



COMPASSION

Small group questions

Hebrews 10:32-29 – The danger of compassion

Leaders – if the questions make no sense or you don't know the answer – please contact the preacher!

1. Read Hebrews 10:32-29. Is there anything from the sermon or passage you didn't understand? Or something that stood out for you in a new way?

Remember the early days?

2. Any one brave enough to share your story about a significant romantic interest?
3. What about someone keen to share their early enthusiasm in serving Jesus? What were the stand-out features of that early enthusiasm?
4. Read again vv32 and following. What did the author mean when he talked about receiving the light?
5. What were the consequences for these readers of their early enthusiasm?
6. Why do you think they were able to stand their ground in the face of suffering?
7. Their suffering arose from insult and persecution, from standing with those who suffered insult and persecution and from their sympathy and compassion for those in prison for their faith. How is that they were able to "joyfully accept" the confiscation of their property? (see v34)
8. In the message, Mark shared the story of St John's Vancouver in Canada. This church forfeited their property in 2009 because their diocese (after many years of the neglect of God's word and sound doctrine), voted to bless same sex unions and ordain practising homosexuals. Their compassion for the lost, their compassion for their city and nation, led them to take this action. The Diocese of Brisbane, is heading down a similar track. Do you consider that one day we may have to consider similar drastic action should the Anglican Church of Australia or the Brisbane Diocese change its doctrine of marriage or decide to offer a blessing for same sex couples? Or should we just press on and remain faithful, standing our ground where we are, knowing what a massive distraction such action would be and what a great loss in terms of our buildings and facilities?

Don't throw away your confidence!

9. v35 – *So do not throw away your confidence* – what will help us maintain (or revive) our early confidence in God?
10. What is the reward we will receive if we persevere? (What did Mark point that reward?)
11. In what ways would your life look different now if you had all the zeal now for the Lord Jesus, you had earlier?
12. Under what circumstances are you most tempted to 'shrink back'?
13. Why do you think Mark has a similar confidence in us that the author had for his first readers – namely – that we are *not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved!*
14. Who is the supreme and wonderful model for our perseverance? Read again Heb 12:1-3.

Date: 15 October 2017
Services: 730am, 930am Tewanin and Peregian (video)
Series: Compassion
Passage: Hebrews 10:32-39
Title: *The danger of Compassion*
Outline: Remember the early days?
Don't throw that confidence away!

Remember the early days?

- Do you remember the early days of a key romantic relationship?
- If that's never been your experience - think to a movie you've seen or a book you've read...
- ...where in those early heady days - you're so keen to see one another... so excited at the prospect... sense of tingling anticipation...
- then your significant other walks knocks on the door or walks into the room... and your heart skips a little beat... and you can feel the excitement...
- and then you're together again... and you just feel like you want to hold the other person's hand... and suddenly you feel her hand against yours - his hands against yours... and they meet...
- And then there's that first kiss... tentative at first... will this be welcomed? Is now the right time? // Ah the early days //
- And then as the relationship matures and deepens... you still feel that same excitement... but it's also matched by thoughtfulness and sacrifice... you'd do anything for this person... you'd go out of your way for them... you'd give something up for them... you want to make their life better - you want to help them meet their challenges... You feel deeply when they hurt - you're glad for them if something makes them excited... //
- Did it last for you?
- I'm sure around this room - there are many great stories of long and happy marriages...
- some... where - let's say - things that didn't work out so well...
- And some in the middle of those two extremes - where the initial excitement - and the early sacrifices, gave way to taking each other for granted... and merely **enduring** rather than **enjoying** one another... //
- What about your relationship with **God**? //
- Now - many of us here have known Jesus our whole lives... and that's fine... please don't think you're any less a Christian because you don't have a dramatic **before** and **after** story...
- But what about either when you **first** became a **Christian** - or when you were **young person** - you went through a time when you were **tremendously enthusiastic** about your faith?
- My good friend and colleague John Dickson who became a Christian I think around 15 or 16 under the influence of his high school Scripture teacher, tells the story that long before he learnt it wasn't cool - he would just enthusiastically and naturally tell people about Jesus... //
- Did you go through a time when you were **so** keen - so excited - **so** clear - **so** focussed - that you'd do **anything** - **risk** anything for Jesus?
- You were just so excited to **serve** Jesus - so **blown away** by his grace to you - so pleased to know you could be **forgiven**... so **captivated** by Jesus' kindness to you in his **cross**... that you'd do **anything**...
- Every morning you'd spend time hearing from God as you read the Bible and speaking to him in prayer..

- **Nothing** kept you from **church**
- You were keen to serve on just about **any** roster
- Every time you were with non-Christians you just were **so** excited you couldn't help yourself say something about Jesus...
- And you were **generous** with your **money**
-generous with your **time**...
- filled with **compassion** for the **lost**... for the **needy**... for the **hungry**...
- were you were **unstoppable**... ///
- do you **remember**? ///
- Were you *ever* that way?? /// (Don't worry if you weren't – there's still time!!!)
- The readers of this letter to the Hebrews were...
- Look with me at 10:32 – *Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathised with those*[2011 NIV you suffered along with those] *in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property because you know that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.*
- Wow... let's slow down have a look here...
- Those earlier days when you had received the light...? What a beautiful way of describing what happened when they met Jesus... they *received the light*. They were transferred from the kingdom of darkness, to the kingdom of light – to the Kingdom of Jesus!!
- And when that first happened – they were so committed – so keen.
- That was especially seen as they stood their ground in the context of suffering... they either received insult and persecution **themselves** or they stood side by side with those who did!
- Persecution broke out against Christians at various times, to varying degrees across Roman Empire in the first century. Whether the writer is referring to that which occurred under Emperor Nero or Domitian – we just don't know... and in some ways – that's OK... because the message is the same no matter the specifics...
- ...that these Christians endured... they stuck fast in the face of insult and persecution...
- and v34 – they *sympathised*... [2011 NIV – they *suffered along*] with those in prison...
- there's that concept – compassion... in fact it's often translated “compassion” in other English editions... the Greek is the word from which we get our English word *sympathy*.... It means being emotionally connecting with another's suffering...
- ...in this case – those in prison – presumably as a result of persecution!
- ...but friends – that sympathy – or compassion – **cost** them...
- this is not like sitting watching TV and a World Vision ad comes on and it pulls on our heart strings and we feel sympathy for 30 secs... and then go back to watching *Home and away* or whatever...
- as a result of standing their ground in the face of persecution and insult... as a result of their compassion for those in prison... they suffered the (middle of v34)... **the confiscation of their property**...
- except did you notice my deliberate mistake?
- I said that they *suffered the confiscation of their property*..
- ...that's not what the text says.

- It says they *joyfully accepted* the confiscation of their property.
- How do you – how **can** you “**joyfully accept**” the confiscation of your property?
- Only because – right at the end of v34 – because *they knew they had better and lasting possessions...*
- Ie, they knew that their true home was in **eternity**...
- Perhaps ringing in their ears were the words of Jesus in John 14 – *in my Father's house are many rooms, if it were not so, I would have told you....*
- If you believe God has something better in store for you – you can arrive at a place of joyfully accepting the confiscation of your property... /
- Their association with those in prison – their compassion for those people – their sympathy – was dangerous.
- This is compassion that **costs**.
- It involved **sacrifice**. ////
- Taking a stand for the truth, costs!! //
- I've had an association with the an Anglican church in Vancouver, Canada since 1996.
- It is St John's Shaughnessy (now known simply as St John's Vancouver)...
- In 2003 or 4... the synod reps from their church – and I think three other churches in Vancouver, in the Diocese of New Westminster, walked out of the annual synod when that gathering decided to bless same sex unions and ordain active homosexuals...
- Not quite the same situation as here in Hebrews... but it was because of their compassion for same sex attracted people... their compassion for their city.... their commitment to God's plan for family life... they took a stand...
- You see – we don't best love or serve same-sex attracted people by saying 'look that's fine' and change our doctrine of marriage to suit their particular attractions... just as we don't best serve or love alcohol attracted people by giving them the keys to BWS and say 'go – be you who are'!
- Our compassion for same-sex attracted people, results in us loving them so much – that we long for them to know the love and compassion of the Saviour... along with the joys of knowing and loving Jesus – and the brilliance of his plan for marriage since the beginning of time...!
- And so in the end – so **passionate** were they at St John's for the for the truth of God's word... and so **compassionate** for same-sex attracted people and for the **families** and for their **city**... they **left** the Anglican Church of Canada. ///
- In the Anglican church, the local congregation, doesn't actually own the property they meet in. The local congregation might have built it, maintained it, **extended** it, developed it... but it's owned and held in trust for the Anglican Church by the Diocese... “head office” if you like.... so if you want as a whole congregation to leave the Anglican Church of Australia (say), then you don't get to keep your property!
- Even though St John's Vancouver fought this in the law courts, arguing that it was the Anglican Church of Canada which had left behind and walked away from the doctrine of the church, not **them**... they **lost**. Even taking it to court, cost a lot of money!
- So they had to leave their excellent facilities in the well-to-do Shaughnessy area and find somewhere else to meet.
- Making contact with a Seventh Day Adventist church about 2km away, they have been renting their facility (because they meet for church on Sat.), ever since.
- St John's was the largest congregation in the Anglican Church of Canada... around 800 people! 98% left.

- They had their final service one Sunday – got in their cars, drove up to their new location – and have been pressing on in faithful ministry ever since...
- And that story is repeated all over Canada and in various parts of the United States... they set up a whole new association called the “Anglican Network of North America” and many congregations had to start again from scratch or still meet in school halls and other rented premises!
- Yes – commitment to the truth, compassion for the lost... compassion for the city – for the good of the nation - can be dangerous and costly.
- Compassion here in Noosa – can be dangerous and costly – to suffer with others – to get your hands dirty with others... to get to work in the cause of others – will cost you and could be dangerous in terms of persecution...
- One day **our** compassion for the lost... our commitment to the truth... our stand on the Word of God - on marriage... may cost us **our** buildings...!
- I don't mean to be alarmist... but the fact is that the leadership and many of the clergy in the Brisbane Diocese are completely committed to same-sex marriage and welcoming active homosexuals into the ministry...
- And I figure sometime in the next 10 years – maybe sooner – we'll have to make a decision... a costly decision... well - I hope – I pray – and please do join me – in praying - that it never come to that!!
- But we'd better get back to our text...
- Because there's a **point** to the writer of this letter reminding the readers of *those early days after they had received the light*. There's a point about reminding them how they stood firm in the face of insult and persecution.
- That is –

Don't throw away your confidence

- V35 – have a look with me - *So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded... you need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.*
- What we are being encouraged to do here is to remember our **first love** – our first **confidence** in Jesus as Lord – our first **enthusiasm** in serving him...
- To **remember** that – to **embrace** that **again** – to **live like** that again...
- Imagine if you had again now – all the **same** excitement you had when you were first married...? (if indeed you have been married...)
- Some of you may be saying – “Mark – we've never lost it...” that's great...!
- ... but for others – the intensity of the early months of going out and the thrill of the early years of marriage – doesn't last... but imagine if it were back in place today...
- and all the little touches guys you did then, you did again..
- and all the little surprises girls you used then, you used again...
- there would be new energy – dare I say – a renewed passion – a new drive to focus on what's important – to see things in perspective.. to make sacrifices for the other – to live generously for the other!! //
- Same with the **Lord**...
- Imagine if you captured again all the zeal for Jesus you had at **first** – or had when you were **younger**...
- **Praying with passion**...
- **Serving with love**...

- Reading the word with **curiosity** and **wonder** and **surrender**...
- Dealing with **opposition** with a **strength** and **determination** of **character**...
- A willingness to **speak** of Jesus – not caring a **hoot** what anyone thought...
- A passion – a **compassion** – to care for others – no matter the **cost** or **inconvenience** or **insult** or **persecution**!!
- Where **godly priorities** drove all you did and everything you decided and **nothing** got in the **way**!!
//
- As we live in an increasingly **secular** society and in a church that is increasingly **hostile** to Biblical Christianity – we need brothers and sisters to rediscover and embrace and live again with the love for Jesus we had at first!
- V36 again – *you need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what? – not what you have **earned** – but what he has **promised**!*
- V37 – 38 – you see – Jesus is coming back... and if we live by faith – by trusting him – all will be well... but if we shrink back – retreat – remain quiet – hide our light under a bushel – are embarrassed about what we believe... then our Lord will be not be pleased.
- But I share the optimism of the writer to the Hebrews... the confidence he has in his readers is the same confidence I have in you!! Have a look with me – v39 – ***but we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved!***
- My brothers and sisters – remember the early days when you had received the light? Capture them again.
- And be prepared to be unswervingly faithful to Jesus and compassionate to others... no matter the danger or the cost or the ramifications or the insults or persecution.
- For what we need in the church world-wide today – and what we need in **this** church – is undying – unswerving commitment – on fire love for Jesus which is lived out in compassion each and every day. //
- Where would we be friends, if when Jesus faced the cross, he had said – well – that's a bit inconvenient. That doesn't suit... and he shrank back?
- But no – in love for you – in compassion for you - he went forward to the cross – despite all that lay ahead..
- And in that same commitment, dedication and compassion – *we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.*

Hebrews 12:1.. *And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that **you** will not grow weary and lose heart.*