**HE WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION**

Since January I have been studying the gospel of Matthew daily, hoping to add some value to our Wednesday Bible class. In my study I noticed a pattern regarding Jesus’ feelings toward the masses of common people that crowded around Him daily. Read these verses and see if you can find this pattern too.

Matthew 9
36 But when He saw the multitudes, ***He was moved with compassion*** for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

Matthew 14 14 And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and ***He was moved with compassion*** for them, and healed their sick.

Matthew15
32 Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, “***I have compassion on the multitude***, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.”

Matthew 18
26 The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ 27 Then the master of that servant was ***moved with compassion***, released him, and forgave him the debt. …

Matthew 20
29 Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. 30 And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, … 33 They said to Him, “Lord, that our eyes may be opened.” 34 So ***Jesus had compassion*** and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

*Compassion* comes from the Greek *SPLAGCHNIZOMAI* (don’t even try to pronounce it 😊). It has reference to the bowels, thought to be the organ of emotion. Today we might use the word “gut,” as in “I have a gut feeling.” We would not use the word “bowels” to talk about our deep-seated feelings today. Imagine saying to your wife or girlfriend, “I love you to the bottom of my bowels.” Uh, that could get you into trouble. I suggest you substitute the word “heart” and get a kiss instead. But 2000 years ago a man would say to his girl, “I love you down to my bowels.” Just read the old King James to see how Paul described his feelings toward his brethren:

Philippians 1:8 “For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the *bowels* of Jesus”

Philippians 2:1 “If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any *bowels* and mercies.”

Colossians 3:12 “Put on therefore as the elect of God… *bowels* of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.”

Philemon 7 “For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the *bowels* of the saints are refreshed by thee brother.”

Philemon 12 “Whom I have sent again, thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own *bowels*.”

Philemon 20 “Yea, brother, let me have joy in thee in the Lord, refresh my *bowels* in the Lord.”

Yes, we think that strange, but it was their way of saying how deeply they loved each other. Jesus saw the mass of humanity that had been thrown to the wayside by the religious elite and “*was moved with compassion*.” That gut feeling “*moved*” Him to action. He was not just sympathetic toward their situation, He was *motivated* toward helping them improve! Not once in the four gospels do we see Jesus letting fatigue, personal heart-ache or stress stop Him from helping a fellow human being. I repeat, not once! He always cared enough to lay aside His own problems (like death-threats by the rulers) to bring a blessing to those in need.

He had compassion for:
1. Scattered People (Matthew 9:36; 15:32)
2. Sinning People (Mark 5:1-20)
3. Sick People (Matthew 14:14; 20:30-34)
4. Suffering People (Luke 7:11-13)
5. Seeking People (Mark 10:17-22)

What does that mean to us in these days of stress and anxiousness regarding our own health? While I don’t want to create more problems then solutions by invading someone’s “social distancing,” possibly infecting them with a virus, but I can use every means at my disposal to show compassion toward my brethren, and my neighbors. What can I do, you ask? Let me tell you where my compassion (my gut) is motivated toward today. Cards or Letters.

What if everyone here at Northwest sat down today and wrote someone else in the church a special card or letter? Get your church directory and pick someone. Anyone. Perhaps even someone you don’t know very well. For the price of a single stamp you can “brighten the corner where you are” (one of my favorite hymns). Just close your eyes and point your finger and let that be your project of compassion (“random act of kindness”) today.

If you are hesitating, let me make a suggestion. How about those in our number who CANNOT leave their houses. Do you know there are 11 people in our church who can’t be in public at all? I was tempted to list their names but instead choose to let you figure that out and then be *moved with compassion* to “reach out and touch someone” (to quote the old Hallmark Card ad).

Until tomorrow… I love you (all the way down to my bowels).

Rick