

From Passion to Action (Matthew 9:35-38)

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[0 : 00] Okay. Thank you, Mani, for sharing the way of spending her vacation.

! Okay. Away from the country or just away from Auckland? How many actually did go to like Boxing Day shopping? How many? No? What if you see, how would you react to big crowds, you know? Is anything come up for me? Right? How many actually like going to where all the people are? Right? I'm sure Abraham and Cardia when you went to Hong Kong, how would you like, you know, going to peak hours in the MTR? Do you like that? No. June? No? You know what I mean? Yeah. And if you finally got into the MTR, Leo, right? When you get, when you finished work, finally you got to MTR and you think, you know, those people around you, you know, they are not people. They are things. Why is there so many things? Right? Yeah.

But I'm sure, you know, we, I don't like big crowds. All right. But when Jesus, when he sees crowds, big crowds, see the passage we just read? Yeah, I'm fine now. Yeah. Give it to me.

Give it to me. Right? Yeah. Thank you. Jesus' reaction is quite different from us. When we go, when we see, wow, there's so many people, I won't go. I'll go back home. You know? Oh, look at all the traffics. I'll stay home. But look, when Jesus, when he saw the crowds, what the Bible does this say? He had compassion upon them. I wonder, would we have that same kind of compassion when we see people? Matthew? Thank you, friend, for reading that. Now, this passage, Jesus sighed for the lost crowds, but he did something. He instructed his disciples to pray and ask God to send people to do something, to reap the harvest. People were ready.

[3 : 28] And I pray, I pray, I pray that God will give us a compassionate heart. I pray that this passage, may God speak to us. May God speak to us next time when we see people, next time when we're in a crowd, next time when you go back to school, that's tomorrow, next time when you go to work, when you see all these people around us. May God give us compassion for their lost condition.

And somehow, may God will motivate us to share the good news to them. Surely, I mean, we need to be prudent. We need to be wise. We can't just sell religions. That's the bad way to sell, right? We don't sell.

We share. But we can share with wisdom, right? But I think that's important. Do we have the compassion to those around us? So, two points today, very simple, from passion to action. But the problem is, I don't even have passion. What do I do? Well, pray. Pray the Lord to move me. All right? Now, if you see this picture, I'm not sure you can see it clearly. Now, those are not dogs. Those are not German shepherds.

What were they? They were wolves. Now, if those were your sheep, what would you do? I'll run because I'm scared of the wolves. But if you really care for your sheep, you would do anything to chase away the wolves, right?

[5 : 31] This is what Jesus said when he saw the people, the crowds around. Remember last time? I said, you know, there are always, the people always, a lot of people are surrounding Jesus.

So, wherever people Jesus went, he saw big crowds. And this is how Jesus sees them. He saw the crowds. He had compassion on them. Because what? Because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Now, this is what Jesus sees. I wonder, do we see what Jesus sees? When we see the crowds, when we see people, when we see our classmates, when we see our workmates, when we go back, like Chinese New Year's, all right, next Tuesday, all right?

You might have family dinners and maybe some relatives or friends you don't see often. How do we see them? You know? Oh, you got fatter.

[6 : 45] Oh, you put on weight. Oh, you got, you got less hair. I haven't seen for a while, your hair is getting less than this. This is how we see people, right?

But do we actually see what Jesus sees? Arrest and helpless? Even amongst us here.

And we might, oh, we come to church, we sing songs, or we put out our religious kind of appearance, right? But deep down, we might be harassed and helpless.

Tough, tough things happen in life. You know, as I'm aging, there's bits and pieces, you know, getting wrong in me, right?

I don't necessarily need to share it, but all, I mean, all will encounter issues here and there, right?

[7 : 55] And Jesus cares for us. But for those at the time, they were truly harassed and helpless because Jesus saw them.

And he described that what? Sheep without a shepherd. What did it mean? How were they harassed and helpless?

And you could see the verse before, verse 35. I did not quote 35. But the first verse 35, it was saying that, if you could read Chinese, I'll translate it in English.

He went through different towns and cities. And in synagogues, he taught them. Taught them what? With the will of God. And he preached the message of the kingdom of God.

And he healed all sicknesses. Right? This is what Jesus did. Why was he doing that?

[9 : 04] Because people were harassed and helpless. They were harassed and in the status of helpless because of sin.

And that's why Jesus had to come incarnated as son of God. He is up in heaven.

He is worshipped by angels. He is nothing that he could not do. But he came as a man. He limited himself in the flesh of a man.

Many things he could not do. Right? Why? Because he had compassion unto the lostness of man. He came to preach the gospel.

He came to heal those who are sick. And in the gospel, sicknesses really had a lot to do with sinful status of mankind.

[10 : 10] And even demon-possessed, he delivered the people from evil spirits. And everyone under the status of sin, we're all in a sinful status.

And that's why Jesus looked at us, you and me, with compassion. Prior to us being Christians, being saved, we were truly under the bondage of sin.

And Jesus came and had compassion on you and me and delivered us from the bondage of sin.

And that's why we can be here. Right? Here it is. Jesus looked at the people. They were harassed and helpless like sheep without shepherd.

Now, this, like sheep without shepherd at the time, that actually was describing the people. Why were they so helpless? All right?

[11 : 23] The Pharisees, the religious leaders at the time, they were supposed to be the shepherds for the people of God. Because they had the word.

Right? And they had the, they had, they were appointed by God. But somehow, these leaders, these religious leaders, they kind of, they were not good shepherds.

They did not do what shepherds meant to do. All right? If shepherds meant to protect, meant to provide, meant to, meant to care. But all those shepherds at the times, they did not do that.

That's why Jesus told the people, look, these shepherds, these religious leaders, these Pharisees, these scribes.

Okay? You must be careful. All right? What they tell you, yes, you can, you can, you do, you do what they tell. But do not practice what they preach.

[12 : 25] Because they themselves, they could only talk, but they do not walk. All right? They tied up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them onto others' shoulders.

Now, what was that? That at the time, they had a very integrated, a very structured religious system.

All right? People come and offer sacrifices, and they come to the temple, and everything was well placed.

Okay? But not helpful. People, they were happy to come to offer sacrifices just to get kind of a peaceful mind.

Hopefully, God could forgive me because I sinned. All right? But these guys, these religious leaders, Pharisees, they did not offer any comfort. They actually expanded the laws, which is given

to the Israelites, to 600 and something regulations.

[13:36] Right? Do not do, that's about, the negative commands, it was about 365. And positive commands is about 200 and something.

So, it all added up 600 and something. I couldn't even remember all them. Right? And that's what they did. And that's why Jesus said, look, they put heavy loads onto you.

But they themselves can't even observe all those laws. So, people, somehow, when they were under the bondage of sin, they were helpless, they were harassed, and they come to those shepherds, and the shepherds offered no helps.

And that's why, when Jesus said, if you remember Jesus in Matthew 11, 28, he said, come to me, all who you are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Just imagine, just imagine, just imagine how attractive Jesus would be when these people under the yoke of sin, they couldn't find any help from the shepherds of the day.

[14:46] And when they heard Jesus said, come to me when you are a heavy burden. Come to me, I will give you rest. They just flocked to Jesus.

That's why Jesus was so attractive. Because Jesus was the good shepherd. He said, I am the good shepherd. I lay down my life for my sheep.

Right? So, now, think. Just think. We come to Jesus because we know he is the good shepherd.

And somehow, Jesus wants us to be shepherds to others as well. Now, yeah, I am a pastor, pastor as shepherd, right? But, yes, I am with a title.

But, you are, you guys are all shepherds without a title. God wants you, whether how young you are, how old we are, you can be shepherds to bring healing, comfort with God's word, not your own word, right?

[15:50] To those who are harassed and helpless. Tomorrow, you go to school, just check. Just listen. Just open their eyes.

There may be many needs amongst our friends at church. I mean, in school. At work. Same thing. I am sure, Billy, you have many of these experiences.

People in trauma, right? People in grief. Surely, God used you as a shepherd. Right? But not without my own word.

There is a guy from our church. He is a professional, okay? So, he often gets referral from other professionals. And this particular family who actually had a real problem, okay?

Physical sickness, cancer. Last stage. And he was, the family was referred to this guy, to this brother at church.

[16:55] But he was in his workplace. And when he found out the situation, he really, really felt the compassion that came from God.

But he could not do much. He could do, he could try to help, okay? But because of, as a professional in New Zealand, you cannot cross the line, you know, whenever you want to and tell them Jesus loves you.

You've got to be very careful. If he or she complained, the family complains, you end up in trouble, right? So, he was trying to help, but he needed to be prudent as well.

But he, I mean, he said, I can't help but feel very much moved. And God wants me to do something. So, he shared that situation with us.

And he asked us to pray. So, we prayed. But because it's not a one-off thing. So, next week, the family went back. And this time, and he just felt that, oh, after we have been praying for him, and he just said, oh, I think I should be a little bit more courageous and do something.

[18:07] So, it was the opportunity that came, and he just sat individually with wife and the husband. And he noticed the wife was actually crying.

So, he tried to, you know, offer some comfort. And then to this, the husband, who was a cancer patient, and because he was in the room by himself with him.

So, he actually asked, do you have any religious belief? And he said, no, I'm just traditional Chinese, you know.

I just offer, yeah, I just, Bai Zhou Xi, you know. I just offer ancestral worship. And he said, oh, actually, I'm a Christian.

I come to, I go to PCPC. Oh, you live around here. Oh, I can, you know, I can accompany you to church one day, you know. And further on, he said, can I pray for you?

[19 : 12] It's pretty daring, you know. And the guy was kind of felt a little bit shocked praying for me. But eventually, he was willing to be prayed for, right?

We don't know how this couple go. We don't know what the story, how the story will carry on, all right? But that compassion, when we, yeah, we're willing to be moved by God, I'm sure God will open a way.

I think that's the first part, right? So, may God help us. Yeah, next time when you see people, don't just look if they were getting older or younger or fatter or slimmer or whatever.

Just pray if God will enlighten us. There's something that, of the needs and how, in a way, we can actually be used by God to touch, to meet those needs.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

[20 : 32] That's a description of the lots and lots of people, even here in New Zealand. Right? And globally, you know, this is the 15 global challenges.

When I look at it, man, even just one, I would be so overwhelmed. So, so much you can't do. Right? The more you talk about peace, the more there's no peace. Right? The more you talk, these guys, the world leaders, talking about environmental issues.

And the more, I mean, resources they spend on talking about it. Right? So, I think, yeah, I'm not saying that they should not do that, but it's just really, really overwhelming.

We cannot solve all the problems. But the first step, if we ask God to give us the compassion to those who are around us.

[21 : 45] When we are moved, then we can move. Right? When we have that passion, and God somehow will give us direction for actions.

And Jesus said, verse 37, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into the harvest field. Does it look strange to you?

Jesus said, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Then what happens? Go and reap the harvest.

But instead, Jesus said, ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into the harvest field.

[22 : 48] Isn't it better to go directly instead of just praying? So, does it look strange to you? You know? Yeah.

It's clear. We all know. If the fruits, the crops are ready, but there's no one to reap, no one to harvest, they'll rot. They'll go waste.

Right? Remember, during the COVID, and those farmers, those fruit farmers, terrible, horrible times.

Right? Because New Zealand wouldn't allow overseas workers to come. All right? And locals didn't want to work. So, all these crops got wasted.

And we all know this common sense. Right? Just as Jesus said, when all the harvests were ready, but there's not enough workers. And I believe, yeah, I mean, there are plenty of people who might be in the troubles and crisis.

[24 : 00] Actually, those are the time that would allow people to be open. But if there are not enough Christian workers, not enough Christians around them to tell them about the good news, they will be led astray.

So, I'm not sure if you actually realize, and around our suburbs, there are lots and lots of Mormons around.

Have you realized? And lots and lots of these J-dubs. Now, the Mormons are the one with the badges, right? And maybe those, the shrines around, the big one up in Manukau, that's why they had to send all these missionaries to come over.

New Zealand, to share about the bad news, right? But we have the good news, and no one went out to share. That's just like that.

All the harvests are ready, but there's not enough workers. Pray. Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the harvest field.

[25 : 19] Right? So, and you might say, oh, that's good. I'll do that. Send out people that I don't need to go.

Right? Here I am, Lord, but send him. And I don't have to go. But really, why Jesus asked his disciples to do that?

Because, because Jesus knew they're going to go anyway. Now, this is the last verse in chapter 9. But the first verse in chapter 10, he chose those who are around him, the 12 disciples, right? Apostles. And eventually, these had to go. So, when Jesus told them to pray, it's really, it's not praying to send others.

It's praying for themselves, get ready to be sent. Have you experienced that before? When I was praying for this, praying for that. Eventually, I felt I had the inspiration to go.

[26 : 34] Because I've been praying enough. And by that time, my heart is ready. Whether you pray or not, you have to go anyway. Right?

So, why not praying and get my heart ready? And when the time comes, I'm ready to go. And I'm more than happy to go. Right?

So, Jesus really was saying that, yeah, get yourselves ready and pray. And by that time, I send you, you're ready to go. Money, she shared about her Samoan mission trip.

Maybe too late. It's not too late. I mean, for the annual two. What she shared, actually, she shared a little bit different this morning.

She shared that even as a mom, taking two teenager kids, she did not have confidence. But God had confidence in them.

[27 : 42] And eventually, it actually helped them to bond together better. And somehow, God did wonderful thing. Right?

So, if we're willing to go, God can do amazing things. So, if Vanuatu in April, it's not too late.

It's still got about two or three spots. And later on in September, there's another trip.

And you're welcome to pray. Pray. Here I am, Lord. And maybe God will speak to me. Send me. If it's too far, oh, there's another opportunity.

We're going to, at a King's birthday weekend, I'll take some people to Napier. You can't really call it a mission trip, but there's cross-subcultural experiences.

[28 : 47] There's a Chinese church there. Okay? We've kind of known there for 20-something years. But that, a very interesting place. How many people have been to Napier? But not for church.

Right? Napier is a nice place. Oh, you've been there once. But you were young. You were so young then. Right? It's a nice place. But lots, I'll tell you what, this church there, is those people, the Chinese people, I can actually describe them harassed and helpless, in a sense.

I'm from mainland China. Some have been there for a long time. But, you know, Chinese will struggle financially, language, culturally, in a small town.

All the time, they want to make more money. But, at the end, they found that money is not everything. And all the kids, when they grew up, they all left Napier.

And all the old people just remained. So, it's a very typical kind of a place that is very different from Auckland. Very different from any Chinese churches in Auckland.

[29 : 59] So, if you're willing to pray, God may open up our eyes and see different needs. Yes. Sixteen years ago, we met this family.

The son had heart issues. The mom came to church because somehow she used to live around here, saw our church.

Husband was not a believer. And she came and said, oh, I'm going to give birth. But, eventually, we found out the son had a heart problem.

So, some brothers and sisters, we went and just to spend time with them. And it would be horrible. It's just horrible, right? But, praise God, because of the compassion of our brothers and sisters, they remained.

They stayed here. And James became a Christian. And that's how compassion drives us.

[31 : 13] And Henry had another surgery just three weeks ago, right? And, praise God, and Adel just said, we felt so loved.

Right? I just can't imagine. This is Henry's third surgery. Right? I just couldn't imagine if they never met, never came to church.

Right? And never had God in their lives. How could they have coped? Right? So, praise God.

There are people around us that God wants us to care for them. There are people like, we visited Mount Eden prison.

We visited other places. And we, yeah, God has enabled us to reach about six of these inmates who were actually all young people.

[32 : 18] Drug trafficking. Got caught. And now they've all gone back to Hong Kong now. But, praise God, because they're brothers and sisters who are willing to open up their homes, open up their times, even drive four or five hours up to Kaikowī to visit just for an hour.

And, yeah, some came to Christ. But some haven't. But that's not the biggest thing. But I think God allowed us to have compassion.

And those compassion turn into actions. So, I pray that the word of God will challenge us today. So, next time when we see your friends, people around you, pray.

Is there anything? Is there anything I can do? Right? So, this 2033 vision, all right, we're on the witnessing path.

Last time we talked about the Bible. And this week, witness. Next week, I'll talk about the neighbor path.

[33 : 34] God has placed us in our neighborhood. What we can do to our neighbors. And they had some objectives for us for this 2033 movement.

By 2033, that's seven years later, they really want four, how many, 4.5 million? Yeah, 4.5 million will have their testimony shared, testimony shared to others.

So, for you, you think, I can walk? Yes, I will ready myself. I'll have my testimonies ready.

Not just one. I'm sure God has placed us, God has blessed us in multi-dimensions. Get yourselves prepared in at least three or four testimonies of God.

So, if you want to do better, you'll run faster. I pray that I will share my testimonies to our school friends, to our workmates, to our neighbors.

[34 : 44] I was yesterday, we were talking to, someone was talking to Ross. And Ross said, in our workplace, we always encourage our staff to hear the gospel.

We always give them time, at least 30 minutes a week, to hear the gospel. That's great. And if you feel you can even run faster, you can even fly, ask God, maybe I have my testimony shared in a cross-cultural situation.

You don't have to fly over to Vanuatu or anywhere. Right here. There are different cultures, different ethnicities that God might have prepared us to share our testimonies.

Let's pray. Father, I pray that, Lord, may your word move us. When we see people, Lord, help us to see more than just the physical bodies.

But we see the soul, the spirits under harassment and, yeah, in helplessness.

[36 : 10] Lord, we have the gospel. Lord, give us this compassion. And that compassion will lead us to appropriate actions.

In Jesus' name. Amen.