Compassion Of The Pharisees

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday September 27th, 2020

Text: Matthew 23:2-3

# Intro

1. It has been said, “Compassion is one of the greatest characteristics of the human spirit.”
   1. American Heritage Dictionary: "Deep awareness of the suffering of another coupled with the wish to relieve it.”
   2. Webster’ College Dictionary: "A suffering with another; painful sympathy; a sensation of sorrow excited by the distress or misfortunes of another; pity; commiseration. Compassion is a mixed passion, compounded of love and sorrow; at least some portion of love generally attends the pain or regret, or is excited by it. Extreme distress of an enemy even changes enmity into at least temporary affection."
2. Jesus was moved by compassion on many occasions:
   1. Prior to feeding the five thousand *(Mt. 14:14)*
   2. Prior to feeding the four thousand *(Mt. 15:32)*
   3. Compassion towards a leper *(Mark 1:41)* – Healed him!
   4. Compassion for the widow of Nain *(Luke 7:13)* – Raised her only son from the dead!
   5. Compassion shown to two blind men *(Mt. 20:34)* – Healed them!
   6. Compassion caused Him to teach *(Mk. 6:34)* – Saw they were like sheep without a shepherd so He taught them “many things.” His word brings us back to God! *(I Pet. 2:25)*
   7. His compassion caused Him to die for His enemies and take away the sins of the world *(Jn. 1:29; 3:16; Rom. 5:6-10)* – He grants eternal life to those who obey Him!
   8. He is now our compassionate High Priest *(Heb. 2:17-18; 4:14-16)* – He is merciful and sympathetic to our troubles in life!
3. Jesus left for us an example to follow so that we may not go astray! *(I Pet. 2:21-25)*
   1. Christians are commanded to be compassionate, loving individuals – Jn. 13:34-35; Col. 3:12-14: To put on compassion and love, traits of Jesus!
   2. We are to have compassion for one another *(I Pet. 3:8).*
   3. We are to have compassion for the lost *(Jude 1:22-23)*
4. Saints were told to “put on compassion” because there were those who did not! – Mt. 23:2-3
   1. Jesus, in essence, said of the Pharisees, “Do as they say, not as they do!”
5. Love and compassion are contrasted in Jesus and the compassion of the Pharisees!

# The Pharisees and the Sick

1. Matthew 9:32-34: Jesus heals a mute, demon-possessed man!
   1. The crowds said, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!”
   2. The Pharisees said, “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons!”
2. Matthew 12:22-28: Jesus heals a blind, mute demon-possessed man.
   1. The crowds were amazed!
   2. The Pharisees said, “This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons!”
   3. Jesus took this opportunity to teach that a kingdom divided cannot stand and that led into the discussion of the sin against the Holy Spirit (12:29-32)
3. Luke 6:6-11: On a Sabbath Jesus was in the synagogue teaching. A man was there with a withered right hand.
   1. The scribes and Pharisees were watching closely to see if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath so they could accuse Him.
   2. Jesus asked the scribes and the Pharisees if it was lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil.
      1. If they answered correctly, they would have to say that it was right to do good on the Sabbath, and wrong to do harm.
      2. If it was right to do good, then He was doing good by healing the man.
      3. If it was wrong to do evil on the Sabbath, than they were breaking the Sabbath by plotting to kill the Lord Jesus.
   3. Jesus healed the man, showing them an act of mercy was not breaking the Sabbath (He had already told them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” – Luke 6:5)
      1. Note: Jesus just spoke words to heal, “Stretch out your hand!” and did not do any work with His hands!
   4. The Pharisees were filled with rage and plotted with the Herodians on how they might destroy Him (Mark 3:6) – Proving Jesus’ point!

## The Pharisees: Their compassion went as far as their own selves, to their own best interests!

1. Jesus: Jesus’ compassion moved Him to do what was best for people.
2. Saints Today: Does your compassion go as far as doing what is best for others? (Phil. 2:4)
3. Challenge:
   1. The next time you hear of someone who is sick, make it your mission to reach out to them.
   2. Could be a phone call, text, card, flowers, or visit (May be hard to visit with social distancing going on, esp. at hospitals), but reach out to them and let them know you were thinking of them and praying for them (James 5:16).
4. Having the compassion of Jesus moves saints to help those who need help!

# Pharisees and the Adulteress

1. John 8:1-11: The Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman caught in adultery.
   1. The Pharisees thought they had Jesus between the Law and the law of the land.
   2. Jewish Law: Adultery was punishable by death *(Lev. 20:10: Both parties put to death).*
   3. Purely legal point of view: they were perfectly correct—*but…where was the man???*
2. If He said that the woman ought to be stoned to death, then:
   1. He would come into collision with Roman law, for the Jews had no power to pass or carry out the death sentence on anyone *(John 18:31: Jews told Pilate this very thing!).*
3. If He said that the woman should be pardoned then:
   1. It could be said that He was teaching men to break the Law of Moses.
4. Their trap backfired!
   1. At first Jesus stooped down and wrote with His finger on the ground.
   2. The scribes and Pharisees continued to insist on an answer.
5. John 8:7: Jesus said, “Stone her! But let the man that is without sin be the first to cast a stone.”
   1. There was a silence—and then slowly the accusers drifted away.
   2. Jesus and the woman were left alone.
6. How the Pharisees treated authority and the woman:
   1. They were condemnatory. It never occurred to them that authority should be based on sympathy; that its aim should be to reclaim the criminal/sinner.
   2. They were not looking on this woman as a person at all; they were looking on her only as a thing, an instrument whereby they could formulate a charge against Jesus – *Where was the man caught in adultery?*
7. How Jesus treated this woman:
   1. Jesus exhibited genuine pity.

The basic difference between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees was that they wished to condemn; He wished to forgive.

They knew the thrill of exercising the power to condemn; Jesus knew the thrill of exercising the power to forgive.

* 1. Jesus gave this woman a challenge.

Jesus confronted this woman with the challenge of the sinless life.

He said: "Go. From now on, sin no more."

1. Saints Today: Do you have compassion towards your brethren when they sin? (Gal. 6:1-2)
2. Challenge:
   1. The next time someone confesses a sin, either to you in private or in public, let them know you forgive them (from your heart) and that you love them (say the words), and if you are both huggers (again, social distancing!), give them a hug! *(James 5:16)*
   2. Don’t allow them to be swallowed up with sorrow (II Cor. 2:1-7 – *vss. 6-7)* by continually bringing it up or holding it over their head, but “reaffirm” your love towards them (II Cor. 2:8).
3. Having the compassion of Jesus moves saints to forgive and reclaim!

# The Pharisee and the Sinful Woman

1. Luke 7:36-50: Jesus invited to the house of Simon the Pharisee and has His feet anointed by a sinful woman.
2. When a guest entered such a house three things were customarily done (Lk. 7:44-46):
   1. The host placed his hand on the guest's shoulder and gave him the kiss of peace.
   2. Cool water was poured over the guest's feet to cleanse and comfort them.
   3. Either a pinch of sweet-smelling incense was burned or a drop of rose oil was placed on the guest's head.
   4. *Good manners demanded these things, and in this case not one of them was done!*
3. The woman was a sinful woman—a notoriously sinful woman (they knew her reputation).
   1. She brought an alabaster vial of perfume (perhaps very costly perfume).
   2. She wished to pour it on His feet, for it was all she had to offer—but as she saw Him the tears came and fell upon His feet.
   3. Here, a sinner anoints the Lord!
4. Simon the Pharisee:
   1. Simon was conscious of no need and therefore felt no love, and so received no forgiveness.
   2. He felt that prophets, like Pharisees, should be separate from sinners.
5. Jesus:
   1. Recognized her faith and forgave her sins, though they were many!
6. Saints Today: Do you have compassion to teach the lost? (Jude 22-23)
7. Challenge:
   1. The next time you encounter someone (brother or unbeliever) you believe to be a lost cause due to their reputation, don’t write them off but give them a chance! (II Tim. 2:24-26)
   2. Our goal in teaching the gospel is not to judge a book by its cover but to snatch souls from the snare of the devil! (Ananias learned that with Saul of Tarsus! – Acts 9:10-16)
8. Having the compassion of Jesus moves saints to teach and redeem sinners!

# Conclusion

1. There is a reason we are told to be Christ-like, and not like the Pharisees.
   1. Mt. 23:1-3: They do not practice what they preach, “Do as they say; not what they do.”
   2. John 13:34-35: Jesus was an example in all that He said and did!
2. Christ-like compassion will move us to help people in need, even when we see someone in sin:
   1. To offer them the physical help as we are able – James 2:13-17; I John 3:17-18
   2. To offer spiritual help when needed: to seek to correct and forgive, not to humiliate and condemn – Col. 3:12-14; II Tim. 2:24-26
3. It’s easy to treat one another (and other people) like the Pharisees, but more of a challenge to treat one another like Jesus treated people!
4. Do you show the compassion of the Pharisees or do you show the compassion of Jesus?
5. If you are not a Christian, heed the words of Jesus *(Mt. 11:28-30: “Come unto Me…”).* He has shown such compassion for you, He died and paid your debt with His own blood and promises rest for your soul. Repent and be baptized!
6. If a Christian with unrepented sin in your life, His compassion is extended to you as well, repent and He will forgive you. We will forgive you. Repent before it’s everlasting too late!
7. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!