



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Jesus' motive behind His Ministry!

Matthew 9:36-38

Matthew 9:36-38, *But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. ³⁷Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. ³⁸Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*

What motivated Jesus?

Why did Jesus do all this?

Why did God care?

There are three elements to His ministry:

- Teaching,
- Preaching,
- Healing.

There are three elements to His motive:

- ✓ Compassion,

- ✓ Condition of the People,
- ✓ Harvest.

1. Compassion

V 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.*

We can picture Jesus on an elevated on a hillside, and as He looks down the little slope, He sees this mass of people before Him. They were always there.

They came mostly with physical needs, diseases, deformities, hunger. He sees them beyond the physical to the real needs. Through this we can get a glimpse into His heart.

He was moved with compassion for them

What does that mean?

The Latin word ***compassio*** means to suffer with.

Jesus suffered with them.

He felt their pain. Basically, has nothing to do with us. This is the expression of an attribute of God. He cared because God is love and love cares. It is the nature of God.

The first great motive in the heart of Christ to teach and preach and heal was that God cares about men.

It is His nature to care.

It is His heart to care.

Repeatedly this is stated in the gospel record that Jesus had compassion, for God cares by virtue of who He is.

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.*

Matthew 15:32, *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 18:27, *Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.*

Matthew 20:34, *So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.*

Mark 1:41, *Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."*

Mark 5:19, *However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."*

He had compassion because it was His nature to love.

Now the Greek term here is very interesting. It literally means to feel something in the bowels. The word ***splagchnon*** is the noun form and it means bowels.

How it's used in the Bible?

Acts 1:18, "and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gushed out."

The word literally means the midsection, the internal organs, the intestines, the entrails, the inward parts. We would use it in the vernacular today and say the guts.

The Bible talks about the bowels of the earth. That means that central portion, and literally it says, "Jesus was moved in the bowels upon them."

Why did they use that word?

If you were to go to your girlfriend and say, "I love you with all my bowels" they would take that wrong.

That is no different than going to someone and saying, "I love you with all my heart."

It was just an expression. The Hebrews talked about the heart, and they talked about the bowels, and they had something in mind. They talked about the heart as the seat of thought and action and will.

Proverbs 23:7, *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. "Eat and drink!" he says to you,*

Proverbs 16:23, *The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, And adds learning to his lips.*

Hebrews 4:12, *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Romans 10:10, *For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

Matthew 12:34, *Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

The heart is the initiator in Hebrew thinking. There you find the root of thought and action and will. The bowels in the Hebrew thinking are the responder, the reactor. The Hebrew expressed attitudes and emotions in physiological symptoms, not in abstractions.

So, when they wanted to express something, they felt very deeply and were very pained about, they said, "I hurt in my midsection." Now we understand that.

Our midsection responds to pain. When we see a horrible accident or a disaster, we get sick in our stomach. Sexual feelings, fears, needs, we feel anxieties here. We have ulcers, colitis, upset stomachs because here is where emotion grips us. Jesus literally said that He was wrenched in pain in His midsection when He saw these people.

Does God care?

Does God care and love beyond anything that human being could ever experience?

Yes.

Then put God in a body, and let Him love like that, and let Him care like that.

Matthew 8:17, *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses."*

It isn't the idea that He got the leprosy when He healed the leper.

It is the idea that He wrenched in agony in sympathy and compassion, for He felt the pain of seeing what sickness did to those He loved.

We have seen parents sick to death over an ill child. No parent has ever felt the compassion or the love that Christ felt, because it was God loving in that human body.

Illustration:

John chapter 11.

Lazarus is dead and Jesus comes there, and He goes to the grave.

John 11:33, *Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.*

I can't express the depth of what that means. The terms mean He was deeply moved.

He was seized by an anguishing emotion, but only He would know how a supremely loving God is wracked by the pain of seeing the ones He loved in anguish.

He was not just feeling pain because of Lazarus, because He was going to raise Lazarus out of the grave.

I think He felt there all the pain of knowing that all of humanity that He loved was going to live its entire history out in anxiety, because it would always be facing the death of those it loves.

I think He gathered all the anguish and pain that the knowledge of death itself could bring into one person's thoughts.

He was pained.

John 11:35, *Jesus wept.*

Greek it says that "He burst into tears."

If He cried, believe me, He cried in an utterly comprehensive manner.

John 11:38, *Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.*

We could translate that one, "He shuddered."

He was wracked with emotion.

He sobbed and wept and felt deeply the pain.

Our Lord by nature was sympathetic because He was God, and God loves His people. God is not willing that any should perish. God doesn't enjoy the sorrow that He sees in the world.

I really believe, if you want to know the heart of God, then look at the emotion of Jesus and see the heart of God.

Our Lord, every time he saw a need, was just wracked internally with compassion.

We see Him in the garden in John 18.

John 18:4-8, *Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?"* ⁵*They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am He." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them.* ⁶*Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.* ⁷*Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."* ⁸*Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,"*

The soldiers come to take him, and twice he says to them, "Whom do you seek?"

"Let these men go." He was so compassionate on His disciples that He didn't even give a thought for what He was going into.

John 19:

We see our Lord on the cross.

He was hanging there with those four great wounds in His body. If ever there was a moment when He could have thought of Himself, it would have been then.

But He looks down at the foot of the cross, and He sees this little lady, his mother Mary. He knows that He isn't going to be around anymore to care for her. He knows that Joseph is dead. The brothers and sisters in the family have not yet believed and don't until after the resurrection.

What was on His heart?

Who is going to take care of Mary?

That's what's on His heart, and He commits her to John and John to her, and once that's done, He can go ahead and die.

What compassion.

What compassion. He looked at those people so many times with pain in His heart.

Matthew 23:37, *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*

Luke 19:41, *Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it,*

Can't imagine the dimensions of weeping that must have come from the heart of God.

Luke 19:42, *saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.*

If you only had known. If you would only know. When the Bible says He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, it means sorrow and grief as God would feel it.

Matthew uses the strongest word there is for compassion. He was wrenched in His midsection. Oh, how He loved. Oh, how He loved.

*We may force our Lord to punish us, but we will never have to force Him to love us. That's His nature. **Thomas Watson***

The Greek gods were indifferent. In fact, the Greeks said that the number one attribute of their gods was apatheia, apathy, indifference.

The Jews had been taught by the Pharisees that God was an ogre, uncaring, uninterested, and indifferent. Jesus brought a whole new message.

Jesus, the friend of humankind, with strong compassion moved, descended like a pitying God, to save the souls He loved. And still for erring, guilty man a brother's pity flows. Still His bleeding heart is touched with memory of our woes.

1 Peter 3:8, *Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tender hearted, be courteous;*

calls on us to have the same compassion. And I guess if you don't understand what I'm saying, that tells how far removed you are from It. We not only are called to minister, but we're called to minister because we love, because our hearts are broken over those who are lost.

There is no reason in man that God should save. The need is born of God's own compassion. No man has any claim upon God.

Why, then, should men be cared for?

Why should they not become the prey of the ravening wolf, having wandered from the fold?

It has been said that the great work of redemption was the outcome of a passion for the righteousness and holiness of God. That Jesus must come teach, live, suffer, and die, because God is righteous and holy.

God could have met every demand of His righteousness and every demand of His holiness by handing men over to the doom they had brought upon themselves.

But deepest in the being of God, holding in its great energizing might, both holiness and righteousness is His love and compassion. It is out of the love which inspired the wail of the divine heart that salvation has been provided.

What moved our Lord?

Love. Compassion.

2. Condition.

V 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.*

He moves from His nature to the need, and He saw them in their real condition.

He was not fooled by their religious fronts.

He was not fooled by the facade, the superficiality.

He said, “These people are desperately in need,” and He uses two tremendously rich words.

Faint and scattered abroad don’t really translate the core of meaning – *eskylmenoi* and *errimmenoi*, two tremendous words.

The first one can mean worn out, exhausted. It can mean beaten up, battered, mangled, ripped, torn, skinned alive. They were devastated. They were skinned, mutilated, worn out, exhausted, battered, bruised, beaten.

The second word means to be thrown down, lying prostrate, totally helpless, and it’s used in the Septuagint version in the Old Testament.

Judges 4:21, *Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.*

A man who was dead with a spike driven through his temples. It means they were mangled and devastated, and then thrown on the ground lying prostrate and utterly helpless. That's how He saw them. It was as if they had no shepherd.

Who claimed to be their shepherds?

The scribes and the Pharisees.

They were the shepherds of Israel, but that's what their shepherds had done to them.

- This is an indictment of their spiritual leaders.
- Their spiritual leaders didn't show them any pasture.
- Their spiritual leaders didn't feed them.
- Their spiritual leaders didn't bind their wounds.
- Their spiritual leaders literally mutilated them.

They were mangled corpses, plundered by the scribes and the Pharisees, and now they were lying prostrate, devastated. It is a graphic picture of the uncaring, unconcerned leaders.

It happened because their shepherds never helped them but rather harmed them.

Matthew 10:6, *But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

The phrase literally means the sheep that have perished. Terrible indictment of their leaders.

- They were offering a religion that didn't lift burdens. It bound burdens on them.
- They were fooling around with subtle arguments about the law and their traditions.
- They were utterly indifferent to need.
- They could have cared less.

Matthew 23:4, *For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.*

Matthew 23:13, *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.*

This was their leaders, their supposed shepherds. Jesus saw that condition.

We even see that today.

People say, “you shouldn’t speak against this situation, shouldn’t speak against those other religions. You shouldn’t say anything against those other groups.”

They are shutting people out of the kingdom of God.

They are mangling them and flaying, mutilating, and leaving them lying prostrate and helpless. If you don’t perceive that, you miss it. You don’t see it the way the Lord did.

Can you imagine how wonderful it must have been when they heard Jesus?

Matthew 11:28-30, *Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*”

Their yoke was hard, painful, killing, and Jesus said, “Mine is easy.” They needed a shepherd, and He longed to shepherd them, to gather them.

Ezekiel 34:1-6, *And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ²“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? ³You eat*

the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. ⁴The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. ⁵So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. ⁶My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.”

They feed themselves instead of their sheep.

They come with no healing for the wounded sheep.

They never seek the lost sheep.

Zechariah 11:16-17, *For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces. ¹⁷“Woe to the worthless shepherd, Who leaves the flock! A sword shall be against his arm And against his right eye;
His arm shall completely wither, And his right eye shall be totally blinded.”*

There are shepherds who eat their sheep and who eat so ferociously their sheep that they pull apart their feet to get every morsel remaining.

John 10:12-13, *But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.*

Acts 20:29, *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.*

3. Harvest:

Jesus loved them and cared for them and ministered to them because of His compassion, because of their condition, and because of the coming judgement.

V 37, *“Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.*

What does Jesus mean?

Some people think the harvest here is the lost.

Some people think it's the elect.

Some people think it's the seekers after God.

Some people think it's the number to be saved.

It is not the field of John 4. That's a different picture.

What is the harvest?

Isaiah 17:10-11, *Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation, And have not been mindful of the Rock of your stronghold, Therefore you will plant pleasant plants And set out foreign seedlings; ¹¹In the day you will make your plant to grow, And in the morning you will make your seed to flourish; But the harvest will be a heap of ruins In the day of grief and desperate sorrow. ¹²Woe to the multitude of many people*

The harvest in Isaiah 17 is judgment.

Joel 3:9-14, *Proclaim this among the nations: "Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, Let all the men of war draw near, Let them come up. ¹⁰Beat your ploughshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, 'I am strong.' " ¹¹Assemble and come, all you nations, And gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord. ¹²"Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. ¹³Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the winepress is full, The vats overflow— For their wickedness is great." ¹⁴Multitudes,*

multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

Now I believe that when the Lord saw the multitudes, He thought of Joel's harvest. It is judgment that Joel spoke of.

Jesus saw the eternity perspective. He didn't see people just in their current problem. He saw them as doomed to hell.

Matthew 13:30, *Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' ' "*

It is judgment on the multitudes.

- Some will be barned
- Some will be burned

It is judgment.

Matthew 13:39, *The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.*

The harvest that He sees is not just a mission field.

That isn't the perspective here.

The harvest is the final judgment.

The end of the ages, the time of grief.

Revelation 14:14-16, *Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. ¹⁵And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." ¹⁶So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.*

Judgment.

Jesus ministered to people because He loved them. He ministered to people because of their terrible condition, and He ministered to people because He could see their ultimate judgement.

If you have lost that vision, you have lost a major portion of your motive.

2 Corinthians 5:11, *Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.*

Romans 12:19, *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

Hebrews 9:27, *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,*

Apostle Paul painted such a vivid picture.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-9, *since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, ⁷and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, ⁸in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,*

So easy for us to lose the sense of the imminence and inevitability of eternal judgment.

There's no way to describe hell. Nothing on earth can compare with it. No living person can really comprehend it. No madman in the wildest flights of insanity ever beheld the borders of hell.

No nightmare racing across a fevered mind ever produced a terror to match that of the mildest hell. No murder scene with splattered blood and mutilated bodies could ever suggest the revulsion that one glimpse of hell could suggest.

Our Lord saw that, and He was moved to reach out to people. So, our Lord saw the crowds. He taught them. He preached to them. He healed them, because of His compassion, their condition, and the ultimate judgement.

I hope that speaks to your heart. It sure does to mine.

Conclusion

V 38, Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

Labourers who understand the heart and mind of God with the imminence of the coming judgement.

Dr. Thomas John Bernardo 1845-1905



One night in the East End of London, a young doctor was turning out the lights of a mission hall in which he was working. He found a ragged little boy, **Jim Jarvis**, hiding in a dark corner. The little boy asked him to please let him stay there, because it was warm in the corner and he could sleep, and it was a nicer place than he always slept. The doctor said no, and he took the homeless little boy to his own room. He fed him. He bathed him. Then he tried to get his story. He learned from the little boy that he was living in a coal bin, and he was living in a coal bin with several other little boys. So, the doctor asked the little fellow if he would take him to where the coal bin was so he could see. They went through the narrow alleys of London.

Finally, in the darkness of night, they came to a hole in the wall of an old factory. "Look in there," the little boy said. The doctor struck a match, and he looked inside through the hole

and crawled into a filthy coal bin cellar, and he found 13 little boys there, clothed with only bits of old burlap to protect them from the London cold. And one little fella had clinging to him tightly a four-year-old little brother. They were all orphans.

The doctor said that, then and there, he caught a vision of how he could serve the Lord.

He cared for those little boys and for little girls. At the time of his death, the newspapers of London reported that Dr. Bernardo had taken and surrounded with a Christian atmosphere over 80,000 homeless children, and hundreds of them became Christians, because he had the eyes of Christ to see into the darkness and the heart of Christ to draw people into the light.

Even today Barnardo charity operates out of London.
<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/>