

Sermon on Luke 10:21-42 prepared by Jonathan Shradar

Luke 10:21-42

Those who truly encounter Jesus are made compassionate and consumed with him.

I want to be like a Jedi when I grow up.

Watching the new Obi-Wan Kenobi series and a remark in the first episode struck me. And I promise it is related to what we see in our Scripture for today!

The Jedi are being hunted... and as they are trying to find them, the lead Inquisitor says: "The Jedi leave a trail of compassion wherever they go... it's like they can't help themselves."

The Jedi code is too central to their existence. They help those in need. A trail of compassion wherever they go.

Would this be said of us? Christians. Those to be known by our love for one another. Those destined to be the aroma of life and death to those we encounter.

As we travel on the road with Jesus we begin to see a clearer picture of who disciples are. How we live. What we long for.

Here it is through one of the best-known parables and the steady service of a saint that the picture forms for us.

These are those that know Jesus.

Those who truly encounter Jesus are made compassionate and consumed with him.

Context - I have skipped over the sending of the 72 in the first half of chapter 10. Much of the same as we saw before in sending the 12. Ministry going before the Lord. He called them, equipped them, and sent them to preach the kingdom.

Responding to their fruitful ministry, Jesus rejoices in the Holy Spirit and we discover how it is that we know him.

“At that time he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, because this was your good pleasure. 22 All things have been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son desires to reveal him.” -- **Luke 10:21-22** (CSB)

A clear statement of his divinity, Jesus and the Father, known as one. And you can't know God unless the Son reveals himself to you.

This is exciting, good news. We don't have to be elite or climb the religious ladder (wise and intelligent), we come as infants, in our need, he reveals himself to us and this is life, salvation, and hope.

In his good pleasure, these things were hidden from some and revealed to others. It is impossible for spiritually dead humans to know God the Father or his Son unless the Son reveals both.

“Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him. 5 He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace 8 that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he purposed in Christ 10 as a plan for the right time — to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in him.” -- **Ephesians 1:3-10** (CSB)

This is enough to set our feet to dancing! **Chosen**, adopted, grace lavished upon us, redemption, forgiveness... all in his good pleasure. God takes pleasure in redeeming you - making himself known to you.

And how great it is when you see it!

“Then turning to his disciples he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see the things you see! 24 For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see the things you see but didn’t see them; to hear the things you hear but didn’t hear them.” -- **Luke 10:23-24** (CSB)

The difference between what the prophets and kings saw and what we see is “the difference of twilight and noonday, of winter and summer, of the mind of a child and the mind of a full-grown man” J.C. Ryle

Not something for the whole crowd, but for those who truly encounter Jesus, don’t just know of him, but know him and see who he is and what he does for us.

“Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied about the grace that would come to you, searched and carefully investigated. 11 They inquired into what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified in advance to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — angels long to catch a glimpse of these things.” -- **1 Peter 1:10-12** (CSB)

What glorious grace!

From this revelation, from this elation, Jesus is challenged by a lawyer, a scribe, and we begin to see how his disciples are different. How the teaching of Jesus is to shape and transform his followers.

The One revealed, Jesus, frees us to be compassionate and consumed.

Compassionate

“Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Here a biblical expert (in the law that is) tries to “test” Jesus. He is checking his theology and trying to catch him saying something off. But it is the question on all of our minds!

And Jesus turns the question back onto the Scribe. “What is written in the law, how do you see it?”

So he quotes Scripture...

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” -- **Deuteronomy 6:5** (CSB)

And “love your neighbor as yourself;” -- **Leviticus 19:18** (CSB)

That’s the correct answer... do this and you will live.

To obtain eternal life one must love the Lord with all that one is—with one’s mind, heart, emotions, and will. God must be supreme in one’s affections, and at the same time, one must love one’s neighbor as oneself.

Scripture will make clear to us, and our own lives will reveal it, that there is none perfect but Jesus. What the law demands it has no power to achieve. This is why the redeeming work of Jesus is vital!

And maybe the Scribe gets this, he isn’t perfect and can’t live it. Unless... unless the definitions fall the right way. “And who is my neighbor?”

The story that is his answer provides the picture of what it means to be a neighbor (not who they are), this is how a disciple of Jesus lives.

Jesus then tells the parable of the Good Samaritan. Of the man traveling the treacherous road through the desert. He is robbed and beaten, left for dead.

A priest and a Levite (both religious, good Jews) pass by. Neither stops to help the beaten man. They both cross to the other side of the road to avoid him. In attempts to be kind to these characters, we often hear talk of their temple duty (maybe the priest was running late) and desire to remain ritually “clean” (which would be ruined if the man was dead). Whatever their reasons, however, the point is neither of them stopped. They had no compassion. Two Jews, refusing to help another Jew in need. Not neighborly.

There are lots of stories like this. And they are always told to prove how awful humanity is. Someone is harmed and crying for help yet no one responds to the screams and pleas.

In our neighborhood in DC, there was a small plaque to mark the place where one such story occurred. A maid was attacked and raped and killed in broad daylight, next to a bank building, and no one helped. Tragic. Nothing of that place remains (its a Whole Foods now).

We hear these stories and we know - someone should have done something! That is how we are supposed to feel when Jesus tells this parable.

But there was someone who stopped to help. To bandage wounds, to nurture, to provide shelter and food. These are the right things to do.

It is who did it that is scandalous. It was a Samaritan.

We have mentioned Samaritans before. The remnants of the northern tribes of Israel. Generations of mixing with outsiders and occupiers. Those worshipping on another mountain. Less than human to many Jews.

This is the type of neighbor that Israel would rather build a wall to keep out. The type that ruins the neighborhood.

For us it might be the good Russian, the Democrat, the Patriots fan. Those you are prone to think less of...

When the Scribe asks who his neighbor is, it seems that the man hoped Jesus would justify his bias against certain kinds of neighbors. Instead, he uses his bias to reveal real compassion.

“Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The Scribe was stuck... Who proved to be a neighbor? “The one who showed mercy to him.” “Go and do the same.”

Not just an answer to the Scribe's question - putting imagery to his teaching. Love of neighbor as self - here is what it looks like and it blows out prejudice and cultural norms. Our neighbor is the least, the enemy, those who oppose you.

This is the way of Jesus. His followers are people of compassion.

“The command to go and do likewise (v. 37)—that is, show mercy to others—is not an “entrance requirement” for eternal life. Rather, it is a call to follow Jesus’ way of loving God and others from the heart. Indeed, it is simply a life mindful of the way we have been loved, instead of living out of self-justification (v. 29).” GTB

As we have the opportunity, let us work for the good of all. With compassion. Comfort others as we have been comforted.

To see the unseen. To heal the wounded. To restore the broken. To feed the hungry. Compassionate people following our compassionate King. It is life in the Kingdom.

We are called to bring the good news to the ends of the earth, but following Christ as a disciple means treating every person as a neighbor, loving everyone in our path. May the focus on mission never blind us to needs right in front of us.

Like Jedi, compassion follows us. We can’t help it.

We can’t help it because we are consumed by Jesus.

Consumed

From the parable, Luke inserts a story, likely chronologically out of place. And I think it is because he is building the case for what disciples look like. Martha’s service, and Mary’s devotion, show us where the disciple gets the fuel for their compassion. Being with Jesus.

You likely know this story well too. Two sisters (Lazarus is their brother), living in Bethany, near Jerusalem, providing a place for Jesus.

On this occasion, Martha was the hostess. While Jesus came in and taught, her sister Mary was at his feet listening to him. But Martha was distracted by the tasks at hand. Likely preparing a meal and managing the home now full of guests.

Frustrated by it all, Martha interrupts Jesus and says “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? So tell her to give me a hand.”

I love that Martha doesn't wait for Jesus to answer before she instructs him what to do!

“Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has made the right choice and it will not be taken away from her.”

So much to be done. Things need to be just right. Presentation matters. Linens need ironing. Food needs to be prepared. Water poured. Wine uncorked.

But Mary is doing it right. One thing is necessary. Sitting at Jesus' feet.

I was tempted to describe this as “connected” because disciples do need to remain connected to Jesus, tethered to him by the work of the Spirit in our lives. But what Mary shows us is something more. When the tasks remain. When the clamor of doing is increasing. She is consumed with what Jesus is saying. It is the overriding posture of her life, to be at his feet. Abiding. In communion with her King.

I am often stuck in the midst of this decision. Am I doing enough? Producing enough? How full is my task list in relation to proving my worth and faith?

“Serving is good and necessary, but Martha has lost the truth that all service must flow out of one's relationship with the Lord, that all service must be rooted in the joy of knowing God as one's treasure and one's pleasure. The story of the Good Samaritan is misunderstood if it is sundered from a living and vital relationship with the one true God.” TS

We become compassionate as we spend time with Jesus and let him, his way, consume us. We still work but we work from a settled place of communion with Jesus not to prove ourselves.

No one is right before God by virtue of one's obedience. Instead, good works demonstrate one truly belongs to God.

“Before the gospel is a call to doing it is an invitation to the presence of the Lord. To follow Jesus as a disciple means to be with him and listen to him. This abiding

with and depending on the Lord alone enables us to take up our cross daily and follow him (9:23).” GTB

“What I can do for Christ is little. What he did for me is so amazing—so matchless, so unspeakable, so glorious—that I ought to give that the major part of my attention. I may sometimes run with Martha to do what Christ needs of me, but I think I should more frequently sit with Mary to receive from Christ what I need from him. Our religion is not of a first-class order if it is altogether looking at our practice and not at the finished and perfect work of Christ.” Charles Spurgeon

What must I do to inherit eternal life?

“Love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself.”

I can love God with all of who I am because Christ loved me. Because he gave himself in my place, perfect, obedient, compassionate, totally committed to the Father.

The One whose feet Mary sits at will have his same feet nailed to a cross for her, for you, and for me. To see us. To free us. To heal us. To provide for us.

In turn, we have compassion for others, because Jesus has compassion on us.

We prioritize time with Jesus, this becomes to us the one thing necessary, because he has welcomed us, embraced us, made his heart our home.

Were we are inclined to solve situations and prove ourselves through finished tasks or accomplishing work “for Jesus,” he desires for us to experience his love and live from that, labor from that place.

“God’s highest value is not efficiency, especially considered in any simple or mechanistic sense - it is love. He is more interested in beauty than speed or process; he is more concerned to lift our gaze, to provoke song, to stimulate our imaginations than he is to just get things done. God is not wasteful or negligent, but purposeful and wise, patient and intentional as he works.” Kelly Kapic
“*You're Only Human*”

“Christianity’s goal or telos has always been to grow in love and communion with God, our neighbors, and the rest of his creation.” Kelly Kapic

Through a parable and interaction with those he loves, Jesus shows us this.

And it is those compassionate and consumed that Jesus uses to change the world.

He is not done doing it. And now, like then, he is looking for those that will make the right choice and never have it taken away.

Those who truly encounter Jesus are made compassionate and consumed with him.

“Then turning to his disciples he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see the things you see! 24 For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see the things you see but didn’t see them; to hear the things you hear but didn’t hear them.” -- **Luke 10:23-24** (CSB)

That’s you, saints...

Be Consumed - Hear him in his word. Find him in his church. Speak with him in prayer. Make it your life’s endeavor to encounter Jesus and never turn back.

Be Compassionate - See your neighbor, because you have been seen by Jesus. Love, serve, and give of yourself, because Jesus has given himself for you.

... and do it again. Be consumed. Be compassionate.

Let them hunt us. Let it be easy to track us down because we can’t help it. We can’t help it because we have been with Jesus.