

Compassion

“God of the Prodigals” Series- Part 3

Connect: Describe a time when someone extended a favor or an act of kindness to you and it caught you by surprise. Why were you surprised?

Hook: One of the best ways to increase our own happiness is to do things that make other people happy. In countless studies, kindness and generosity have been linked to greater life satisfaction, stronger relationships, and better mental and physical health—generous people even live longer. With these great benefits, we ought to pursue opportunities where we can extend kindness.

Research suggests that it is possible to train ourselves to be more compassionate toward others and to be more willing to extend acts of kindness. Children, in particular, should be taught to be more kind. The Encouraging Kindness in Kids organization offers three specific techniques to bring out children’s natural propensity for kindness and generosity.

1. Avoid giving external rewards for kind behavior, so that kids get to experience the feeling that kindness is its own reward.
2. Praise kids’ character instead of their behavior so they come to see kindness as an essential part of who they are.
3. Model kindness in your own behavior, since actions tend to speak louder than words when it comes to nurturing generosity.

In our text for today’s study, Jesus tells of a man who, despite the racial divisions of his day, extended compassion to an unlikely person.

Book:

25. One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking Him this question: "Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?"
26. Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?"
27. The man answered, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"
28. "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"
29. The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
30. Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.
31. "By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by.
32. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.
33. "Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him.
34. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.
35. The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.'
36. "Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked.
37. The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same." Luke 10:25-37

Look:

1. The expert in the law of Moses states that to inherit life, one must love God with all that he has and also, his neighbor as himself. Jesus says, "Right! Then go and do it." Is Jesus suggesting that we can work our way into Heaven? Why or why not?

2. Why do you suppose the lawyer felt the need to justify himself? (vs. 29)

3. In the parable, the injured man is ignored by two religious leaders. What are possible reasons or excuses for ignoring the needs of this man? What reasons do we offer to ignore needs that we could possibly address?

4. The difference between the two religious leaders and the "despised Samaritan" is summed up in one word- "compassion".

5. What did it cost the Samaritan to be compassionate?

6. What does having compassion relate to inheriting eternal life?

7. Pastor Brandon told us in his message on the Prodigal Son that we are "*ready for the party heaven is throwing when...*"

-We see the value of every human life – even the least, the last, and the lost.

-We rejoice when another sinner is saved and God's grace is magnified.

-We act, with compassion, when we see people lost and in need of good news.

Discuss each one of the above three statements and how these truths are demonstrated in your life.

How about the life of your small group? How do you demonstrate these truths?

The older brother was angry, jealous, unkind and not willing to join in the party for his lost, but now found brother. In what areas of your life do you find yourself acting much like the older brother? you

What commitment do you need to make to have the compassion of Christ?