religious sacrifices. It explores the concept of loyalty to God equating to compassion towards others, highlighting the transformative power of love and the special care God has for those who are broken or marginalized. The sermon encourages a deep reflection on God's call to sinners, the humility required in acknowledging our shortcomings, and the intimate relationship God desires with those who seek Him wholeheartedly.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 9:13, Hosea 6:6, Luke 15:7, Psalms 25:14, 1 John 4:7

**Topics:** "Compassion", "Humility in Faith"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the profound meaning behind Jesus' words in Matthew 9:13, emphasizing the importance of understanding and embodying compassion over religious sacrifices. It explores the concept of loyalty to God equating to compassion towards others, highlighting the transformative power of love and the special care God has for those who are broken or marginalized. The sermon encourages a deep reflection on God's call to sinners, the humility required in acknowledging our shortcomings, and the intimate relationship God desires with those who seek Him wholeheartedly.

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## Transcript

I also wanted to share from the memory verse Matthew chapter 9 verse 13. It is not, verse 12 he says, it is not those who are healthy who need a physician but those who are sick, but go and learn what this means. I desire compassion and not sacrifice, for I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.

I just wanted to underline a few phrases in this verse. Go and learn. What did Jesus mean by saying go and learn? It could mean a few different things but to me what it meant to me at least was, Jesus was telling the Pharisees, Jesus was telling the experts in the law, go and learn what it means.

And he says in this verse in Matthew 9 13, I desire compassion and not sacrifice. Go and learn what that means. And one of the things that we can go and learn is, as we've been taught, to go to the Old Testament and read what the verse means in the Old Testament.

And so that verse is from Hosea chapter 6 verse 6. So I just wanted to read it there because it reads differently than it reads in Matthew 9 13. And so as Jesus was saying go and learn what this means, he was talking to a group of people who knew Hosea chapter 6 verse 6 very well. But the way he said it was different than the way it read in Hosea chapter 6 verse 6. And that's what Jesus went and learned from the verse.

So let me read how it reads in the verse and that's how I learned something from the verse too when I went at least going back to Hosea chapter 6 verse 6. Hosea chapter 6 verse 6 says, for I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. So I learned something very simple but powerful that God calls loyalty and God calls compassion the same thing. How do I explain that? How do I build that out, that thought? God wants loyalty.

God says I want loyalty not sacrifice. I want you to be loyal to me. That's one of the most important words that I think in my Christian life, that above all else Lord I want to be loyal to you.

How do I show that I love you? The word that I've associated with love is loyalty. We talk about love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. To me that word loyalty is a very important word.

I want to be loyal to you Lord Jesus. But here Jesus explains to me what loyalty means because I'll tell you in my human dictionary definition of loyalty the word compassion doesn't come up. When I think about being loyal to Jesus what I don't automatically translate that into is be compassionate to other people.

There's a difference and there's a big difference between being loyal to God in my mind and being compassionate to other people. And I find that that was one of Jesus's great revelations that he explained many times when the scribes asked him what is the greatest of all the commandments? Again I'm sure some of them would have thought love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. That's the greatest.

But the wisdom of Jesus was to combine that with love your neighbor as yourself. And the new commandment he gave combined the two as well where he said love one another as I have loved you. So do you want to be devoted to Jesus? Lord I want to have my first love.

You know that phrase simple and pure devotion to Jesus. That's where deception begins when we lose our simple and pure devotion to Jesus. Do we want to keep that? That's loyalty.

That's what Hosea said. Be loyal to God. I'm not interested in sacrifices.

I'm not interested in burnt offerings. I'm interested in loyalty. And the Pharisees took that loyalty and made it ruthless obedience to the law.

Rigid by keeping all the detailed commandments but missing out on love and mercy. And Jesus changed that completely and he said Pharisees you missed the mark because loyalty to God is compassion. And so that's the first reality that I discovered.

Jesus said go and learn what it means. You go and meditate on the book of Hosea and think about the book of Hosea where this prophet had to marry a woman who was not faithful to him and bore children and left the children alone while she left him and deserted him. And said you go and learn what loyalty means.

I see how Hosea had to keep welcoming his wife back and having compassion on her. And he was showing from his own heart how compassion was the mark of faithfulness and loyalty. And so to me that informs what loyalty means.

What devotion means. We exalt devotion as I mentioned 2nd Corinthians 11:3 Revelation 2:4 and 5 where it says you've lost your first love or simple and pure devotion. These are words that are very important to us.

But this verse tells me to go and learn what that word loyalty means and it means compassion. And compassion to whom is also interesting. It's compassion to sinners.

And the context of this in Matthew chapter 9 is he was spending time with people who clearly were not obeying the law, were not following God in any way. What does that mean for our lives? Does that mean that we have to spend all of our time, do we spend most of our time with sinners? Because that's what Jesus did. How do we show compassion? What does that compassion mean? A lot of, I know when I was in my 20s I also sometimes have subscribed to the view that oh you got to be hanging out with the worldly people going to wherever they're hanging out.

Because look Jesus did it. Look there's verses that support it. I've got to spend all my time with them.

But I love the world. That's why I was going. It wasn't because I had a burden for them.

I wanted to do what they were doing and they were doing all the fun things in my mind. That's not what this means. I read the Amplified translation of this verse and it helped me.

Let me read the Amplified version of Matthew 9:13. Go and learn what this scripture means. I desire compassion for those in distress.

They're not animal sacrifices. For I did not come to call to repentance the self-proclaimed righteous who see no need for change. But I came to call sinners who recognize their sin and actively seek forgiveness.

That helped me a lot because I can hang out with a lot of Christians, non-Christians at work, this and that, who are not recognizing anything wrong with them. Who are not actively seeking forgiveness. And it relieves a lot of burden.

But for me to have compassion, anybody in the world, no matter what their situation is, tax collectors, horrible sinners, and to have a deep burden and compassion for them over anybody who is self-righteous or proclaiming to be righteous. I thought about Jesus's remarkable love for sinners when he said that I did not come to call the righteous but sinners. That's a remarkable statement if you think about this.

Jesus grew up in the purest of all locations, which is heaven. I mean, sorry, he was there for all eternity. He didn't grow up there.

He was there for all eternity. And the purest of all places, heaven. The cleanest, the sweetest smelling place.

Then he came down to earth. And the places he seems to go visit are the smelliest. He obviously was not attracted to the smell.

He was, sorry, he felt a tug towards it, but he definitely did enjoy the smell. But he was willing to go to those places. And he said he came for the dirtiest places.

And that gives me a sense of what compassion truly means. It's where it's inconvenient, where it requires me to be bent beyond my comfort zone. That's what compassion is.

I was thinking about this in the story, as I think about love, you know, all of us who are parents, when we have children, we understand the word love in a brand new way. All even all definitions of love as even as it relates to our spouses is thrown out the window, when we see the love we have for our children. And whenever when all of us, I'm sure we can relate to me when I have when we have our firstborn child.

We look at that child and what is what is the word adjective to use to the love we have for our child? Infinite, limitless. There's no word. You say I love chocolate.

You say you love different things. Well, that's that's not the right word to talk about that we love our children. There's no word.

But how much how much do we love our children, even as they're growing up? Limitless. There's no limit to it. And I'm sure, again, we're talking about healthy families, we're talking about functional families, we're talking about families where there's that normalcy, not abusive families.

That's how normal families ought to be. They look at their children, and there's a limitless love. And then we have another child.

Well, so child number one had infinite love. What happens when child number two comes? There's also infinite love. Wait, hold on.

I thought all that infinite love went out of the first one. There's no love to give to anybody else. But somehow we find we can have infinite love for multiple children.

And that is how we can understand the heart of God, too. We can have infinite love. Of course, you understand what I mean.

It's not truly infinite like God is. But there's no word to describe. There's no limit to it.

Sacrifice and things like that come easy to us. But then some families have this. Some families have a child where a child has some defect.

A limb doesn't grow properly. A muscle doesn't work properly. Some defect where there's a challenge in the ear or the tongue or the eye, can't speak properly.

Or maybe there's a defect in the brain, can't understand properly, what we call typical. And you got this other child that doesn't have typical capabilities. What's the love that a normal parent has for such a child? It's not infinite.

It's more than that. It's more than that. There's a special word that doesn't exist in the dictionary.

It's different than the love you have for every child that comes across. For the child that has a ailment, that has some shortcomings, that has some disability, for no fault of their own were born with a crooked arm or personality or something that limits them. And a loving parent does extra, goes over and above for that.

And I thought about that as Jesus looked at sinners. So many of them, so many of them, because of circumstances outside their control from a young age. When I look at my life, when I look at what I have been given, what I've been taught to me from the day I was born, you know what that is.

But even beyond that, if you looked at how my parents raised me to study, my mom especially made me work hard, took away the cricket bats, hid all of those things, were willing to face shouting and ridicule and all kinds of things to get me to study, I would not be in this country if it wasn't for that. If it wasn't for my parents pushing me to work really hard, I didn't deserve that. I look at so many families whose parents didn't give that to their children.

They have different situations, some of them, many of them still in India or other parts of the world, much better than I was, much kinder than I was. God gave me so much. God didn't give all of them that much.

The question is, how do I look towards them? Is my heart a compassion? Because God didn't give them what he gave me, that's much I know. How does God look towards such people? People who've had abuse in their life from a young age, people whose children have died untimely deaths, children who grew up with poverty and abusive parents and lack of education and didn't have any opportunities for working, didn't have the ability to grow their mind the way they could have. They're struggling to make it for all of their lives.

How does God look at them with deficiencies in their life? God says, I came for them. And just as God loves all of us infinitely, God has a special love. He says that, I care for the orphans, I care for the widows, I care for those.

And I care for those, I have a special love. And that's kind of where this verse has meaning for me. The question is, who is that maimed, handicapped person? It is those around us, and it is us ourselves.

And God says, I came, I came to call on people like you. And to look at those people who have less fortunate than God says, just like a parent has special love for the handicapped child, Jesus has special love for those who didn't have much. And so rather than complaining about our lot in life, what if we saw Jesus as having a special love for us? For those who don't have much? Who we feel God has given us a bad deal.

God's given us a raw deal. This is what this verse means. Jesus says, I came not to call the righteous, but to call sinners.

And I like that word that Jesus used, I came to call, because it took on a new meaning for me as I look at my phone. And I thought about Jesus is having a phone in heaven. And who does Jesus call? Who's on his call log? You want to get Jesus's phone, and you go to his call history, and you say, who's on his call history? You know, it's on my call history, my wife.

But Jesus said, you know who I call? I call sinners, who know that they fall short, and are seeking a way out. If you're hearing this message online or in person, you're probably thinking you fall short, and you want a way out. Jesus says, I want to call such people.

Hold on. And you know, there's that verse in Luke chapter 15, where he says, he leaves the 99 righteous to go find the one who's a sinner. That too, it was because the Pharisees were grumbling.

As I was reading this passage in Luke 15, I was thinking, thank you God for the Pharisees, for grumbling, because they gave me this beautiful story of the prodigal son, and gave me these beautiful verses. If they hadn't been grumbling, I wouldn't have gotten these things. And I thought about Jesus talking to the righteous 99, and then he hears a sinner calling for help.

And he says, righteous folks, sorry, I got to go. I got to take this call. Who's the important person Jesus is going to take the call for? For the sinner, who knows that he falls short, and wants forgiveness, wants help.

That's the only thing Jesus wants for us. That is true humility. And what the Lord was also telling me was, that's the humility we as Christians need to have too.

We do fall short, but do we feel like we've suddenly arrived? That's what the sinners are to find when they come into the presence of God, in the church of God, when they find the body of Christ. They say that they too are sinners who are in need of repentance. And so they say, who comes to join the altar call? Well, everybody is at the altar call, because we all fall short.

And so the sinners feel welcome to kneel at the feet of Jesus, because that's where all of us are there too. Don't we want to be on Jesus' call logs? Don't we want to be one of the favorites that Jesus calls? Who are the favorites that Jesus calls? And I saw from this verse, Jesus came to call the sinners, who are saying, you want help? I'll call you. I stand at the door and knock.

I'm calling you to repent. Of course, He's not calling you to remain in your sin. And the woman caught in adultery was brought to Jesus, but there was a cry inside of her.

I don't want this life. Who knows what she went through? Lack of parents, abusive parents, whatever it is. Do we think we're any better? But there was a call, cry, an unspoken cry that we don't read in the scriptures.

And Jesus said, I'm here for you. I'll protect you from all the stones. I don't condemn you either.

Go and sin no more. And that's the heart God wants from all of us, from the youngest to the oldest. And as we become more obedient, we can lose that cry, that we still need Jesus, that we still... And it's good to see who are the people Jesus is calling maybe, and to ask ourselves, Lord, are you calling me? And, you know, we know that verse also, Jesus is intimate with the righteous.

He calls those who fear the Lord, Psalm 25, 14. God shares the secrets of the righteous. He's intimate with the righteous.

When He calls those who fear the Lord, what is He telling them? I'll show you what I feel He's telling them. 1 John chapter 4. 1 John is a letter written by a fisherman who became an apostle and walked with God for decades. And near the end of his life, he writes 1 John.

And this is the secrets, I feel one of the secrets God shares with those who follow Him. 1 John chapter 4, verse 7. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God. And everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. So now let's describe what love is. John, the apostle, inspired by the Holy Spirit, defines what love is.

The love of God, the true, pure love. But this is the love of God that was manifested in us, that God sent His only begotten Son, that we might live through Him. And this is love.

Not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. So here's the conclusion. Verse 11.

Beloved, if God so loved us, let us love Him back. That's not what it says. That's not what it says.

Read verse 11 of 1 John chapter 4. Beloved, if God so loved us, and you know that He loved you so much, love Him back? No, John picked up on the mystery that Jesus also picked up. Loyalty to God is love one another. And see verse 12.

What an incredible verse 1 John 4, 12 is. No one has seen God at any time. We have no idea what God looks like.

We have no idea. We think we know. We have not the faintest idea.

But if we love one another, God abides in us. And here's a beautiful word. Perfection happens.

Love God. The love of God is perfected in us. Not just we become great, we become excellent.

The love of God is perfected in us as we seek to love one another, as we seek to grow in compassion. Dear brothers and sisters, let us find the freedom that God wants to give us by seeing that loyalty to God is compassion to one another. Let us be on God's call log history.

He says, you call on me and I'll answer you. Seek me and you'll find me. And you seek me with all your heart.

And God's calling sinners all the time. His phone log is full of people who are just willing to say something simple. Lord Jesus, I fall short.

I want to find a way out. And He's calling you. And He has a special love for such sinners.

That's the only thing that separates us. And He sets aside even the righteous, Luke 15, 7. He even sets aside everybody sitting in this room has been obedient this week or listening online. He sets all of them aside.

And He says the people in this room who are saying, Lord Jesus, I fell short. I'm estranged from you. I don't match up.

I want the way out. He rushes in. He stops whatever He does and whatever He's doing to call us.

This is the gospel that we must become more and more familiar with. This is the Jesus that we must become more and more familiar with. And God says, like I was in this world, you go and be the same.

May God help us.

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