

**INTRO** → Watching news over summer: a few stories dominate...  
Floods across UK...10th anniversary of death of Diana...Foot & Mouth...Rhys Jones...

1 stands out most → Madeline McCann... Why such attn = Empathise & sympathize w/ parents...  
Put ourselves in their shoes...  
Hearts go out to them; Pray for them;  
Try & do something about it if we could...

Describe this feeling? **COMPASSION...**

Def. = Deep awareness of & sympathetic pity & concern for suffering & misfortune of others.  
Compassion = Coming alongside & embracing someone's heartache & wanting to do something about it.  
Emotion of care & concern that drives us to action.

Today: Each One Reach One Series → Cultivating our Compassion for the Lost.

**Matthew 9:35-38** & Pray...

**vv.35-38** Example & teaching of Jesus → Help us in cultivating our compassion for the Lost...  
Serve us in "Each One Reaching One"...

4 things that have struck me from this passage that I want to share with you this morning...  
Trust that God by HS will stir our hearts w/ compassion & fresh faith for lost...  
Motivate us to go & Each One Reach One...

### 1. **GREAT NEED**

**v.35** Jesus = On a mission!  
Matt = Wants us to get a sense of Jesus' tireless & comprehensive activity...

Jesus = On Tour → Continually on road going from village to village; town to town; city to city...  
Purpose → Teaching, proclaiming gospel of Kingdom, healing people...

**v.36** Ceaseless activity is motivated by his compassion...(get to that in a second)  
**BUT:** **What stirred his heart to compassion?** He saw the crowds & their great need...

Jesus' heart went out to them b/c he see their need...  
Crowds: Men & women, boys & girls = Dangerous situation..

Matt = Paints picture of people being like sheep...  
**BUT:** **Sheep w/o a shepherd**, leaving them harassed & helpless...

Sheep = Defenseless animals...w/o a shepherd they are vulnerable to any danger...

**W/o a shepherd =** Vulnerable to predators → Bears; Wolves; Lions...  
Even w/o predator... **NOT:** Good foragers ∴ in danger from starvation...  
Stupid animals → Get caught in thickets, thornbushes, etc

Matt → Jesus viewed crowd = **People in great danger w/o any ability to escape.**  
**Jesus' filled w/ compassion for them...**

In 2000yrs → Situation hasn't changed!  
The people Jesus observed in the crowds that day = Just like the people in the crowds today

21<sup>st</sup> century = People w/o Christ are **sheep w/o a shepherd...vulnerable...in a dangerous situation...**  
When we look upon the crowds (& the 1's around us) our hearts should be moved w/  
compassion b/c of the great need we see.

Unbelievers you know → Might not seem to fit that description...  
Might look: Happy, successful, satisfied, content...

**BUT:** Truth = No matter how good or bad these people seem...  
No matter how happy or successful or assured or content w/ life these people seem...

W/o Jesus Christ = Under righteous wrath of God for sins committed against Him...  
No peace w/ God...No hope of eternal life...One way ticket to hell.

To make matters worse → They don't even realize the perilous predicament they are in!  
**NB: Frog Illustration or Sheep grazing on mountain sides!**

You & I → **See those around us w/ the eyes of Christ...**  
**DON'T** be misled by the superficial appearance of confidence, etc...  
Must recognize them as sheep in desperate need of a shepherd...

See them as Christ sees them; See the great need...  
If we view them correctly it should have the same affect upon us as it had on Jesus...

## 2. **GREAT COMPASSION**

**v.36** Saw crowds; Saw need = Compassion on them.

Jesus → Saw perilous predicament; deep awareness of their danger...  
Pity & concern (Compassion) for their suffering & misfortune...

Compassion drove him to go from village to village; town to town; city to city...teaching, proclaiming, healing.  
Jesus' compassion = Fuel & motivation for his rescue mission...

Study Life of Jesus → Compassion = Hallmark of his life & character & motive for ministry...

E.g. **Mark 1:40ff** *And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.*

**Luke 7:12ff** *Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.*

**John 11:32ff** *Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?" Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb.*

In fact: **John 3:16** reveals: **Compassion = Primary reason for Jesus coming...**

Extent of Jesus' compassion = Ultimately revealed in his death on a cross...  
Paid ultimate price to redeem us from sin & rescue us from wrath.

Jesus had great compassion b/c he saw the great need of the crowd & it drove him to act.

You & I → Our need is to feel compassion when we see *their* need.  
Our need is to care and love like Jesus did.

**NOT:** Called to die on a cross for others...

**BUT:** See need of others...Compassion → Move us to reach out & share gospel - only saving message.  
Christ's compassion = Sacrificed his life.  
What will we sacrifice? Time, leisure, comfort, sleep, money?

**Want to grow in compassion?** Honestly? Compassion doesn't come to us naturally. We need help...

John Piper: "[Compassion] is a work of grace in our hearts and, for that reason, the product not of works, but of prayer."

Pray: For eyes to see lost as Christ sees them...eternal welfare in mind...  
That what we see would affect our hearts in same way it affected Christ...

### 3. GREAT POTENTIAL

v.37 Surprising change... Matt → Having provoked us w/ Christ's e.g.  
NOW: Draws attn. To Christ addressing his disciples...

Having seen great need of crowd...Having seen great compassion of Jesus...  
Christ draws our attn to see the **great potential**...

Point = Unbelievers = **NOT:** Only sheep who are in trouble...  
**BUT:** A crop ready to be harvested... (**See great need, but see great potential!**)

Temptation = See great need; feel compassion for our friends/family...  
**BUT:** Feel inadequate in ourselves...Feel these people are too far gone...  
(quickly think of 100 reasons why they wouldn't respond to gospel)  
We begin to wonder whether we are fighting a losing battle, is there any hope?

v.37 Jesus tells us to have an expectancy & hope that anticipates a harvest of such souls!  
Jesus tells us there are people ripe for harvesting; ready to respond to the gospel...

Seeing this great potential should fill us with great hope & excitement & expectancy!

**DON'T:** Look to your inadequacies, incompetencies & failures...  
**The potential all lies with God! NB: v.37** - his harvest (already determined!)

What looks impossible, what looks hopeless from a human point of view...

Remember **Luke 18:24ff** Rich young ruler...

Jesus says → Harder for rich man to enter kingdom of God than for camel to pass thru the eye of a needle.

Disciples → Who can be saved?

Jesus → **What is impossible with men is possible with God.**

### Bamboo farmers in Asia who grow a particular type of bamboo, a very valuable type.

Takes great expertise to cultivate it. Here's how it is done... (**This is true**)  
(Bear in mind that a typical season between sowing & reaping = 4 months)

1<sup>st</sup> Year = A supreme grade of seed is planted. Water & fertilizer need to be faithfully administered. End of year = NOTHING.

2<sup>nd</sup> year = Water & fertilizer need to be faithfully administered. End of year = NOTHING.

3<sup>rd</sup> Year = More necessary that water & fertilizer be faithfully administered.  
End of year = NOTHING → No visible indication of 3 yrs of hard work & cultivation.

4<sup>th</sup> Year = Water & fertilizer need to be faithfully administered in right amounts @ right time. Guess what? End of year = NOTHING.

5<sup>th</sup> year = Water & fertilizer need to be faithfully administered. Bamboo grows 90 feet in 30 days.

**Q:** If you didn't know the time it took and the way to cultivate this particular bamboo, how long would it take before you told the farmers they were wasting their time? 6 months? 1 Year?

Reaching out? Friend or family member? (Seems uninterested, unresponsive, antagonistic?)

**Don't give up! With God helpless sheep become a plentiful harvest!**

### 4. GREAT PRAYER

v.38 Great & important command from Jesus to his disciples...  
See Great need → Feel Great compassion → See Great Potential → Lead to great prayer...

John Piper: "*The strangeness of this command points to something very important. It is strange that the farm hands should be told to beg the owner of the farm to send out more workers into his harvest. Surely Jesus doesn't mean to imply that God doesn't know there is a shortage of reapers! And surely he doesn't mean that God doesn't care whether the harvest comes in! Why then are the farm hands told to beg the farmer to get more help? There is only one possible answer. God has willed that his miraculous work of harvesting be preceded by prayer. He loves to bless the world. But, even more, he loves to bless the world in answer to pray.*"

### **Each One Reach One #3**

### **Cultivating Our Compassion for the Lost (Matthew 9:35-38)**

When we consider evangelism & "Each One Reach One"...

MUST recognize → Prayer = Most vital part of what we can do...

Can: Teach 5-weeks & all be intellectually clear & informed...

Prepare & give out literature about the church...

Lay on events & meetings & outreach opportunities...

**BUT: WE MUST PRAY!**

Invite you: Prayer meetings are so vital → Don't see it as a week off...come & pray!

Consider fasting one meal each day this week & pray for the harvest & labourers...

Pray: For your own heart (see the need & grow in compassion for lost; see the potential & increased faith)

Pray for the persons you are reaching out to...

Pray for the efforts of this church...Pray that God would use us to reap some of the harvest.

Why fast? Fasting strengthens your faith by certifying through sacrifice that you really care.

Fasting says to God: I want the answer to my prayer more than I want food.

### **CONCLUSION**

See the need all around us - desperate people in need of a saviour...

Let that need stir your heart w/ compassion for the lost...

See the potential! God has prepared a harvest of souls...

Let's pray that God would use us to be his labourers in the field bringing in the harvest of souls.

**NOT:** B/c we just want a big church or fancy reputation...

**BUT:** B/c of our compassion for the lost and our desire for the glory of God in our city.

Let's pray right now...