

Compassion Sunday 2018

Luke 10:25-37

Introduction

Today, we're going to take a break from our study of Philippians to focus on Compassion Sunday. The children of the world are in need of us, and we are in a prime position to help them through both our prayers and through Compassion sponsorship. Listen to the following list of statistics from Compassion.

- 11 children under age 5 die every minute.
- Nearly 1 child in 5 of all children under age 5 does not have enough to eat (is undernourished).
- An estimated 61 million primary school-aged children worldwide don't attend school.
- At least 10 percent of the world's population is thought to consume food irrigated by waste water.

Today, we're going to talk about our Christian calling to love children and to help out the poor. These themes are undeniable pieces of what it means to be a practicing Christian. Today we will examine one of our Lord's parables, to see what it says about helping those in need. We will also look at the example the Christ set during his ministry on Earth, and finally, we will wrap up by looking at the tangible results that we can see through helping out those around us who are in need.

First, we will see that we need to...

Follow Christ's Example

As is always the case, we need to follow the example of our Lord. Jesus lived a humble life, not gathering much, but giving plentifully. We're going to immediately look at 4 facts regarding the ministry of Jesus, as they pertain to both children, and a life of service.

1. Jesus loves children – This likely goes without saying, but there, I said it. Look at the following example from the book of Luke.

Luke 18:15-16 – People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

The Jewish parents recognized that nothing was more important than bringing their children to be blessed by the Christ. For whatever reason, the apostles didn't. They felt that the Jewish parents were being a bother to Christ with their requests, but the Lord felt differently. He was indignant at the notion that children would be hindered from coming into His presence. He called children of all ages to him, prepared to bless them. Following Christ's example we must be prepared to bless the children of the world with our love, prayers and charity. Following the example of the Jewish parents, we should be prepared to bring the children of the world to come to know Christ in any way we can. While this is easy enough for us to do with our own children, it is much more difficult to do for the children who reside half-way across the world from us. Services like Compassion International make it possible for us, here in the U.S., to express the love of Christ to children all over the world. We must remember this resource at our fingertips when considering our call to touch the children of the ends of the Earth.

2. Jesus lived a life of service – Secondly, we must remember that Jesus did not come to be served, but rather to serve. He did this not only to express the love and grace of God, but also to provide an example to his apostles and to all of us on how we should live out our daily lives in service. In line with Jesus's ministry on earth, we are called to express the love and grace of Christ to all people. Again, we find ourselves asking, in what ways can we serve people who live half-way around the world from us. Certainly through missions, but also through services like Compassion International, helping out families in many nations. Jesus's ministry involved a trek across the Holy Land. Our ministry, by contrast, is meant to be worldwide. We are the hands and feet of our Lord here on the ground. Let us never forget that.

3. Jesus fed many – As part of the Lord’s service portfolio, he fed many people. Five-thousand, and then three-thousand. While Jesus did this by way of miracles, He also said to us in the book of John.

John 14:12 – Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

The question is not how will ‘you’ feed 5,000, for you are but a member of a larger body the body of Christ. In truth, if you can find a way to feed 1 or 2, and the person beside you can do the same, and the people down at Middletown United Methodist can do the same, followed by brothers and sisters from across the area and the world, we can truly feed more than 5,000 as the body of Christ. We can truly do things greater than what Jesus did, as He said we would. Keep in mind also what we are able to feed to the children of the world, not only nutritious food, but also spiritual nourishment through good Christian upbringing. We’ll talk more later about just where your money goes when you give to a Compassion child, but for now, just know that your contribution is powerful to make a tangible change in the life of another.

4. Jesus told us to love our neighbors as ourselves – Finally, we must remember that we were called to love one another on multiple occasions by our Lord. Our neighbor is not strictly confined to those people who geographically live beside us. Listen to the parable of the Good Samaritan, located in the book of Luke, chapter 10.

Luke 10:25-37 – On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as

he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

We make neighbors, and we make neighborhood, out of those to whom we show mercy. Is it time for you and your family to show mercy to a new neighbor?

Next, we will...

See Tangible Results

There are tangible results when we give to a Compassion child and his family. Below is a list of three results we can expect to see when we show the mercy and grace of Christ in this way.

1. The child and his family will be blessed – The child and his family are blessed in a number of ways. Listen to this official list from the Compassion website regarding how your donation is used to benefit your sponsor child.
 - regular Christian training
 - supplemental nutrition support
 - educational opportunities (e.g., funding school attendance and/or regular participation in alternative educational activities, as well as opportunities to learn life and job skills.)
 - health care and training (e.g., regular physical exams, dental care, vaccinations, referral for advance medical care, instruction in physical and dental hygiene, exercise, nutrition and preventive health care)

- social and emotional development (e.g., learning basic social skills, teamwork, art, drama, dance, etc.)
- materials and supplies including hygiene supplies (e.g., soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste), center supplies (e.g., paper, writing utensils, games, toys), fees or costs associated with field trips, camps, drama, art and dance activities, and snacks, food and supplemental nutrition each child may need
- individualized care and attention (e.g., school progress reports, center attendance records, health records, home visits by social workers and adult supervision while at the development center)

Beyond these, you get to form a relationship with your child. Through the exchanging of letters, and even the possibility of visiting your child, if you are willing to travel, you can extend your family overseas to include your sponsor child. Consider what a blessing this would be to you and your family.

2. You will be blessed – The Bible is very clear that when we bless others, we in turn are blessed. The Prophet Isaiah reminds us in his own book that...

Isaiah 58:10 – If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.

Further, the apostle Luke reminds us of Christ's own words in the book of Acts...

Acts 20:35 – In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Indeed, the number of verses regarding care for the poor in the Bible are numerous. It is clear that care for those who cannot adequately care for themselves was perhaps more than a command, and rather a fundamental tenant of biblical living. By doing so, we show Christ's mercy and receive blessings of our own from the Lord. Jesus explained in the book of Matthew...

Matthew 10:34-40 – “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’”

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’”

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

We must remember that when we provide for the needy, we entertain the Lord himself.

3. You could save lives – This sentiment is real. With 11 children under the age of 5 dying every minute, the clean water and food you help to provide, and the medical care you help to secure could literally help to save a the life of your sponsor child or children. Remember that the lives of all men, women, and children are precious in the eyes of Christ.

I’d like to begin to wrap up by sharing with you a children’s devotional from a book called “Indescribable” by Louie Giglio. Consider the marvel of a child as I read this devotional to you.

“Did you know that you’re a miracle? It’s true! You are a crazy, amazing miracle. Even though you are so tiny compared to the vastness of the universe, you are created in the image of God. That’s right! The God who breathes out fiery ferocious stars and hangs them in the sky is the same One who crafted and created you. You are fearfully made ‘in an amazing and wonderful way’ (Psalm 139:14).

You began in your mother’s womb when God created a unique, never-before-seen guide for how He’d build you. Think of it like a blueprint, which is the guide builders use to construct a new building. Your blueprint is called DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), and it contains all the information for how you look and function – from the color of your eyes and hair to the shape of your toenails. Your

DNA describes exactly how God wanted you to be, and there's never been and never will be another DNA code (or blueprint) like it. In all the history – and future – of the human race, there's only one you.

Scientists have figured out that God's DNA code for you is 3 billion characters long. (A character is like a single letter or number.) And this DNA code is planted inside each cell of your body, so all the cells function and grow according to the same master plan. Your body as 37.2 trillion cells – and they each follow God's grand design to make you exactly into who He planned you to be before you were even born! Your hair, your eyes, and your smile are all exactly as God designed them to be. An amazing and wonderfully designed miracle called... you." – **Louie Giglio**

What a marvel children are in the eyes of God, and what an opportunity we have to care for these marvels when we take advantage of a service like Compassion International.

Conclusion

This may be the time for you to extend your family overseas by sponsoring a compassion child. If you prayerfully believe that it is. If you believe that your heart is being moved by the Holy Spirit to take care of one of these children, please don't let the opportunity to sponsor today pass you by. We've explored our need to help, viewing some shocking statistics about worlds which we cannot even relate to from the comfort of the United States of America.

We've seen how Jesus loves children, and how He became indignant at the notion that children might be kept away from knowing Him. Sponsoring a Compassion child provides the child not only with elements of Christian based education, but it also exposes them directly to the grace of Christians and thusly, the grace of Christ Himself. We must remember that Christ came to serve, and we as Christians are equally called to serve. We've talked about the numerous blessings that a child would receive through Compassion's services, and we've also seen that when we bless others, we in turn, are blessed. Let us be reminded one more time by the words of King Solomon.

Proverbs 19:17 – Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.

I want to close with this reminder, found on a church envelope from an unnamed church. It reads as follows:

Did you ever see a tombstone with a dollar sign on it? Neither did I. I have known hundreds of men who lived as though their only ambition was to accumulate, but I have never known one who wanted a final judgement of himself to be based on what he got. A man wants people to read in his obituary, not a balance sheet of his wealth, but a story of his service to humanity. – **Church Envelope**

Please stand with me as we prepare for the invitation.

Invitation