

Col 3:12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

One of the most difficult attributes spoken of in these verses has to do with compassion.

Putting ourselves in someone else's situation so that we can see it as though it had happened to us.

And then dealing with it with a heart of mercy.

Luke 10:30 Jesus replied and said, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went off leaving him half dead. ...

33 "But a certain Samaritan, who
was on a journey, came upon
him; and when he saw him, he
felt compassion

Jesus tells this story to illustrate what one does when he puts himself in the same situation.

What would you have liked someone to do for you if you had been beaten, robbed and left bleeding

Luke 10:36 "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands? 37 And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

There are at least 7 times when the NT uses the word compassion. You can look those up using a concordance. I want us to focus on a number of times when the word is not used but Jesus can be seen to have the kind of compassion that each of us needs.

In order to be the right kind of neighbor, we have to have compassion – show mercy – as we would want someone to do for us if we were in the same situation.

We often say we can't understand how someone could get in that situation, but to show compassion, we have to put ourselves in that place.

When the woman taken in the act of adultery was brought to Jesus, the Scribes and Pharisees wanted to test Jesus to see if they could accuse him of not keeping the Law of Moses.

John 8:6 And they were saying this, testing Him, in order that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.

What do you suppose Jesus wrote on the ground?

7 But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9 And when they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the midst.

What would have caused the teachers of the Law to leave.

Lev 20:10 'If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

If Jesus had begun writing this passage in the dirt, those most schooled among these scribes and Pharisees would have recognized the verse first and realize that they had broken the Law.

Both were to be stoned – not just the woman!

10 And straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?"

11 And she said, "No one, Lord."

And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more."

Jesus was not guilty of breaking the Law or of failing to apply it. He recognized the failure of the Scribes and Pharisees to follow the Law.

Jesus then showed compassion – mercy if you like. The woman had no accusers and he was not a witness to the act. He tells her to “sin no more”.

We often practice the same kind of arrogance as the scribes and Pharisees when we do not show compassion to one who has sinned by forgiving them and then giving the same advice Jesus gave this woman.

Remember, Rom 3:23 for all
have sinned and fall short of the
glory of God,

We must put ourselves in the
same place as others who sin.

In John 4, we find Jesus in a conversation with a Samaritan woman who didn't know whether Judaism or paganism was the right way to worship. Jesus took pity on her, even though she wasn't of the house of Israel, to whom he had been sent, and told her about the living water.

John 4:41 And many more
believed because of His word; 42
and they were saying to the
woman, "It is no longer because
of what you said that we believe,
for we have heard for ourselves
and know that this One is indeed
the Savior of the world."

Sometimes we fail to help those who are “not our kind of people” or who don’t have the same background as we do. Jesus didn’t leave out the teachers of Israel or those who were least among them.

Mark 12:32 And the scribe said to Him,
"Right, Teacher, you have truly stated that He
is One; and there is no one else besides Him;
33 and to love Him with all the heart and with
all the understanding and with all the strength,
and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much
more than all burnt offerings and
sacrifices."34 And when Jesus saw that he had
answered intelligently, He said to him, "You
are not far from the kingdom of God." And
after that, no one would venture to ask Him
any more questions.

Jesus was also distressed over the Israelites and their lack of understanding of God's word since their leaders did not teach them correctly.

Matt 9:36 And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd.

We have to learn compassion, realizing that the world is lost and each one of us has been caught up in sin. If we don't help others to find the true way to Jesus, we have failed to show the mercy Jesus required us to have.

*Millions are groping without the gospel,
Quickly they'll reach eternity's night;
Shall we sit idly as they rush onward?
Haste, let us hold up Christ the true light.
Souls that are precious, souls that are
dying, While we rejoice our sins are
forgiv'n; Did he not also die for these lost
ones? Then let us point the way unto
heav'n. Ruth Carruth/Tillet Teddlie*

Matt 9:37 Then He said to His
disciples, "The harvest is
plentiful, but the workers are few.
38 "Therefore beseech the Lord
of the harvest to send out workers
into His harvest."