

Think - What involvement and commitment do I have in God's missionary movement? Going, Sending, Praying, Giving, Serving? How do we reflect the compassion God has for all nations?

Study Six - The God of all Compassion – Read Psalm 103, 2 Cor 1:3-5

This majestic psalm lists for us the many blessings there are in knowing God. It's always a good thing to count the ways in which God has blessed us – Why? The psalmist says, 'don't forget all his benefits!' We are a forgetful people so we need reminding! Just look at all the adjectives, all the actions in these verses: What does God do? He forgives, He heals, He redeems, He crowns, He satisfies...the list goes on. There are also things that God does *not* do. He doesn't accuse, He doesn't treat us as our sins deserve or punish us. This psalm is full of vast descriptions of how lavish God is towards us. Use the psalm to praise Him for who He is and for what He has done.

Think – do I spend time each day thanking God for His mercy and love for me? Do I pray for opportunities to share His love to those around me? Does my 'inmost being' praise and bless the Lord?

Study Seven - Compassion in the Family of God. Read Col 3:12, 1 Peter 5:5

Living in a family is not easy at times! When Paul wrote to the Colossians he had some instructions on how to live as God's children, in God's family. Having been challenged to 'set our minds on heavenly things, along with putting to death sinful desires (both of these things are day by day battles!) – Paul then reminds us *who* we belong to. We are chosen by God and dearly loved by Him – so how are we to look? Our 'clothes' should reflect something of His nature: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. This is a list we can work on. But there's more! We are to forgive one another *as He forgives us*. How does He forgive? He doesn't keep a record of wrongs. His love covers a multitude of sins. Does ours?

Think – What kind of 'visual aids' are we to a watching world who may never read God's word, but they do 'read' us? Do we reflect the compassion God has for a lost world as we serve Him in God's family?

United Free Church of Scotland Women's Home and Overseas Committee

Bible Study Notes

2020/2021

Christian Compassion



When you think about God, our Heavenly Father – what characteristics come to your mind? You may think of His love, His kindness, His goodness and His mercy. Or perhaps His holiness or anger against sin. These brief studies will focus on the compassion of God and how see it in the Person of the Lord Jesus.

The LORD is like a father to his children -tender and compassionate to those who fear him. For He knows how weak we are; He remembers we are only dust. Psalm 103:13+14 (NLT)

Study One - Compassion for the Needy. Read Matthew 9:35-38

As Jesus went to villages and cities, He SAW the needs of people. They needed healing, help and hope. He FELT their needs. They were sick and harassed. He was MOVED with compassion as He saw their weariness, their lostness. He ACTED in response...but perhaps in a surprising way! Look at what He said to His disciples. *'The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.'*

Think - As we see the needs of people around us, both locally and globally; What is our response? Do we see, feel and act as Jesus did? Jesus preached Good News to those in need AND told His disciples to PRAY for more workers.

Study Two - Compassion for the Enquirer. Read Mark 10:17-22

Jesus was often asked questions. As people listened and watched Him, some wanted more information. It's always good to ask! This young man came with a request about eternal life. He came with a REQUEST – 'What must I do?' Jesus' RESPONSE pointed him firstly to the Lord who is good and to the Law, to obey. The man's REASONING was that he had obeyed everything! Look at Jesus' response. He loved the man. He saw what He was lacking. The challenge for this man was his wealth and riches. This was his priority. Jesus' REMEDY for him was to follow Him so that he would then have treasure in Heaven. The young man RESISTED. He came to Jesus humbly enquiring, but left sadly, with only his riches.

Think - What are we doing to build up treasure in Heaven? What does my heart focus on? What do I give my time, gifts and energy to?

Study Three - Compassion for the Grieving . Read Luke 7:11-17

This story paints such a sad picture. The only son of a widow has died. We cannot imagine her grief. Hope and security lost. Her future bleak. But that isn't the whole picture. Jesus is in this picture. The widow, though comforted by a crowd of friends, faces this loneliest of sorrows as she buries her son. The response from Jesus is, quite simply this – His heart broke. The only Son of God is full of compassion for this Mum who has lost *her* only son. He saw her, He spoke to her, He went to her, He raised her son and He gave him back to her! Jesus was with her in her grief and, in this instance, transformed sorrow into joy.

Think - What lessons can we learn about showing compassion to those who grieve? How can we bring 'Jesus into the picture' when we are in a sad situation?

Study Four - Compassion for the Doubter. Read John 20:24-29

All Christians suffer doubt at one time or another, but the example of doubting Thomas provides both instruction and encouragement. Jesus did not have to answer Thomas's request. Remember that Thomas had spent three years intimately acquainted with Jesus witnessing all His miracles and hearing His prophecies about His coming death and resurrection. He also heard the other 10 disciples talk about Jesus' appearance - that should have been enough, but still he doubted. Jesus knew Thomas's weakness, just as he knows ours. When Jesus came a second time to the disciples, He said, 'Come here Thomas, come and see and touch.' Jesus knew what Thomas needed. When we doubt, let's remember that we have two things Thomas did not have—the indwelling Holy Spirit and the written New Testament.

Think - What do we do when we doubt? How do we help others who doubt the love of God or the promises of God?

Study Five - Compassion for the Nations. Read Psalm 46:10, Jonah 4:11

All through Scripture, we read of God's world-wide plan to not only call one man, Abraham, causing him to be the father and leader of the nation of Israel, but for that nation to be a 'light' to all other nations, pointing them to the one true God, Lord over all. Our God is a missionary God – sending His Son, into time and space, ultimately to redeem a people to live for Him, love Him and long for Him. As believers, we are part of His world-wide Church serving until Jesus returns, gathering believers from every tribe, language and people. What a glorious hope!