

Dear Receivers of the Lord's Compassion:

There are a lot of needs out there today that people have. But perhaps the greatest need people have is the need for compassion.

We need compassion, love and understanding and that is what Jesus brings into our lives.

When she was 17 years old she became paralyzed as a result of a diving accident at a swimming pool. For the rest of her life she would be wheelchair bound.

But, she experienced compassion and love from those that counted the most in her life. On her wedding day her gown was draped over the wire mesh covering the wheels of her wheelchair. While waiting for that moment when she would motorize her wheelchair down the church aisle to meet her groom at the altar she discovered a big, black grease mark across her dress from the wheelchair.

Joni Eareckson Tada did not feel like the picture-perfect bride.

- Here she was in this big clunky wheelchair
- Her paralyzed hands were unable to handle the bouquet of flowers on her lap
- And then there was the grease mark on her dress

As she situated her wheelchair in the back of the church ready to go down the aisle, she saw her groom waiting for her. Joni writes: "I spotted him way down front, standing at attention and looking tall and elegant in his formal attire...My heart began to pound. Our eyes met and amazingly, from that point everything changed. How I looked no longer

mattered...no longer did I feel ugly or unworthy; the love in Ken's eyes washed it all away. **I was the pure and perfect bride.** That's what he saw..." p47 *Next Door Savior* Lucado

God sees us as that pure and perfect bride. We are covered with the righteousness of Christ. Not because of anything we have done but because of everything Christ has done for us. Jesus has the answer for the diseases and darkness in our lives. Jesus is our groom and when we as the bride see his face everything changes for us as well.

King Solomon once asked: "Will God really live on earth among people?" Yes he will. II Chronicles 6:18

As the Gospel of Mark tells us Jesus walked this world of ours and was involved in the daily struggles of life that we face, too. Jesus is at the beginning of his public ministry. He has called the first four of his 12 disciples. He has already faced a demon and drove him out of a man. He began to teach the Word of God and the people were amazed at his authority.

Now the people begin to see his healing power and his compassion for those who are suffering. After Jesus finishes teaching in the local synagogue he went with his four disciples to the home of Simon Peter and his brother Andrew in the village of Capernaum. Upon arriving at the home they find out that Peter's mother-in-law is ill with a fever. Luke's gospel describes Peter's mother-in-law as having a high fever which was continuous in nature. She was seriously ill. Too ill to get out of bed and to the point where it was life-threatening.

Jesus showing compassion "took her hand" and healed her. The authority of Jesus' word delivered her from a life-threatening illness.

Luke said Jesus “rebuked the fever”. The fever was obedient to the command of Christ. Immediately the woman was healed and she was given an infusion of strength for it says “She began to wait on them.” She did not need days of bed rest.

The report that Jesus had cast out demons and had healed the sick spread rapidly throughout the region. By sunset of that day many with the same needs were coming to Peter’s home with their sick family and friends. The whole town had gathered at the door and Jesus healed those with disease and those who were demon-possessed.

Christ spoke the word and delivered people, but he did not allow the demons to speak because they knew who Jesus was. Jesus did not need testimony from these morally unclean evil spirits. He did not have to rely upon them to tell people that he was the Messiah.

Jesus love and compassion for the needy can be seen in that he ministered to the crowds. Jesus was at the beck and call of all kinds of people. We, too, are here to serve people with the love and compassion of Jesus.

Peter and Andrew brought Jesus home with them. They did not leave him behind in the synagogue. May we take Jesus home with us, too. May we let him share our blessings and burdens. What a privilege for Peter and his family to have Jesus in their home.

Deuteronomy 6:6f says: “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” God’s word is to the subject of our

conversation both inside and outside the home from the beginning of the day until the end of the day.

When it says that the people “brought” to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed the Greek verb indicates that they “kept of bringing” people to him. Jesus must have gone to sleep at a very late hour.

But late hours did not keep Jesus from his appointed meeting with the Father as it says “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” Jesus met the father morning by morning. What an example for us to follow, too. Mark 6:46; 14:32ff

Prayer is an attitude of complete dependence on the Lord. Prayer was essential in Jesus’ life and ministry.

The crowds had come to Peter’s home looking for Jesus. When Peter found the Lord the disciples said to him: “Everyone is looking for you!” The people wanted to see and hear more of Jesus. Luke says they tried to keep Jesus from leaving them. But Jesus knew it was time to leave so he could preach and teach in other towns, too. Luke 4:43

Jesus knew his mission. Jesus came to continue preaching and teaching in the whole region of Israel. Mark 1:38 Jesus had to press on to reach people who had not yet heard him. He was compelled to preach and heal because he had compassion for people who needed to hear the truth of his word.

He traveled throughout Galilee teaching and performing miracles. Matthew 4:23-24 The crowds came to hear and see Jesus from Jerusalem, Judea and across the Jordan. They came with their needs because Jesus showed them compassion.

Hebrews 4:15f “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are --- yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Do you fear what may come next? Are you uncertain of tomorrow? Are you on the eve of change?

Jesus once asked his disciples: “Why are you frightened? Why are your hearts filled with doubt?”

God says to us: **“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret** when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.” Psalm 37:7

“Courage is fear that has said its prayers! When Christ is great, our fears are not. Christ is great and he is filled with compassion toward us. He has the power over cancer cells, corruption, identity theft, stock-market crashes and global calamity.”

- Max Lucado

The longer we live in him, the greater he becomes in us.