

WHY INVITE OTHERS TO HEAR OF JESUS?

COMPASSION//REVERENCE//LOVE

Sermon 1 - Matthew 9:35-38 "Compassion"

Introduction

- i. What's your impression of the upcoming invitation series? Relevant? Helpful? Or?

Three Sunday talks - all services

14 Oct Where's all the evidence?

21 Oct Why aren't you more obvious?

28 Oct Hasn't science disproven you?

Two Wednesday night seminars

7.15pm-8.30pm - Tewantin site

17 Oct Why didn't you stop the abuse?

24 Oct Why don't you end all the suffering?

- ii. Do you think they reflect some of the common 'belief blockers' of 2018?
- iii. What do you think of these two quotes Mark put on the church Facebook page this week?

"We must remind ourselves of the basic truth that church people go to churches, and unbelievers generally don't."

"If unbelievers are going to join us on a Sunday morning, it isn't because they heard that our band is awesome or that I (as pastor) am relatable. It's because their friend loves their church and couldn't wait for the opportunity to invite them."

Do we love our church? Enough to be looking for opportunities to invite others?

1. **How clearly are you seeing?** - read vv35-36

- a. What was the 'good news of the Kingdom' Jesus was proclaiming? What was the relevance of the healing of diseases and sicknesses which accompanied the proclamation?
- b. What did Jesus mean when he described the crowds as '*harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd*'?
- c. Why are they like this?
- d. Why did Jesus have such a strong reaction to seeing the crowds? (What is behind the word used?)
- e. Are people who don't know Jesus today, also like this? What are some of the signs this may be true?

2. **What's your response to what you are seeing?**

- a. Why don't we have the same reaction as Jesus did?
- b. How do non-Christian funerals demonstrate the reality of people who are 'sheep without a shepherd'?
- c. Jesus said that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few and that we should ask the Lord to send more workers. Why don't we? What does he mean by 'workers'?
- d. How might Jesus answer such a prayer?
- e. Do you have a longing for friends and people to know the Shepherd and have their needs met? (See Psalm 23 for the blessings knowing that the Lord is our shepherd brings.)

3. **How's your compassion?**

- a. Our hearts go out to those on our TV who have lost everything in flood and bushfire. Why don't they go out in the same way to those who have no shepherd?
- b. When (if) we do begin to feel a great compassion the shepherd-less, what might result?

Lord, give us a real heart-felt compassion for those we know and love, who don't know and love you. Send more workers into the harvest field to tell more people about where they can find a shepherd who will meet all their needs. And may compassion stir us up and embolden us to invite others to hear of Jesus.

Date: 23 September 2018
Services: 730, 930 P (via video) and 930 T
Series: Why invite others to hear of Jesus?
Passage: Matthew 9:35-38
Title: Compassion

Outline

1. How clearly are you seeing?
2. How passionately are you praying?
3. Wk 1 How's your compassion
Wk 2 How's your reverence?
Wk 3 How's your love?

INTRODUCTION

- On Oct 14, we begin a series of sermons AND seminars, to which I'm hoping we might be bold enough - fearless enough - to invite family members and friends who don't usually come.
- Here's the plan
- The overall theme is "*If you could ask God anything*"
- The three **Sunday sermons**:
 1. Where's all the evidence?
 2. Why aren't you more obvious?
 3. Hasn't science disproven you?

The **Wednesday night** seminars during those weeks (on 17 and 24 October) will give a chance to have a **longer address** and to take **Q and A** from the floor...

The seminar questions are:

1. Why didn't you stop the abuse?
2. Why don't you end all the suffering?

I'm **sure** they people you know, have raised objections to *your* trust in Jesus, based on **some of those or similar questions**.

But of course, asking people to attend a **church service** - is **never easy**...

A **Wednesday night seminar** that's held **at** a church - only *marginally easier*! //

I posted an article on Facebook this week and these two grabs from the article stood out for me:

"We must remind ourselves of the basic truth that **church people** go to **churches**, and **unbelievers** generally **don't**."

And:

"If unbelievers are going to join us on a Sunday morning, it isn't because they heard that our band is awesome or that I (as pastor) am relatable. It's because their friend **loves** their church and couldn't **wait** for the opportunity to invite them."

So... I wonder how true this is for **you**...? /

Do you **LOVE** your **church**...? /

....and are you **regularly** looking for an opportunity to invite **others**? ////

But here's the **question** - *why*? /

Why WOULD you invite someone else along?

Some of you will be thinking

- 'Well that's the **last** thing I'm about to do!'
- 'I don't **know** anyone who will come!'

- ‘They’ll **laugh** at me or openly **ridicule** me or **rubbish** me to others or **avoid** me or **isolate** me... or something **else!**’
- ‘Anyway – religion is a **private** thing – why should I **bother** them...? most people just want to be left **alone** in regard to this sort of thing... so I should just mind my **own business** and let **them** mind **theirs...**’
- ‘Surely I should respect whatever it is **they** believe and leave them to it and not try to force what **I** believe on **them!**’ //

And I **understand** those points... and there have been times in my life where I would have made the **same** points...

...but in the end they are either just **lame excuses...**

....or reflect a **very poor understanding** of how **good** and how significant the **Good News is!** //

So we are going to spend **three** weeks – before our **3-week invitational series**, asking the question – “**why bother?**”

...why put ourselves **out?** – why put **friendships** on the **line?** – “Why invite **others** to hear of **Jesus?**”

So – here’s where we are heading... and this will be our outline across today and across the following two weeks:

1. **How clearly are you seeing?**
2. **What’s your response to what you’re seeing?**
3. **How’s your compassion? (reverence and love)**

- So **first:**

1. HOW CLEARLY ARE YOU SEEING?

- Have a look with me at vv35-36 – ³⁵ *Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.* ³⁶ *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*
- Jesus had the **best** news in the world to share...
- That God was **real**
- That he **loved** his **people**
- That the kingdom promised to King David so long ago had finally **arrived** in his **coming...**
- There was going to be **victory** over **enemies**; **peace** would **reign**, **justice** would **come...** **relationships** will be restored - with God, with one another and with creation... and God’s people **perfected** in his **image...**
- And he must have had a **great** time going around all the towns and villages proclaiming this **amazing** news... and healing **diseases** and **sicknesses** – as a **glimpse** or **promise** of the **future** kingdom! ///
- But when Jesus saw the **crowds...** **what** did he see?
- He saw people who were **harassed** and **helpless...**
- Like **sheep** without a **shepherd...**
- He saw people who were **lost**
- Confused
- Dazed
- Hungry

- Thirsty
- Vulnerable
- Unprotected
- Easily led astray
- Easily taken captive
- People who were fearful
- Anxious
- Distracted
- Consumed by everything that is unimportant
- Chasing the latest fads
- Looking for satisfaction in the all the wrong places ///
- And because Jesus he saw them like this; we're told, he had **compassion** on them...
- That word we saw last year... from the **bowels** – where he was impacted... we might say he had a **gut-wrenching** compassion on them...
- We might say when we see something disturbing – my stomach just **turned** – or **churned!**
- ...**that's** how Jesus reacted, to what he saw as he looked at the **crowds**... //
- I want to ask this morning... how **clearly** are **you** seeing the crowds?
- Because brothers and sisters – whenever you are at the **shops**, at **work**, at **school** or **uni**, or at the **football**...
- At your **club**, at the **pub**, out at the **restaurant**...
- At the **family gathering**, at the **beach**, on the **bushwalk**, on the **cruise**, on the **plane**...
- The **patients** you see, or the **clients** you deal with at work...
- The **people** you're with at the **movies** or the **theatre**...
- ...*wherever* you go this week... ...you'll be **face to face** with – **side by side** with – **shoulder to shoulder** with – people are who **harassed and helpless**... like **sheep without a shepherd**...!! //
- Now – they won't necessarily **look** like that to you...
- They may come across as **content**, **happy**, **successful**... have everything **together**... **life is good** – **family is good**...
- When you ask them '*how are you*'? they'll say '*fine*', '*couldn't be better*'....
- And **some** of them of course *will* be fine – at least at the **superficial** level... //
- ...and they won't even **recognise** that they are harassed and helpless... because they've managed to **suppress** those feelings... and live life almost entirely on the level of the **superficial!**
- ...While **others**.... others will be keeping **dark secrets**... nursing unseen **brokenness**... living with an aching **emptiness**... which they'll **never** share with you ...//
- and friends, here's the thing – if the **suicide** rate is anything to go by...
- ...if the number of people on **anti-depressants** or in some kind of **therapy** is anything to go by
- If the amount of unhappy, **complaining** people is anything to go by...
- If the rate of **drug use** and alcohol **abuse** is anything to go by...
- If the **divorce rate**... is anything to go by

- ...if the number of times police are called every day to intervene in **domestic disputes**...
- ...then the **reality** of people's lives, **matches** what Jesus says here... that people **are harassed and helpless** – like *sheep without a shepherd*...
- ...and so are:
- Confused
- Dazed
- Hungry
- Thirsty
- Vulnerable
- Unprotected
- Easily led astray
- Easily taken captive
- ...fearful
- Anxious
- Distracted
- Consumed by everything that is unimportant
- Chasing the latest fads
- Looking for satisfaction in the all the wrong places ///
- How **clearly** are you **seeing**? //
- Some friends shared with me only recently that they'd lost a good friend to suicide...
- **Everything** in his life said he had everything **together**... successful in **career and family**; financially **secure**...
- His death came a **shock** to everyone...
- ...because you see in **fact** you see, he was **harassed and helpless**... //
- And we have to start **seeing** people as **Jesus** saw them... and know that if someone doesn't **know** Jesus... has no contact with their **creator**... //
- ...if they have **no idea** that God has made them for **relationship** with **himself**...
- ...if they have been **suppressing** the truth about God all their lives...
- ...then they need **someone** to point them to the **shepherd**!!

• so second:

2. WHAT'S YOUR RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU'RE SEEING?

- When Jesus saw these shepherd-less people, he was filled with **compassion**... //
- Do **you** feel **any** of that same compassion for the *harassed and helpless* of **our** day?
- If you're seeing **clearly** // I'm sure you **will**
- If you see people as **Jesus** saw them, I'm sure you will know **something** of **Jesus'** compassion...
- For these people are **lost**! //
- They don't know where they've **come** from; they don't know **why** they're **here**; they don't know who they are; they don't know what the **future** holds... //

- You'll see it clearly at funerals taken by a **celebrant**... there's no **hope**, no **comfort**, no **direction**, no **peace** the celebrant can **possibly** give... //
- The erroneous thought that the deceased is "only in the room next door" is frankly an **insult**...
- ...or that "we all take a little bit of the person home with us in our hearts... and so they will live on..." is a **nonsense**... but the celebrant has **nothing** else to say – and you can see the grief and despair in the gathered crowd... **sheep** without a **shepherd**...
- But friends... that's only **one** tangible expression of the **helplessness**, which unbelievers actually **live** with **every day**... ///
- What did Jesus tell us to **do**??
- *³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.*
- Isn't that **brilliant**?
- **More** people need to **know** there's a **wonderful** shepherd available... // so **ask** the Lord to send more **people** to tell **more people** about **Jesus**... **Jesus** the **shepherd**. //
- This doesn't mean **paid professional ministers**...
- I think it means people like **you** and **me** – ready to **care** enough – who have enough **gut-wrenching compassion** – to **point** people to Jesus the Great **Shepherd**!!
- "*Ask*" // – "*ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field.*"
- **Huge** job. / **Tiny** workforce. / So **pray!** //
- He's the **Lord** of the **harvest**.
- He's in **charge**. It's **his** field. **His** harvest. **His** work.
- So we ask **him** who is in **charge** – **please send out workers...!**
- The great mission of sending people out, starts with **prayer!**
- When you're seeing things **clearly** – as **Jesus** sees them – you **pray**... //
- Note that you might just be the answer to your own **prayer**...
- Let me ask you // – do you **long** to say to your family, to your **friends** who don't know Jesus... do you **long** to say to them – in one way or another *something* like...
- "do you see the **shepherd** over there?? - ///
- "Do you **see** the shepherd?
- "He **loves** you and **knows** you
- "He wants to take **care** of you
- "In fact he wants to meet all **your** needs...
- "He longs to lead you to **green** pastures and **quiet waters** and **right** paths...
- "He wants to make his presence **known** to you in your **darkest valleys** so that you have no **fear**
- "He wants to **reconcile** you to your enemies so that you can sit at a **table** and feast with them
- "He wants to **pursue** you with his goodness and love
- "He longs to take you into his **presence** for all **eternity**...!" //
- Friends do you **long** for your unbelieving friends and family to discover in the **Lord Jesus** what **you** have discovered? //
- To **know** him as **you** know him

- To be **known** by him as **he** knows **you**?? //
- If you're seeing **clearly** – than you **WILL** want that for them – you'll **long** for that for them!! //
- And you'll both **PRAY** for more workers...
- And **look** for ways to tell them where they can find the shepherd.... //
- You may even **invite** them to a place where some of their very real **questions** will be **answered**!!

3. HOW'S YOUR COMPASSION?

- There are **loads** of things that stir up compassion within us...
- Images of people who have **lost everything** in **bushfires** or **floods**
- People dealing with the impact of **mass shootings**
- Images of **refugees** – both in our **own** nation – or in massive **refugee camps overseas**...
- Images of **children** – **malnourished** and facing **death**
- Images of families picking over **dumps** in third world countries as their only source of food...
- People who have been massively injured by **burns**...
- Images of families who have lost **children** in an **accident**... ///
- We would say that “our hearts go out to those people” in *those* situations... and **countless** others... //
- We're helped by the **images**... we can imagine something of their pain... //
- And if you're **not** moved by any of those – well – we would describe you as '**heartless**'... //
- ...but **reality** of all those around us who are *harassed and helpless* – like *sheep without a shepherd*... is no **less** real.... // and in **fact** – on many levels... will have far **greater** impact – for it will have eternal **implications**! /
- We must ask the Lord to help us see more **clearly** the **reality** of all those for whom the Lord is NOT their shepherd.... /
- To see clearly that for these people – they are sadly left wanting in **SO** many **ways**...
- they have **no shepherd** to lead them beside **quiet waters**... or **paths** of **righteousness**...
- they are **tremendously** fearful in the valley of the shadow of death because they do not **know** the presence of God
- they are still at **war** with their enemies, so there is **no table** to feast at...
- ...they do **NOT** have **goodness** and **mercy** following them all the days of their life and will **NOT** dwell in the house of the Lord **forever**...! //
- Shouldn't our hearts go **out** to such **people**? /
- How's your **compassion**? //
- here is a call this morning to **lift** our **eyes**...!
To lift them from **ourselves** and our own little **worlds** we often inhabit...
...to lift our eyes out of our **books** and or off our **devices** for a moment...
to lift our eyes even from our own **challenges** and **problems** and **anxieties**
and to see around us – people – **living, breathing, real people**....
...whose greatest need is to be **cared** for, **loved**, **provided** for, **led** by, **fed** by - Jesus the **Good Shepherd**.... //

And when we've seen clearly these *harassed and helpless* people – these **lost** and **dying** people... then surely // – we will begin to feel a **gut-wrenching compassion of our own!!! //**

- And **when** we feel **that**... then **perhaps** – with a **passion** and a **fervour** we've not felt before – we'll **beg** the **Lord** of the **harvest** – to *send more workers*...
-perhaps... we'll even **beg** the Lord for the awesome privilege of **being** one of those workers!!
- Perhaps we'll **beg** the Lord for a timely opportunity to **invite** someone to our upcoming **series**...!
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- Why on **earth** would you **bother** to invite someone to our '**If you could ask anything**' series? //
 - Because you **you've begun** to see the reality of those around you as *harassed and helpless*,
 - ...and from right down in **here**... a **gut-wrenching compassion** for them is **slowly** but **surely developing**!