

WHATEVER IT TAKES 4.3.18

God goes to great lengths for each and every person. He loves, He draws, He calls, He woos, and He follows through.

Testimony: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSQvXstfQos> A Jewish Lawyer coming to Christ.

He works through us – through our invitations to others, through our testimonies. Our testimony is what we have – the facts we can testify to of what Jesus has done in our lives. Acts 26 – when Paul shares his story, he weaves the gospel, the good news within it. See the honour he still brings to those who hold their power in the hand to kill him for it. We stimulate thinking while we share His love.

Whatever it takes, that not one be lost. Shine a light and speak a word that people would see and know Christ.

Key passage: Mark 12:1-2 'A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ²They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³Some men came, bringing to him a paralysed man, carried by four of them. ⁴Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralysed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷"Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? ⁹Which is easier: to say to this paralysed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? ¹⁰But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So, he said to the man, ¹¹"I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ¹²He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone, and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

There are extreme personalities in Scripture. It is an arresting thought that Jesus forgives sins (Romans 3:23; 6:23 – sin is everybody's problem and Jesus is always the answer).

These four fellows, 'they' saw a paralysed fellow, couldn't get in to bring him to Jesus, so they 'lowered' him in. 'They' – no one knows them; 'they' – saw and realised they needed to do something and so 'they' did. Extreme action and worked together because they knew that Jesus had what this man needed; they dug through the roof right on top of where Jesus was.

'They' reminds us of 'us' – we see needs everyone and do what we can. We can't change the whole world but could change the world of this one man.

Matthew 25:35ff Two groups of people on Jesus left and right. Both groups seemed oblivious what they had done or hadn't done. In the account of the Good Samaritan, the one who stopped and helped would ask 'why wouldn't I?' 'They' these people, take the lids off situations to see people set whole and free. 'They' have **compassion**.

See compassion defined – in more modern dictionaries it has been mellowed to only sympathy, pity or even concern. Matthew 9:36 – Jesus saw and was moved (with compassion) – Jesus saw this crowd as sheep without a shepherd.

Com (together) passion (suffering)

God is trying to bring us to the place where there is 'gut-wrenching' ('visceral feeling')

'They' had compassion because compassion always moves to action, moves a situation forward.

It also has the power to withhold action when a process needs to be completed – as in the Prodigal son, where the Father waited until the son turned. Compassion in this instance had the ability to restrain from short circuiting the process; compassion in this instance compassion could hold the Father back until such a time was the right time to run towards the son.

Compassion messes with us, disturbs us, our innermost parts. Jesus could hear the thoughts of those in the House, Mark 2. He could see why they were thinking those things; He knew how broken they were and where they had come from; we see the compassion in His question to them – causing them to consider why they were as they were.

We must be moved by compassion, not just for the man to be lowered through the roof but for all others.

Can we be disturbed? Can we be disturbed beyond sympathy? Hebrews 5:11-14 says we can train this.

2 Corinthians 7 shows the process and the work and the fruit of godly sorrow. This is like the process of compassion. We see something, and it takes our senses captive; something happens, and our body responds chemically; slows us down – asks us to process – range of feelings occurs from guilt, to hopelessness, to anger, of being overwhelmed. A Godly sorrow comes upon. If we don't short circuit the process we see the work that compassion does – first within us, and then to move us.

An earnestness comes to do something, a diligence comes; an eagerness to clear ourselves (not just an attempt to easy conscience, but the ability to stand before a judge and defend our cause and preparedness to do what we can); an indignation (Mark 10:14 Jesus was indignant at those who tried to stop the children coming to Him), a fierceness, anger at injustice; accompanied by an alarm that is essentially a trumpet call to arms, a call to move as an army with longing, with concern and with readiness to see justice done (a readiness to right the wrongs that sin created).

'They' had great faith. Faith is visible, and Jesus saw their great faith. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Jesus saw the boldness of their faith, and He moved upon it Himself.

There is a culture of care, for individuals, for children, for nations. Genuine compassion changes the world. God will disturb us to the place where my world is bigger is bigger than me, my and I, to a place where we can. We can't change the whole world, but we can change someone's world.

'They' in Mark 2 is 'us' now – no frills, no one knows us, and Jesus is working through us – in our Jerusalem, our Judea, our Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Psalm 2:8 'Ask of Me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.'

Those observing say: 'We have never seen anything like this!'