

Sermon Notes



Speaker: Patrick Mead

7/20/25

Compassion and Kindness

Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-35

Intro: The shortest biography of Christ is found in Acts 10:38 where his whole life is summed up in the phrase: "He went about doing good." Jesus wasn't born accidentally, he didn't die accidentally and the character which He showed among us was not born out of reactions or accident. He lived an intentional life.

Just as beliefs become attitudes which become actions, Jesus believed certain things and he had attitudes towards people and things and we can see what those beliefs and attitudes were by his actions among the people 2000 years ago and his actions among us.

When Compassion Moves Into Action

- In very short order, historically speaking, Christians had a profound effect upon their culture.
 - Infanticide and child abandonment began to fade away. (this is also true in other cultures where Christians make an impact – Wednesday nights topic)
 - Women were given rights and no longer treated like property.
 - Gladiatorial spectacles ended.
 - Crucifixion of criminals ended.
 - Brutal treatment of slaves was ended by law.
- There is something in Christian doctrine which changes things in the culture at large.
 - Compassion is fellow feeling, but it is also more. (1 Peter 3:8) It is a requirement that we feel with others and for others. (Romans 12:13-17) This can only be a command if it is not natural for most of us.
 - Compassion on its own is nothing but impotent sentimentalism. Compassion must give birth to action, the acting out of our inward feelings.
 - We need to correctly direct the actions that flow from our feelings. In scripture, care and compassion are personal directives. We are not given permission to hand it over to the government so that they can tax and distribute as those in power see fit. WE act. The obligation is upon us.
 - Rust and waste are witnesses to our over consumption and lack of compassion and generosity.
 - Changing our heart is supposed to then change our lives. (Ezekiel 36:26 – A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you, and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh)
- God goes first, as always. He takes note of who we are and what our limitations are. (FIVE -- Psalm 103:14)
 - He then acts to protect us. (1 Cor. 10:13 – not tempted more than we can bear)
 - He feels along with us. (Zechariah 2:8; Psalm 56:8)
 - He acted on our behalf when He sent His Son. And how did that Son act among us?
- When Jesus healed the deaf man in Mark 7:32-35 he took him aside so that he was not embarrassed or startled.
 - In Luke 7:11-16 he was deeply touched by the widow's grief. Then he acted on that feeling.
 - Even after the resurrection and ascension He did not stop his fellow feeling. When Saul of Tarsus was persecuting the Christians, Jesus said He felt the pain. (Acts 9:3-5) As in Isaiah 53 and Hebrews 4:15, He feels along with us. (which is why those who care for the weak and broken are caring for Him)
 - Paul tells us that we are to continue this way of thinking and living. (2 Corinthians 11:29) Paul kept the jailer from committing suicide in Acts 16:24-28.
- Generosity
 - This is the "action" part of compassion. It is the verb that follows our faith. It does not need to be a grand gesture or a big gift. Jesus says he will never forget even the giving of a cup of water in his name. (homeless shelters in summer)
 - Do a serious survey of your home and goods. Are you using it. Do you need it? Is it still good and solid and useful? Share it.
 - And remember snowflakes and bunnies. We are nothing on our own but, together, we can make miracles happen in front of our eyes.