

# Bite Size Bible Study

## Compassion #242 By Lee Logue

Matthew 9:35-38

*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. When he saw the crowds, he had **compassion on them**, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

Mark 1:40-41

*A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean". Jesus was **filled with compassion**. He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"*

Luke 7:11-15

*Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, **he had compassion** on her and he said, "Don't cry."*

*Then he went up and touched the bier (coffin) they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.*

Have you ever been involved with someone in a situation that just tore at your gut?

Maybe it was a family member who was going through an especially tough time, and you were helpless to remedy the situation.

Maybe it was a neighbor or a church member that was having a really stressful time and you were so empathetic that you cried. You tried to console them but couldn't find the words to say.

Maybe you were compassionate for the people that live in squalor and have no hope of anything else. Or even a country ripped apart by war and innocent bloodshed.

The Greeks had a word for that gut wrenching compassion – *splanchnízomai* (Strong's G4697). It literally means "**one's heart contracts convulsively**" at the sight of a desperate need.

It can be observed by someone crying, in deep sorrow, or in extreme cases vomiting (pardon the explicitness of the last one). Finding oneself in that situation shows a deep commitment and compassion for one's neighbor.

Our neighbor is our parents, our family, our friends, anyone within our field of influence, even our enemies, even those whom we do not know. Anyone with whom we have contact.

I'm sure Jesus has *splanchnízomai*. Consider how He feels as He sees all of the events taking place here on earth. Jesus showed us that He has *splanchnízomai* in the three verses at the beginning of this study. Those words, in bold, were translated from this Greek word.

Read those verses again with this new understanding of compassion.

It's worthwhile to sit and consider all that is happening in this world and how that makes God feel. Does He have a gut wrenching feeling for all the evil that is happening?

If you are considering this, let's bring it a little closer to home. How does it make Him feel when He sees what I am doing or not doing? I do some things close to right, but some improvement is possible. But I am ambivalent about other things that I could be doing. And, sorry to say, I do things that make me an enemy. I am all over the spectrum. That can't make Him happy, but He still loves (hesed) me.

Try replacing your name where "I" is in the above paragraph. Then give your answers some time to sink in.

Could we do better? Definitely.  
Will we do better? Eventually, I believe so.

Along with compassion, even a possible part of that compassion, is forgiveness.

*Therefore, is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was **moved with compassion** (*splanchnízomai*), and loosed him, and **forgave him the debt**.  
Matthew 18:23-27*

In this parable we can see the relationship between compassion and forgiveness. It is interesting that Jesus uses the image of a king having compassion and then forgiving debt. It gives us a picture of Jesus (King of kings) having compassion (*splanchnízomai*) on us and forgiving our shortcomings.

When we have compassion for someone, forgiveness follows easier. It is difficult to have a deep feeling for someone and not be able to forgive them of their mistakes.

When someone harbors unforgiveness, it shows itself in many other symptoms. For example, having a critical spirit, grumbling, decreased relationships with others (even God), and sometimes even in physical illnesses.

When we forgive someone, it doesn't necessarily remove our pain that was caused by the person's actions, nor does it necessarily remove any consequences of that action. It

does free each person involved to begin the healing process. But conversely our unforgiveness feeds on itself and leads to more hurt and pain in all of our relationships.

We might do well to consider who and what we are unable to forgive. So that our compassion for that person will begin to look like Jesus' compassion for us.

**Do we have a "heart that contracts convulsively"?**

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