

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is compassion? Is it a feeling? A thought? An action?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

One day Moses said to the LORD, “You have been telling me, ‘Take these people up to the Promised Land.’ But you haven’t told me whom you will send with me. You have told me, ‘I know you by name, and I look favorably on you.’ If it is true that you look favorably on me, let me know your ways so I may understand you more fully and continue to enjoy your favor. And remember that this nation is your very own people.”

The LORD replied, “I will personally go with you, Moses, and I will give you rest—everything will be fine for you.” Then Moses said, “If you don’t personally go with us, don’t make us leave this place. How will anyone know that you look favorably on me—on me and on your people—if you don’t go with us? For your presence among us sets your people and me apart from all other people on the earth.” The LORD replied to Moses, “I will indeed do what you have asked, for I look favorably on you, and I know you by name.” Moses responded, “Then show me your glorious presence.”

The LORD replied, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will call out my name, Yahweh, before you. For I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose. But you may not look directly at my face, for no one may see me and live.” The LORD continued, “Look, stand near me on this rock. As my glorious presence passes by, I will hide you in the crevice of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and let you see me from behind. But my face will not be seen.” **Exodus 33:12–23 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

Mercy is the act of withholding deserved punishment. Grace is the act of giving an undeserved blessing. Compassion is the heart of God moving through his mercy and grace first to us, and then *through* us.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

How has God been compassionate to you?

What attitudes in you are inspired by God’s compassion?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, teach me your ways. Fill me with gratitude for your undeserved mercy, grace, and compassion towards me. Fill me with mercy, grace, and compassion in a very real way towards the people in my life.

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

How can God be powerful and good and choose not to alleviate all pain and suffering on earth?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, “The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.” The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. **Lamentations 3:19–26 NIV**

Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor you. With all my heart I will praise you, O Lord my God. I will give glory to your name forever, for your love for me is very great. You have rescued me from the depths of death.

O God, insolent people rise up against me; a violent gang is trying to kill me. You mean nothing to them. But you, O Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. Look down and have mercy on me. Give your strength to your servant; save me, the son of your servant. Send me a sign of your favor. Then those who hate me will be put to shame, for you, O LORD, help and comfort me. **Psalms 86:11–17 NLT**

Sermon Insights: The origin of the word “compassion” helps us grasp the true significance of the word: the Latin word “compati” means to “suffer with.” Compassion is not just being aware of someone’s heartbreak, but their heartbreak becomes our heartbreak. Another’s suffering becomes our suffering.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Some people question God’s goodness or God’s power because he does not alleviate all disasters, pain or suffering on earth. This judgment against God is based on a set of false expectations of God and a misunderstanding of God’s plan. He will make all things new...just not yet...and not here... Are you managing your expectations of God to include his power and presence and compassion for you IN your difficulty? Remember, we’re not home yet!

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, you told us that we would have trouble in this world but to TAKE HEART because you have overcome the world! Thank you that we have eternity with you in Heaven to look forward to as we continue in this broken world to trust and obey!

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Where do you see reminders of Jesus’ compassion most clearly in this season?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.”

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them. **Luke 2:8–20 NLT**

Sermon Insights: God coming to earth and dying on a cross for our sin—these two acts are the greatest acts of compassion the world has ever known. And they boldly express God’s love, heart, and compassion for his creation.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

The harsh situation Jesus was born into reminds us of Jesus’ choice to participate in our suffering. How does this help you practically draw closer to Jesus and the people in our life?

What is a meaningful way someone has shown you genuine compassion?

Who needs you to show patience and kindness today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for coming to this earth to show us great love and compassion. Thank you for breaking the power of sin over us through your victory on the cross so that we can participate in your life and love!

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

When people look at your baby pictures, is it difficult or easy to recognize you?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

God sent a man, John the Baptist, to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. **John 1:1–14 NLT**

Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people. **Luke 2:52 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

When did you first recognize the “light” of Jesus? Was it difficult to understand at first?

Take a moment...think about it until you feel something more deeply about it: if you have believed in and accepted Jesus, God gave you the right to become a *child of God*.

If Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is living IN you, then how will that affect your relationships today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, your compassion astounds me. Your love overwhelms me. All of my difficulties fade away in their power over my mind and heart in the presence of your light and life. You have given me significance and security far beyond what I could have asked or imagined. Thank you for creating beauty out of ashes!

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

What do you believe is REALLY worth waiting for?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon was there.

He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, “Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!”

Jesus’ parents were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby’s mother, “This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul.”

Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.

When Jesus’ parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God’s favor was on him. **Luke 2:25–40 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Do you believe that the time you patiently wait on God to fulfill his promises is valuable time?

Intertwined with the excitement of God’s promises being revealed was dark prophecies of deep pain and division. Jesus came to bring truth—some would hate him and lie about him. Jesus came to bring life—and he would be killed because of it. Yet God would bring a new Kingdom and new life to the new people who would be filled with the Holy Spirit and become new creations. Does this fill you with gratitude, humility, and purpose?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for fulfilling promises for those who trust in you and wait expectantly!