

Moved by Jesus

by Stewart Ruch

Stewart Ruch's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of Jesus' compassion and the church's new vision to equip everyone for transformation through prayer and community engagement.

Duration: 22:09

Scripture: Psalm 37:4, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 9:36, Acts 1:14, Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:12, James 5:16

Topics: "Spiritual Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a personal connection with God. He highlights the need for individuals to be moved by Jesus' movement for them, rather than just externally pushed or compelled. The speaker shares about a conference with Iranian leaders where preaching Jesus is illegal, which prompts reflection on how we think about our time, life, and resources. The sermon also introduces a five-part series on equipping everyone for transformation, with a focus on a new life in Christ. The passage in Matthew 9 is referenced, highlighting Jesus' compassion and his movement towards those who are far from him.

Transcript

Eighteen years ago, Catherine's and my life, it was radically changed. With the birth of our first child, this new life came into what had been two lives in our marriage and interrupted just about everything. Now, not everything, because the fact of the matter is, after our oldest daughter Madeline was born, I was still Stuart, Catherine was still Catherine, we still lived in the same house, we still drove the same cars, there were a lot of elements where we were still the same people.

Not everything changed. That would be an exaggeration to say that the birth of a new child changed everything. But it changed so many things.

It changed our interaction with sleep. It changed our interaction with bodily waste. It changed how we interacted with our money.

All of a sudden we thought about our finances and our budget very differently now that a new life had come into our lives. And that change wouldn't only happen then, but two years later when her brother was born, Ellison, our first son, things changed again. And actually we would go through that pattern four more times after Ellison with six different children, with six different new lives coming into our life and every time that's happened there's been this disorientation, it's a bit unnerving, it's very exciting, and we're saying,

how do we think about our time? How do we think about our life? How do we think about our money? How do we think about where we're going? How do we think about our direction? All those questions come up anew every time a new life has entered into our life.

Now you don't have to be a parent. You don't have to be married to understand this dynamic. Because a new boss brings a new life into your life.

A new location. A new job. A new roommate.

A new friend. New lives can come into our lives in a lot of different ways and when they do, they don't change everything, but they bring significant change. I share this analogy with you this morning because I don't know a better way to describe what I think is happening at Church of the Resurrection right now.

It is our discernment as a leadership over the last 18 months that God is bringing a new vision. The best way to describe it is it's a new life. Vision if it's from the Lord.

Vision if you're hearing from Jesus and it's aligned with the Scriptures which bring us life. Vision is a new life. It's like having a new child in the family.

And it's our discernment as leaders. It's our sense of what God has been doing and is doing now is bringing this new vision into the life of Church of the Resurrection. And in the next five weeks, I want to unpack biblically.

I want to look at scripturally what it is that God is doing. We have a new vision phrase. Now for years, we celebrated the gift of a vision that we called Building a Sanctuary of Transformation.

That's been like a new life. If you were here 11 years ago when I first started teaching into this, it was like having a new life in the family. Exciting and unnerving.

Well, Building a Sanctuary of Transformation now has a sibling with the same last name, by the way. Because our new phrase is Equipping Everyone for Transformation. That's kind of the Res family name.

Transformation. It's very purposeful that our sense is that the call to live for transformation, the call to focus on the transforming presence and power of Jesus Christ, that is absolutely still foundational for us as a church. It is who we are.

Which is also to say that we're a worshipping church where we come into the transforming presence of Jesus Christ. We believe deeply and fundamentally that there is nothing in the human soul that by the cross of Jesus Christ and His resurrection, that nothing cannot be touched by Jesus. That some kind of gradual life change, sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly, but always, always in the Lord, happening as a part of our lives in Christ.

And I recognize that not every believer that tried to take their faith seriously necessarily would embrace that. I recognize that. But that's foundational for us.

We believe that's deeply biblical. That the life of change in Jesus, changing how we think, sometimes changing and healing our bodies, changing our hearts, freeing us from sin, is the hope of transformation. Foundational.

Same last name. But two new names. First and middle name, if we may.

We believe that this time we're calling this new life among us equipping everyone. Let me be really clear. That doesn't mean that building a sanctuary has gone away in the same way that we didn't say, Oh, Madeline, sorry.

Now there's Ellison. Get out of here. Now all we do is care about Ellison.

No, our family didn't stay three. It just expanded to four. And that's what's happening.

We're still embracing building a sanctuary of transformation. We still love that calling. But a new life's come in where now we're saying not only building, but actually let's emphasize in new ways the call to equip.

Both of them rich biblical words. Oh, yes, the sanctuary. But what about something that's even more radically inclusive and broad? Everyone for transformation.

Because Jesus came as a everyone Savior. He was constantly upsetting everyone because he was so for everyone. The next four weeks we'll look at this equipping everyone for transformation.

I'll seek to explain biblically what it means that we want to equip everyone for transformation. What it means biblically and what it means practically for us. And we'll have different communication tools also make that clearer and clearer.

Okay, can I switch analogies now? I did babies. Now I want to do rockets. Can you stay with me on that? Okay, great.

Flip over to the front of your bulletin because there you'll see this beautiful drawing of the face of Christ. It's actually a rendering done by a few of our artists. One key artist especially involved in that.

That face of Christ, by the way, is the face that will be etched in a wooden arch that will be over great doors as you walk into the sanctuary. And that wooden arch will be a beautifully carved rendering of a drawing of the resurrected Christ. That's the face you see right there.

As we go into a new vision season, what we want in front of you on your bulletin, what we want in front of you in terms of image is Jesus himself. We are only going to this new place. It's not us who created this new idea.

We haven't sat around and made up this new idea. Jesus is leading us here. You don't go somewhere new without the leading of Jesus.

Indeed, we're moved by Jesus. A rocket has, very simply put, at least two key components, right? One is the booster rocket that gets the sustaining rocket, the larger part of the rocket, and the booster rocket moves it into the stratosphere. The sustaining, longer-burning rocket is what takes it ultimately to its mission.

Moved by Jesus, which will be a focus just for the next couple of years, as opposed to equipping everyone for transformation, which we believe is a calling that will last several years, moved by Jesus is a kind of booster rocket. It's propelling us up. It's the call to start with Jesus.

But because Jesus is moved by the crowds and Jesus is moved by our condition, he then moves us. He moves us emotionally. He moves us spiritually.

He moves us strategically. He sometimes moves us geographically. He moves us missionally.

He is the God who moves for the sake of those who are far from him. He's moving us. We start there.

That's our booster rocket. That's what we'll hear about for the next couple of years. But the sustaining rocket, the slow burn, is a pretty significant new life for us, equipping everyone for transformation.

So let's do some Bible work today on this booster rocket. Let's start this five-part series, this call into the next two years and really focusing on this new life with this picture of Jesus in Matthew chapter 9 and your bulletin, your Bible. Please turn with me to Matthew chapter 9. The word moved figures prominently in what I'm teaching on.

That word specifically is not found in your text, but you will find a word that can be properly translated toward moved with the word compassion in verse 36. He had compassion. This is a unique word.

It's a unique word in the original language. It's a word that's hard to fully capture, but it actually has to do with being deeply moved in your gut. Literally referred to kind of the physical innards.

That when Jesus has compassion, Jesus is having a physical, an emotional, a spiritual response. He's moved in his gut. He has compassion.

I'll just break this very simply into two parts. We see Jesus is moved by us. He's moved by our condition.

He's moved by humanity. And then, he moves us. After he's moved by us, he then moves us out.

He moves us into the beauty of his work, which becomes our work. It's a force that Jesus has moved by us, verse 36. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed.

They were helpless like sheep without a shepherd. When Jesus saw crowds, he saw crowds unlike any human being ever had prior to him or any human being ever has since him. When I go to Notre Dame game in a few weeks, I will see tens of thousands of people in a crowd.

And I will know nothing about them. And I won't honestly, maybe now that I've taught on this, I'll be a little different, but I really won't care much for them. They'll be in my way to get to my seat, and they'll be in my way when I try to get to my car afterwards.

I don't know them. They're nameless to me. They're a crowd.

We all are that way. It's impossible for any human being not to be that way except for Jesus. See, he looks out on a crowd.

He's got every name. He's got every story. He knows the exact detail of their helplessness.

And He has the capacity to be moved, not overwhelmed, but moved by every human being. He's moved by us. Our helplessness, our lack of knowing where we're going and feeling so often besieged by our own feelings, by our own compulsions, by our own addictions, by our own thought patterns, whatever it might be, actually moves Jesus.

He's utterly and completely and in detail aware of it. He knows it. And a really important part of being a Christian, I speak to some of you who are committed Christians, and I speak to some of you who are not yet committed Christians, but a really important part of being a Christian is that you've personally known

that to be true about Jesus and you.

This matters. It matters that you personally understand that Jesus is moved by you. That you somehow have some personal connection.

You can actually connect personally in a way that's sensitized in your heart and mind that Jesus is moved by your specific life condition. That you are named by Him. But more than that, that He knows the details.

He knows the desires of your heart. He knows what is strong in you and what is weak in you. He knows what is terrified in you and what is confident in you.

He's got you. He understands you. I had a season when I was far from Christ, and so for me to know that about Christ was almost impossible.

I believed in God, but I believed He was remote. So in retrospect, I understand now that for Christ to reach my heart, He actually had to reach my heart in a way that was just very human. Just from another human being.

It happened actually with a Christian psychologist that I saw. I was a senior in college. I actually went to Wheaton College, a college in this area.

My parents had divorced my sophomore year. And by my senior year, the effects of that divorce were having such a kind of profound influence on me that I lived in constant anxiety and had regular panic attacks. I could not control the motion of my hands.

I couldn't focus to study. I didn't think I could finish the fall term. I'd go on three, four-hour walks.

I was just not in my right mind. And so someone recommended this Christian psychologist who I went and saw. He was one of the first human beings outside of my family who, despite their divorce, loved me very much.

But one of the first human beings who actually gave this experience to me, about the third or fourth appointment, he said, Stuart, it's important that you understand that psychologically speaking, the divorce of your parents is psychologically and emotionally exactly as if you, through death, lost the life of someone very close to you. It's like you've gone through a profound, life-changing death. And for the first time, I realized that he understood.

He articulated what I couldn't even articulate. He somehow understood exactly what I was going through, why I was panicked, and why I felt so incredibly alone, and why I was in constant grief, and why I'd break into tears in the most inopportune moments, and all this weird stuff that was going on. He named it.

It's like he came into my life. And I remember his face when he said it, because he leaned over, and it was etched. It was etched with compassion.

He was professional, and yet he was moved. He was moved by my condition. It meant so much to me.

It brought me a healing in that moment. Human to human, I needed that. And then as I would give my life to Christ, a couple of years after that, and fully come into a life with Jesus, it was then that what I experienced there, which was beautiful, was fully made real with Jesus.

And again and again, I'd have that same kind of experience in prayer, or reading the Bible, or with another Christian, where they would lean into my life, and they would somehow know how I was harassed. They would understand my helplessness. It was Jesus being moved by me.

The God of the universe. He who hung on the cross, coming right into my life, moved by my condition. Simply put, it was just personally understanding how cherished I was by Jesus.

That's where it starts. I'm going to talk about being equipped. I'm going to talk about being out on mission.

I'm going to talk about being workers for the Lord. But none of that is going to connect with you. None of that will make sense to you if you've not been moved by Jesus' movement for you.

It has to start there. If not, it'll feel like I'm pushing you. It'll feel like you're not being compelled or propelled by the ministry of the Holy Spirit internally, like something welling up within you.

But it'll feel all external. So I've got to start here with this five-part series and new vision. Do you have a personal connection with the Lord who is moved by you? And if not, that's where you have to start.

We had some Iranian leaders here for a conference last week that we hosted called Revive. It was very powerful. Many of you may know that in Iran it is illegal to preach Jesus.

It's illegal to have a church. The ramifications, if you do, are very dire. And there was a woman here, Erezu, who became a Christian only three years ago.

She was immediately being equipped by the leaders around her and began to teach about Jesus and preach about Jesus. She was arrested in a small group meeting by the Republican Guard, and she was in prison for a year. Her story was amazing.

Bless all of us. But then, by the way, I gave her the option of being deported rather than executed. It was a miracle.

And she and then her husband, who was also in prison, chose to be deported to Chicago because they felt called to plant churches here among 60,000 Iranian refugees. Maybe one of the first times in the history of the Iranian government when they've underwritten financially the planting of churches in Chicago. But we'll take it.

Amen. She told this story about the compassion of Jesus that in her process of conversion she had not yet fully committed herself to Christ. You can imagine the process necessary for an Iranian Muslim.

She became very, very ill, and she'd heard about Jesus now. She'd come to church a few times, an underground church. She became extremely ill one evening.

She was all by herself. She had no way to reach out to any family. There was no family.

She didn't have Christian friends yet. And in her deep, deep sickness, her horrible illness, she just said, I'm crying out to you, Jesus of Nazareth. I'm crying out to you.

And she reported that in that evening Jesus came to her. Her report was not like a dream or not like a vision. She said, He came to me.

Not only did He come to me, He then spent the entire evening with me, taking care of me in my illness. He wiped my brow as the fever peaked. He brought me water so that I could drink it.

He literally cared for me, she said. I can't imagine a more profound picture of Jesus' compassion. I have heard of Jesus coming physically to some of you as well.

Some of you have testimonies, perhaps not quite as developed as that, but not dissimilar. Because Jesus is moved by us. It all starts there.

So when Jesus is teaching, He says, He's come with His compassion. And then we're told that He wants to raise up workers that are moved out. That are moved out from this center.

His heart of love for the crowds. That they too are being called to have compassion. And the way that that starts, and what's really important for us to understand, is that His first words are, pray earnestly.

He doesn't say, so go out and get equipped. He doesn't say, so go out and develop skill sets. Those are very, very important.

And we need to do more of that at Rez. But where He says, He says, pray earnestly. Why would the Lord give this massive vision? Multitudes, crowds, treated unjustly, desperate need of help and healing.

And then He says after that, pray earnestly. It can almost sound half-hearted. So pray.

What else are you going to do? Just pray. And if prayer was simply a request that we make to God, which it is in part, but it's not entirely. If it was just a request we make to God, Oh God, do something.

Then honestly, I'm not sure that would be enough in light of what Jesus said. But prayer is not just a request we make to God. In prayer, the Kingdom of God becomes alive.

In prayer, you go from listening to recorded music to being in a full-blown glorious concert. In prayer, you're not listening to the Cubs beat the cards on the radio as I did, but perhaps as some of you did. You're a Wrigley Field.

In prayer, you're coming into the full life of the Kingdom of God. That's what awaits you in prayer. The reason He says pray earnestly is that that's where the heart of the worker is converted.

That's where the heart of the worker is touched by the compassion of Jesus. That's why prayer always starts everything we do at Resurrection. We're not praying 24 hours a day because we want the challenge of can we get enough res folks to fill up the slots on the computer screen.

That's not why we're doing it. We're doing it because that's where you enter into the life of the Kingdom of God. And here, this is prayer.

Why is worship so amazing? Because it's the Kingdom alive. Don't you hunger for the Kingdom alive? See, when you come into the Kingdom alive through prayer, you come into the Kingdom alive through worship, that's the first equipping. That's the first readying.

That's where the worker's heart is moved. And that's where we start. If personally, you don't have even a simple story of how moved Jesus is by your condition, get prayer today.

Spend time in the prayer chapel. Pray. Find a place in your home or the arboretum or the marsh and pray.

Enter into the Kingdom of God alive. Where you'll see how moved Jesus is by you. And that will move you.
In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28801.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stewart-ruch/moved-by-jesus/>

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