

God's Compassion and Ours

by Zac Poonen

God desires compassion, not sacrifice, and we should focus on showing mercy and kindness rather than following rules and regulations.

Duration: 57:44

Scripture: Micah 6:6, Matthew 12:1, Matthew 12:7, Mark 5:18-19

Topics: "Compassion"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the theme of forgiveness, using the story of the prodigal son from Matthew chapter 18. The father in the story exemplifies compassion and forgiveness, choosing to overlook his son's wrongdoings and celebrating his return. The preacher emphasizes that God's forgiveness is limitless and that he values his children more than any material possessions. The sermon also highlights the importance of caring for others, particularly those in need, as Jesus demonstrated through his concern for the hungry. Additionally, the preacher discusses the significance of persistence in prayer, emphasizing that we should continue to pray for our desires rather than giving up prematurely.

Transcript

In the Old Testament, once the Lord spoke through his prophet Micah in chapter 6. You know, throughout history, in the history of Israel, also the history of the Church, man has had a tremendous tendency towards being legalistic in his relationship with God. And one mark of this legalism is that we make very strict rules, usually for other people, not for ourselves. The Pharisees were very lenient on themselves, but very hard on others.

And that's why they could not be saved. Now, if those Pharisees had read the Bible carefully, they would have seen what it says in Micah chapter 6. What does God require from man? Verse 6. Micah chapter 6, verse 6. With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God? Shall I bring him an arm full of offerings and yearling calves? You think God would be impressed with thousands of rams and buckets and ten thousand rivers of oil? See, these are exaggerations, obviously. God never asked for thousands of rams or rivers of oil.

But he did ask for these things, rams and oil in their sacrifices. And the prophets and Jesus very often tended to exaggerate. You know, like Jesus spoke about a log in the eye and swallowing a camel and things like that.

To point out how ridiculous the religion of many people actually was. So he said, do you think the Lord will be delighted even if you bring thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of oil? Or shall I sacrifice my first born child, my precious baby, to cancel out my sins? No, he has already told you how to live, what God is looking for. It's quite simple.

First of all, be fair and just to your neighbor and be compassionate and walk humbly with your God. Our attitude to others must be one of compassion. And that is what the Pharisees did not have.

So, when Jesus spoke to them, he said in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 12. How is it that the Pharisees didn't read this passage of scripture? But that is what God wants. He wants you to be compassionate towards your neighbor.

They had that book in their Bible. But yet, when the disciples were hungry on the Sabbath day, Matthew 12, verse 1. And they began to pick heads of grain and eat. The Pharisees immediately said, see, you are not supposed to pick any of that grain on the Sabbath day.

Even if you are hungry, it's better to starve. Is that what God meant? And Jesus said to them, do you know that David in the Old Testament, once when he was very hungry. You read that in 1 Samuel.

It's an amazing story. And that he came to the priest and said, hey, I and my friends are all hungry. We are so hungry, we are about to die.

Is there any food available? Any bread? And the priest said, yeah, there is some bread, but it's not the regular bread. It's the bread which we keep in the tabernacle. You know, the special bread, the 12 loaves of bread they had to keep there to represent the 12 tribes of Israel.

And nobody was supposed to eat it, except the Levites. The priests. That was the law.

God gave that law in the book of Leviticus. And David said, hey, listen, we are dying. Give us that bread, we will eat it.

And he ate the bread which the Old Testament law said only the Levites should eat. And he didn't die. Isn't that amazing? David was a man after God's own heart.

As a young man, he was in touch with God. He wrote some of the Psalms when he was young. And he knew that God's heart is a heart of compassion.

Not one of rules and regulations. Now, a lot of people, even today, if they were living there, they would have told David, hey, it's better to die, man. Don't disobey God's law and eat that bread.

God has said that no one is supposed to eat it. And you would have thought that you were being very strict for the standards of God's word. Actually, by such a statement, if you were there, all you would have been revealing would have been your total ignorance of God's heart.

And the Pharisees, when they made rules like this, yeah, they could find a verse for it. I'm sure you could find a verse if you were there when you saw David eating of that bread which was reserved for the Levites. Saying, hey, God's word is very important, man.

You can't play the fool with it. Don't touch it. Fast.

Starve. And you would have thought you would have been pleasing God. Naturally, you would have been displeasing.

So, if we don't understand that God's laws come from a heart of compassion, you'll never be able to understand God's word. That's why you have among Christians so many people who are very strict with other people on little, little, little things. On what type of shoes they wear or what type of dress they wear.

Even what color of shirt they wear. All types of things. Because they've got an idea in their heart that God is very strict about these things.

And thereby, they're only revealing the condition of their own heart. Their total ignorance of God's nature. And many people are very strict with their own children about some very unnecessary things.

And I think a lot of people are driven away from God by these type of people and their attitudes. I think a lot of people are driven away from many churches. Because the attitude of some of these legalists who happen to talk to them.

I think that's happening in our churches too. Now, I think it's true that most of us, in our pursuit of holiness, we do seem to go through the old covenant into the new covenant. I don't know if there's anyone who's come straight into the new covenant bypassing the law altogether.

Even the apostle Paul speaks of having gone through the law into the life from the spirit. The Bible says the law is a schoolmaster who leads us to Christ to set us free. So, can we read that? Jesus quoted that example to the Pharisees.

He said, don't you know what David did when he was hungry? How he entered the house of God and ate, verse 4, the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat. Jesus said that. According to God's law, it was not lawful for him to eat it.

Nor for those who were with him, only the priests were supposed to eat it. And Jesus said, it was okay. That's amazing.

Do you think there are certain things that you are criticizing somebody else for? What Jesus would say to you, hey, forget it man, it's okay. Your standard is higher than mine. I know the Lord has spoken that to me, concerning some of the standards I made for myself and for others in the olden days.

When I was a legalist, without knowing it, I thought I was pursuing righteousness. But I was pursuing the law. And I had a word.

It's a scripture, you know. The scripture it says here. It says this, this, this, this, this.

And Jesus turned around to these disciples and said, not to these disciples, to these Pharisees and said, in verse 7, if you had known what this means, I desire compassion, not sacrifice. You would not have condemned these innocent people. These people who you think are violating an Old Testament law, which says don't do any work on the Sabbath day.

It's true, according to the Old Testament you were not supposed to go out in the fields and gather your grain. It's true, it was a law. You were not supposed to work, it is work.

But here were disciples who were hungry. And what does God say when a person is hungry? Can he go out and get some grain to eat? Or should he sit at home and die because it's a Sabbath day? If he's sick, should he take his child to a hospital on a Sabbath day? Is a doctor supposed to treat the people on a Sabbath day? Or just let them die because he's not supposed to do any work? Surgery is work. You know, you can go to ridiculous extremes when you follow these rules.

The thing is, most of these niggers, they will never apply these laws to themselves. When they are in a tight spot, they'll violate these laws. But they apply it very strictly to other people.

And that's the reason why they don't grow spiritually. Jesus said, you've got to learn something. He said, go and learn what this means.

I desire compassion and not sacrifice. We can make a lot of sacrifices for the Lord and think that God is very, very happy with us. I'm sure many of you have made many sacrifices for Jesus' sake.

Maybe in your place of work, you lost a promotion because you stood up for the Lord. Maybe you suffered rejection from your relatives because you stood up for the Lord. Or you suffered some other thing because you stood for Jesus.

And secretly you pat yourself on the back and say, well, I've suffered for the Lord with the air of a martyr. And it's to you the Lord says, I don't want all your sacrifices. You don't have any compassion on others.

You're so hard on others. You're so strict. Take some little rule in some verse here and try to hit somebody on the head with it and say, hey, you're violating that law.

The son of man, he said, is the Lord of the Sabbath. And he said in another place, which came first, man or the Sabbath? Do you know which came first? Sabbath was on the seventh day. Man was created on the sixth day.

So, the question is, was man created for the Sabbath or the Sabbath created for man? Which way was it? Very clear. First man and the Sabbath was created for man. Not the other way around.

God didn't make a law saying Sabbath. Okay, now let's get somebody to obey it. No.

He said, here's man. I've got to give him a good law to rest. The Sabbath day shouldn't be working all the time.

All of God's laws were like that, including that first one of the Sabbath. It's just to give us rest. And the whole world recognizes that one day in seven you've got to rest.

You know there's no place in the world where they rest one day in eight or one day in six. Throughout the world the universal rule is one day in seven. The lazy people take two days in seven.

Still lazier people take three days in seven. That's a different thing. But one day in seven everybody.

All over the world. So, that's a law made by God for man to rest. Not to work.

Take some rest because he can't continuously keep on working. So, on that principle I see that every single law God made, and that's the first one, the Sabbath, every single law that God made was for man's good. You can take that law and interpret it in a wrong way and you get a completely wrong interpretation.

For example, there was a law which said you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind. And the Pharisees told people, young people, listen, when you go out and earn some money, you got to give it to God. If your parents are needy, forget it.

Just tell your parents what I was supposed to give you. I know you're a needy dad and you're not having enough to get by and pay your rent and look after your food needs. But, sorry, I am a person who lives by sacrifice.

I live by the principle of Korban. Korban means sacrifice. And so, I have given it to God.

I believe God will take care of you. I've given it to God and Jesus said, you fellas, you good for nothing fellas, you read that Mark 7, that which the Bible says, honor your father and mother, instead of doing that you just quote some verse and don't help your needy parents, they quoted a verse for it. Just like the Pharisees.

And you need to ask yourself whether you're quoting verses to judge other people. And the Lord will say to you, go and learn what this verse means. I desire compassion and not sacrifice.

In fact, I think of two parables that Jesus spoke that illustrated this. You know, when Jesus spoke on two parables on prayer, there are many, many subjects on which Jesus spoke two parables. So, he'd repeat the same emphasis.

Two parables on prayer, Luke 11 and Luke 18, both parables emphasize persistence. Persistence. The widow who went to the judge and the man who went to his neighbor for food, teaching us that the most important thing in prayer is persistence.

If you don't persist, you won't get it. We can pray for lots of things, and I believe many of you have prayed for lots of things which you haven't got, and you will never get, because you stopped after some time. God wants you to have it, but you just gave up after some time, and say, oh well, God won't give it.

Yeah, that's right. He won't give it because you didn't pray further. Now, if you believe that God is a good, loving father, why won't he give it? You say, well, I don't know whether it's good for me.

Well, God's given us some common sense. Jesus spoke about a father giving bread to his child. Very simple illustrations he used.

Anyway, two parables that Jesus spoke, I want to point out to you. One is in Luke chapter 15. You know the story of the prodigal son.

And, I'm not going to the whole story, I just want to say that when this prodigal son came back, after having ruined his father's name, wasted his father's property, made a mess of his life, I don't think there's a single person sitting here who did as much bad as that prodigal son. I mean, Jesus took an extreme example. He sometimes used to take these extreme examples so that everybody would be covered, including all of us here.

Here's an extreme example. First of all, this father was a very wealthy man. He was a multi-millionaire, probably a billionaire.

Because he had many servants. He had fields in which the son worked. The prodigal son, when he was sitting there, he says, how many hired servants of my father's? Can you imagine how rich a person has to

be to have so many hired servants? How many hired servants do you have? I mean, permanently working for you.

And then you know what a rich man this man was. And this fantastically rich man had two sons. And this one son came to him and said, give me my share of the property, which means 50%.

Can you imagine how much that 50% was? It wasn't five or ten thousand rupees. It was millions. That's what he got when he left.

Millions. His entire 50% share of his father's wealth. And so he must have been away quite a long time.

You don't spend millions in six months or one year. He was away a long time. And finally he wasted all of it.

He came down to zero. Can you imagine a man getting millions from his father and wasting all of it? Having nothing to show for all the millions he got from his dad. Wasted it, gave it away to friends.

Wasted it on pleasure and sin. And we don't know what. Everything wasted and he comes down to zero.

Then he comes back. I mean, it's a picture of a person who's got so much from God and never gave anything in return. So much, so much.

I think that's worse than any of us sitting here. I believe that. And it says here that when he came back, he came back to his father because he knew that I know my dad.

I've lived with him for 20 years. And I know that he's a man of tremendous compassion. And even though I've messed up my life and wasted all that he gave me, I know that he at least let me stay in the servant's quarters.

He won't kick me out of there. At least the servant's quarters. He didn't realize how good his father was.

And he came back and it says, and when he was a long way off, verse 20, his father saw him and, you see that word? Felt compassion. That's the word. It's a great word that Jesus used.

Compassion. If you look into the heart of God and try to see what he has towards you, who may have messed up so many things in your life, I'll tell you what is there. Compassion.

I know the devil doesn't want you to believe it. I know the devil wants you to say, no, no, no, it can't be for me. I'm sure that's what the devil told the prodigal son way back there.

Oh, no, your dad won't accept you. But he knew. He knew his dad was not like that.

I want to ask all of you sitting here today, dear brothers and sisters, do you really believe? Do you really, deep down, I don't mean whether you know it in your head. I'm not asking you that. A lot of things we know in our head are useless in daily life.

Do you believe deep down in your heart that if you could look into God's heart right now and see his attitude towards you personally, it would be full of compassion. Do you believe that? A weak Amen. What about the rest of you? Do you believe that? Yes.

It's true. And if you haven't believed it till now, I want you to believe it from today. This is the heart of God that Jesus strove to reveal to his disciples.

They didn't understand it then and for 2000 years Christians haven't understood it. And I'll tell you why I believe many of you haven't understood it. Because you're so hard on other people.

You're so hard on your wife and husband if they make the slightest mistake. You're so hard on your children when they slip up. You think you're being holy.

No, you're not being holy. You're being a Pharisee. And that's why I believe that we haven't really seen the heart of God.

Jesus tried and tried with every possible example and illustration to show how compassionate God was. Now the second parable. Matthew chapter 18.

The theme in the story of the prodigal son is forgiveness. The father was so compassionate he forgave all the wrong. He wouldn't even let his son continue.

His son said, father I've sinned. Stop. It's enough.

I don't want you to make a big list of all your sins. I don't want you to tell me how you spent my money. I don't want you to tell me all that you did is forgiven.

And you know the rest of that story. You tell me how he made a big feast and said, my son is lost. He's come back and I'm so happy.

I don't care what he did with my money. I can always earn some more but I can't get another son like him. Have you wasted God's money, God's time, God's gifts? You know what he says? I can still give you all that but I can't get another son or daughter like you.

I like to hear that. I like to hear God saying to me, I can't get another son like you. And I'll tell you this, it's not because I'm serving him.

He says the same to you. It's got nothing to do with ability, gifts. It's got to do with the heart of God.

We can't understand that because we are such hard creatures ourselves. Okay, Matthew 18. In the other story that Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven, verse 23.

He's telling us what heaven is like. It's good for us to know what heaven is like. In heaven there is a king.

Verse 23 of Matthew 18. That king is God. There is only one king in heaven, that's God.

And God keeps accounts. That's what we read in this story. God keeps accounts for every single one of us.

Every single thing you've done wrong that's violated his law from the day you were born. He's kept an account of it. You may have forgotten, but he hasn't.

It's stored up in your memory. It's like a videotape. Your memory has just got to be rewinded and played back and it's all there.

There's a permanent record of every single wrong thing you thought, did and said and whenever you had a wrong motive and every single thing. He keeps accounts. And a day will come when he wants to settle he'll have to settle those accounts.

Because God is a righteous God. And that's what scares us. When God begins to settle our accounts what will we do? And when he began to settle the accounts there was one man who owed him 10,000 talents.

Boy. See here in my margin it says one talent was the wages for 15 years for a laborer. So 10,000 talents is the wages for 150,000 years.

It's a fantastic amount. It's billions and billions and billions I mean even a Bill Gates won't be able to pay it. It's so huge.

Wages for 150,000 years. You know how Jesus loved to do these huge figures. He said this guy owed his king so many talents and it's a picture of how much we owe God.

Some of us think we have sinned just a little bit. This is to wake us up. If anybody thinks he's just sinned a little bit against God.

150,000 years worth of labor that's how much we owe God. And since he didn't have anything to repay the Lord says sell him and his wife and children and he's got to repay and the slave fell to the ground and said have patience with me. Now see the audacity of this man.

The liar that he is. I will repay you everything. Really? I will repay you 150,000 years worth of wages.

He's an absolute liar. And those are the type of people God hates. People who pretend that they can pay back for their sin.

You can't. Even if you do good the rest of your life you can't pay back for your sin. That's the first thing we need to learn.

And it says the Lord of that, this is God again had compassion. See that word again that Jesus used in the second parable where he speaks about God. He had compassion on this guy who has sinned so much and released him.

And forgave the entire debt. This is how God forgives. It's okay.

Forget it. It's all forgiven. It's all blotted out.

You can live as a free man. You owe me nothing. Have you heard God say that to you? Have you heard God say that to you? Because the blood of Jesus Christ has paid it all.

There's that song we sing. Jesus paid it all. All to him I owe.

Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow. Jesus paid it all.

He certainly did. Now this man goes out and catches another person. And he finds this chap owes him a hundred denary.

Now a denary was one day's wages. So a hundred denary would be say three or four months salary. Three or four months salary.

I mean it's a pretty large amount but not very large. How much is four months salary? It's not such a huge amount compared to a hundred and fifty thousand years salary. It wasn't a small amount I agree.

Somebody hurt you and you really got hurt. I know it was not a small thing. He didn't just call you a fool.

He did something worse than that. I mean four months wages is certainly a large amount of money. He hurt you really badly.

Or she hurt you really badly. But he caught him by the throat. Began to choke him saying pay back what you owe.

And that person fell to the ground and said the same words that this other man said to God. Have patience with me and I will repay you. And this chap I'm sure was able to repay.

Four months salary you can always repay. But he said no. You got to pay back immediately.

And threw him in prison. There were other people who watched this that went back to God and said see what he did? You forgave him so much and he couldn't forgive so little. Sin.

He called him back and called him you wicked slave. What was his wickedness? I thought everything was forgiven. Yeah everything was forgiven.

But he didn't have compassion on one man. That was his new sin. And immediately he became a wicked man.

When you don't have compassion on someone who's harmed you you I don't care what you call yourself you can call yourself believer spirit filled believer. God calls you a wicked woman. A wicked man.

That's God's opinion of you. Whatever your own opinion may be of yourself. You wicked man.

I forgive you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have compassion? I had compassion on you. Here's that word again.

Don't you think you should have had compassion on that other person who treated you so badly or did something wrong. One billionth of what you did against me. And it says here that God was angry.

Rarely in the Bible, in the New Testament you read that Jesus was angry. He was angry with those who were unmerciful to others. You never read him being angry with adulteresses and murderers and thieves.

The one type of people he was angry with was those who exploited others by making money in the name of religion in the temple or those who were unmerciful to others. He was ruthlessly angry with them. And this is the second parable on compassion.

God is compassionate. And he was angry. And here is the one place where we read that God can take a believer and hand him over to demons.

Do you believe that can happen? This man is a forgiven saint. When a man is forgiven everything by God, he is a believer. Unbelievers are not forgiven everything by God.

Here is a man who is forgiven everything. But he goes out and becomes unmerciful to one human being. And God calls him a wicked man immediately and hands him over to demons.

Obviously, he has lost his salvation and I will tell you why. Because he says there you have to repay everything that you owed me. You better pay off those 150,000 years of salary now.

He lost his salvation. Jesus taught it. First he was forgiven and then he was unforgiven.

The forgiveness was cancelled. You try and get any other interpretation out of that. When you read the scriptures, don't have a preconceived theology and try to fit scripture somehow into it.

You will go astray. I accept it exactly as it is written that a man can be totally forgiven and totally unforgiven. That means all that is put back into the account.

Sorry. 150,000 years of wages. You got to pay it back.

Why? Is it because he went out and committed adultery? No. If he had committed adultery he could have gone back and the king would have said, okay, forgive him. Forget it.

Don't do it again. Even if he had gone out and murdered somebody in anger and repented. He said, oh, I'm sorry.

I slipped up. But when he was so unmerciful that he held another person, wouldn't forgive him, you lose your salvation. If you don't forgive others, Jesus said your heavenly father will not forgive you.

He said that in Matthew 6.15. And if your heavenly father doesn't forgive you, I'll tell you one thing. There is no unforgiven person in heaven. My heavenly father will do the same to you if you don't forgive your brother from your heart.

See, it's from the heart that's important. I remember many years ago when I thought I had forgiven somebody. I really believe I had to the best of my knowledge.

I had forgiven the person for what he had done against me and then I heard later that something bad happened to him and I felt a little happy. And the Lord said, you haven't really forgiven him. Because if you had forgiven him, you wouldn't be happy right now.

God's not happy when something bad happens to anyone. Do you know that? Somebody may reap what he sows, but God isn't happy. But I was happy in my heart.

I didn't show it. And the Lord showed me, you haven't forgiven him. And I said, Lord, thank you for revealing that to me.

Because one of the prayers I prayed for many years to the Lord is, Lord, please don't give me any surprises at the judgment seat. What you want to show me, show me now. I swear I can set it right.

I don't want to get a surprise at the judgment seat of Christ that I didn't forgive somebody. I thought I had forgiven him, but I hadn't really forgiven him. Oh Lord, if that's the case, show it to me right now.

And he showed it to me through this little incident. But I could have ignored it. I could have said, no, no, no, I'm actually very sorry.

I knew in my heart I was not. And I'll tell you, you can bluff yourself, but you'll only destroy yourself. You know in your heart whether you feel happy or sad when something bad happens to another person.

And the reverse of that, do you feel sad or a little unhappy when something good happens to somebody you don't like? Somebody's daughter gets married and yours doesn't, even though yours is older. Does it disturb you? Those are the opportunities you get to be honest. And say, Lord, it's right.

There's something wrong here. I tell you, my dear brother, sister, if you value your salvation, be honest with yourself in those moments. The moment will last just for a few seconds.

When God will give you a revelation on yourself. And at that moment, if you don't acknowledge, what will happen is, listen, what will happen is you wait another 5 or 10 minutes and it will disappear. And you'll feel quite comfortable and you may never get that revelation again.

And you'll have lost it forever. So in a flash of a moment when God gives you a revelation of yourself, grab it and say, Lord, thank you, I saw something about myself there and I'm going to deal with it. Otherwise, I'll tell you, I believe God's word, he'll hand you to the torturers.

And that's why a lot of Christians are very depressed and gloomy. It's not because they've been handed over to the angels, they're handed over to the devil. No angel is depressed or gloomy.

If I'm handed over to the angels, they'll make me happy. It's when I'm handed over to demons that I get depressed and gloomy. Don't let God hand you over to the torturers.

Be merciful to everybody. I'll tell you this, in Jesus' name, if you determine to be compassionate and merciful to every human being on earth, in your entire life no demon will have power over you. Right? In your entire life.

I believe that. I believe the devil's scared of me. He'll never have power over me.

Because I decided long ago I would be, to the best of my knowledge, compassionate and merciful towards every human being I've got to deal with. No torturers for me. You have the choice.

It's entirely yours. And it's not a question of your fooling everybody in the church that you're so nice, and you're so humble, and you're so good. The devil is not fooled.

And God is not fooled. He knows your heart. He knows whether you've shown compassion to others or not.

So that's the second place, and I'll tell you why we find it so difficult to be compassionate towards others. Why did this guy find it so difficult to be compassionate towards his fellow brother? Because he forgot how much he was forgiven. Now you'd think that if you were forgiven billions and billions and billions of rupees, you could never forget that.

Oh! We forget very easily. We can be forgiven billions and billions and billions of sins, and we forget so easily. I've often said to you, many of you, think of the first day when you came to this church.

All of you, just right now. All of you can remember the first day you came to CFC. Can you just stop for a moment right now and think about that day when you were a nobody.

Nobody even knew you. You came to the door and said, who are you brother? Somebody asked, who are you sister, what's your name? Nobody knew you. You sat in the back seat, thankful to have a place in the church, extremely grateful, because you were such a sinner and you knew it.

You knew what all things you had done in your life, and how God had been merciful to you and forgave it all. And not only forgave it all, but never told anybody else in the church about all the sins you committed. Isn't that true? That the sins you committed in private, other people in this church don't know.

God's been good to you. But as time has gone by, you have forgotten. You have forgotten that you were forgiven 150,000 years worth of salary.

It's true. And that's why you've suddenly begun to think you're quite an important person now. You're not a forgiven sinner anymore, you're sort of a senior brother, senior sister.

And that's exactly what the devil wants you to think, so that you can ruin your life. Don't be fooled by the devil anymore. Say, I'm not a sinner now, but I'm a sinner, saved by grace.

Peter says, those who have forgotten their purification from their former sins are blind and short-sighted. Have you seen short-sighted people? I've seen some people they have to read the Bible like this. Can't see.

And I've seen spiritually short-sighted people, they read and read and read and read, they get nothing. Read, look closely, nothing. You know why they're short-sighted? They've forgotten their purification from their former sins.

They forgot what they were on the first day they came to the church. So they don't get any revelation from God, they get stirred when they hear a message. Oh yeah.

Even Herod was stirred when he heard John the Baptist. That doesn't prove anything. Herod could be stirred when he heard John the Baptist, and you can be also stirred, without being spiritual.

It says Herod enjoyed listening to John the Baptist. I mean, if John the Baptist was a pastor, Herod would sneak in and say, is John the Baptist there in the pulpit? Otherwise I go away. It didn't prove he was spiritual.

He just liked listening to this fiery man. But it didn't change him, and you can listen to the most fiery preacher in the world, it won't change you. Because you've forgotten your purification from your former sins and you're short-sighted.

So that's the thing. We must never forget how much God has forgiven us. And we need to understand how compassionate the Lord is towards us.

Many of us don't rejoice in that fact. Let me turn to Isaiah chapter 49. Isaiah 49.

There's a lovely verse here which God has spoken to me many, many times. And which I have shared with my fellow elders in this land of different churches. And that is the last part of verse 10, Isaiah 49 verse 10.

It says He who has compassion on them will lead them. It's referring to God. But it's also referring to spiritual leadership.

And what I've shared with my fellow elders in this country is Dear brothers, you want to be a good leader? Be compassionate. Yeah, we need to be strict according to God's standards. We don't want to lower God's standards and be compromisers, but along with all that, be compassionate.

Be compassionate. Many people who hear me in the pulpit know that I'm a very strict man. But those who know me personally know that I'm very compassionate.

I think that's how it was with Jesus. If you heard Jesus speaking and saying, you generational vipers, how will you escape the damnation of hell? And many things like that you'd think He's a very strict man, and He was. But when you got alone with Him, you'd discover He was very compassionate, very forgiving, very merciful.

Only such a man can lead others. Only to such a man will God give the anointing of leadership. He who has compassion on others will lead them.

Because that's how God is. And it says in Hebrews in chapter 5, He's talking about leadership. In the Old Testament it was a high priest.

He says, a high priest who's taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men things pertaining to God. And one of the great qualifications he needs, and it applies to spiritual leadership today, and when you think of spiritual leadership, my dear brothers, who am I talking about? I'm talking about you. There are only two or three elders in every church, but you are a leader of your children.

Yeah. And you young brothers, you are elders to those who are younger than you, the eight, nine, ten year olds. You must deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, because you yourself are beset with weakness.

Why should we be gentle with others? Because beset means everywhere I turn is weakness. This side, weakness. This side, weakness.

Turn around, weakness. This side, weakness. 360 degrees weakness.

That's the meaning of beset with weakness. Oh God. A man beset with weakness, weak as a husband, weak as a father, weak in my home, weak in my office, weak in my work, weak in my mind.

Everywhere I look, weak, weak, weak, weak, weak. How shall I treat another weak person? How many of you believe that you are 360 degrees surrounded by weakness? He's beset with weakness. So he can deal gently with others who are ignorant and misguided.

Your children are ignorant and misguided. Deal gently with them. Even when Absalom drove out David from his throne in rebellion and Joab, David's general, wanted to go after him and kill him.

David said, please deal gently with that young man. David was a man after God's own heart. This young man who was going to kill his father and take the throne.

David said, deal gently with him. God is like that. It says in Isaiah 49 and verse 15.

Can a woman forget her nursing child and not have compassion? That's the word again. Compassion. Compassion.

I think of the number of times in the Gospels where it says Jesus had compassion. I want you to turn to Matthew chapter 14. Matthew chapter 9, sorry.

You know, Jesus looked at the people around him in his day. They didn't have good leaders. I really believe that's the condition today when you look around at so many churches.

They don't have shepherds after God's own heart. They have people who fleecing them for their money. Many of you who sit in this church and have grown up in this church don't have a clue what it is like in Christendom outside.

You've got to go and spend six months or one year somewhere else to understand that. And Jesus looked at those people and it says in Matthew 9, 36, he felt compassion for them because they didn't have a shepherd. They didn't have somebody to guide them.

And the message Bible says, when he looked out over the crowds, his heart broke. Boy. His heart broke because they were so confused.

He saw people so confused and he was just one person trying to help so many people. And how could he help everybody? Oh, so many people in the world, confused, exploited by their leaders. His heart broke.

I hope your heart breaks. That's what it means to fellowship with Jesus. When you see the state of Christendom around.

Matthew chapter 14 it says here, sorry, 15, speaks of the time when he many people had followed him in verse 32 and he called his disciples and I feel compassion for these people. I hurt in my heart for these people because they've been without food for three days. I can't stand to send them away without a meal.

They'll probably collapse on the road. Please let's give them a meal. You see, his heart, when people are hungry, I believe the Lord's heart breaks when he sees hungry people in the world today.

And that's why we decided in our church that in all of our churches that never be a brother, even a backslidden brother, who wouldn't be without a meal or without a blanket in the winter, we'd make sure that they have enough of food and clothing. We can't reach all the millions in this country. But the few who are committed to our charge, we want to care for them.

Because Jesus was concerned. Let me show you one last verse. This is in Mark's Gospel chapter 5. It's the man who was possessed with 6,000 demons and he said his name was Legion and Legion consisted of 6,000 people soldiers and they all got cast out and when they all got cast out he in verse 18 he came to Jesus and said please let me go with you and Jesus said no.

Go home. Verse 19 of Mark 5. Go home to your people and tell them two things. One, what great things the Lord has done for you and two, how he had compassion on you.

Brothers and sisters, that's our calling. To go wherever we go to tell other people what great things the Lord has done for us and to show by our conduct and our behavior and our attitude to others how compassionate the Lord has been towards us. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, that which we do not know teach us by your Holy Spirit. Give us the spirit of compassion, the spirit of Christ in our hearts. Help us to understand how you love us with such a compassionate love.

Be gripped by that so that we can be compassionate towards others. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/16/SID16251.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/gods-compassion-and-ours/>

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