

Compassion for the Gentiles

Mark 8:1-10

October 20, 2024, Jory Nunn

Well, good morning again, everybody. As you can see, I have the whole front row to myself. Mary and the girls are on their way down to the middle of Washington right now. They have an appointment down there, so Mary asked me to greet you guys. So that's where they're at. There's no schism in the family. They're on a mission.

I would also like to say, too, if you're not normally with us, this is Soup Sunday, and providentially, it's also the section in Scripture where we're at is the feeding of the 4,000 sorry, so if you didn't bring soup, it's okay, the Lord's going to multiply. And since I didn't bring soup, I'm going to be eating most of yours. So the Lord really needs to multiply.

Okay, if you would open your Bibles, we are in the Gospel of Mark. Once again, we're continuing in the Gospel of Mark. We will continue all the way through with a couple of breaks here and there, I'm going to be away for the next two weeks, your pastors are going to fill the pulpit in my absence. I'm going hunting with family. So appreciate for a good harvest, but also conversations with my family. I would appreciate you praying for me in that regard.

So in Mark chapter eight, again, the section that we're in here is the feeding of the 4,000. This is a this is a different time where Jesus is going to feed a large crowd, where He is going to operate as Creator God and feed a large crowd, as He did in the feeding of the 5,000 or as it were, if you count women and children, some possibly 15 to 20,000 people during that time. We're going to highlight some of the differences between those two. So you're going to see some overlap in that message regarding the 5,000 and then this one today regarding the 4,000 because the way He does it is pretty much the same, or at least the way that it's described is pretty much the same. So you'll see some overlap, but these are definitely two different events.

And just to bring you up to speed where we are, Jesus and His disciples, prior to being in this region where He is now, began in Capernaum around the Sea of Galilee, preaching to and teaching and healing Jewish people. And then they depart from there and go up into the region of Tyre and Sidon along the shore, the western shore, the Mediterranean Sea, that area that we talked about of Syro-Phoenicia, where Syria and Phoenicia were joined together. He has an encounter with a Gentile woman there. He expels a demon from this young child of this Syro-Phoenician woman. And then the other miracle He did was restored the hearing and speech of a deaf and a man who had a speech impediment.

And so He continues with His disciples through the Gentile region. And remember, this is really this time, this is about a two-month period of time He is illustrating and living out for His disciples that the gospel is for the Gentiles as well. And that's the main thing that we want to get out of this time that He is

spending in this region is He is showing His disciples that their ministry, that He is going to send them out into the world to do is not just for the Jews. Had He not instructed them in this way, had He not illustrated for them in this way, had He not given them the directive to go into all the world. They would have stayed right in Israel, and the gospel would not have gone out. Consequently, you and I, which I think most of us, if not all of us, are not Jews, would not have heard that message. They would have kept it all to themselves, thinking that they were only the people of God. And so this is a really important section for us to understand as Mark is writing His gospel primarily to a Gentile audience. This is for us to see. This message is for all the nations. And so that's where we're at this morning in this passage.

If you flip over your bulletin there, you will see our outline in the proposition, it says in in our passage this morning, this section that we're in, Jesus reveals God's heart of compassion for the Gentiles by providing a basic need. So that's where we're going in this passage this morning. We have two outline headings. Compassion expressed; we're going to see that in verses one through three. And then compassion displayed; verses four through ten. So let's dive right into the passage together. Let's go ahead and read verses one through three together again, we're in Mark 8:1-3.

In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and said to them, "I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come from a great distance."

Let's pray as we get into this text.

Father, we are so grateful, first and foremost, that Your gospel, saving message that You have given through the apostles, Lord was not just for the Jewish people. Lord that Your people in this room, here, right now and all around the world have received the blessing of that message. That through repentance and faith, through turning from our sin and turning to the living God and trusting that the sacrifice that He made on the cross was also for the Gentiles, of which I am and most of us here are today. Lord, You have provided one way for Jew and Gentile to come into saving faith. You've provided one way, and that's through Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, as we look at this text this morning and You show us Your heart of compassion, Lord, we may we understand better how You not only how You feel, but how You act toward Your people. Teach us this morning, all to the glory of Christ, amen.

So during those days, that is that time when He was in the Gentile region. So when He left the Syrophenician woman, He went up and around Tyre and Sidon and then back down to the Sea of Galilee, and He entered that region of the Decapolis. Remember, that's where He cast out all the demons from the man that was consumed with a legion of demons, and cast them into a herd of pigs, and they all jumped over the hill and died. Right? That's the area that He came back to once again, where He healed the man with the hearing problem and the speech problem. He's in that same region, and He walks up the shore a little ways along the sea of Galilee, departing from there, as Matthew chapter 15 says,

“Departing from there, Jesus went along the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, sitting there.” So Jesus, when He departed the Decapolis, when He departed from the man who had the two issues that He healed, He walks along the sea, and then He goes and sits up on a mountain. And here's what Matthew says takes place next, “A large crowd came to Him, bringing them,” that is the apostles and Jesus, “those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others. And they laid them down at Jesus's feet, and He healed them.”

Now I want you to imagine this, where Jesus leaves with the apostles in the in that region of the Decapolis. And remember, He's out in this Gentile region to give the disciples and Himself a little bit of break from all this Jewish opposition. Really, they needed a break from that. They need to escape from His popularity in the Jewish regions, and so He's out now in the Gentile regions, and He has the exact same thing take place again. Jesus is the most compelling person on the planet who has ever lived. He can't escape people taking notice. They are drawn to Him for what He's doing. No one ever spoke like this man before. There is no wise man that has ever existed like Him. In all of the pagan regions that He has just gone through and all the plethora of gods that are out there, no one did anything like this man ever. So He's compelling. They want to be close to Him. And so He goes up on the mountain. He sits there, and people flock to Him once again.

Now remember, we're in a Gentile region. These are Gentiles that are coming to Him. These are not Jewish people. You probably couldn't find a Jew anywhere there except for Jesus and the Twelve. So they're flocking to Him, bringing crippled, blind, mute, lame and they're bringing these people to Him at His feet so that they would be healed. In verse 31 of Matthew 15 says this. It says, “So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking and the blind seeing.” And listen to this. “And they glorified the God of Israel.” That's the Gentiles' response. Remember what the Jews response was? When are you going to give us some more food? Give us another sign? Just disbelief. The Gentiles have a completely different reaction. They actually glorify the God that they didn't even know, as the Jews should have known.

And this is where we're at in this section, where He is in this Gentile region. He wants His disciples to know for certain that the Gentiles are believing, that the Gentiles are being blessed by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He's healing everybody. As He's sitting down and teaching them, and they glorify the God of Israel because of it.

Now I want you to imagine, put yourself in the disciples' shoes. Again, these are Jewish men who have been sitting under the teaching of those rabbis, of those religious leaders of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. They have been sitting under them their entire life. You must follow tradition. This is the way that you interpret law. You must stay away from anything unclean. You must not take anything into your body that's unclean. You must not come close to a Gentile, or you'll be defiled. That's these men. That's their mindset. And so as they are watching this massive Gentile crowd flock to Jesus, imagine what's going on in their mind. Their entire religious view is being squashed, it's being

challenged. Must be marveling at what Jesus is doing. He's defiling himself, as it were, in their mind with these Gentiles. And remember these things that He's doing right now is really all for them, and through osmosis to us. He is showing them a living illustration about what's going to take place in the future. This message is for everyone. Jesus is not concerned about touching Gentiles. He's not concerned about being defiled by a Gentile. And this must be just earth shattering for the disciples, as they're witnessing it.

So three days into His teaching, three days into His teaching, verse two, "I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me now three days." So Jesus brings His disciples close to Him, and He says something to them. He says, "I feel compassion for the people again." Remember, these are Gentiles. So Jesus is saying to His disciples, "I feel compassion. They have been with me now three days and they have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come from a great distance." Notice He's not telling them really, necessarily, anything about, you know, their need for the gospel right here. This is God expressing to those that He is trying to teach, that is the disciples, that God has a heart of compassion for the simple things, something to eat. He recognizes the human need here, and He's going to give them an amazing illustration that we're going to see that they should not miss.

So we're going to focus in, again, we're going to look at a few of the differences between the feeding and the 5,000 and the 4,000. One of the major differences is here in verse two. This is in the first person, "I feel compassion." This is the only time in the entirety of the New Testament where Jesus actually makes this statement about Himself. It's the only time in the New Testament where first person singular, Jesus is saying, "Within Myself, I feel compassion," Now, the parallel passage, of course, is Matthew 15 says the exact same thing because it's the same event. Throughout the New Testament what you have is New Testament writers saying, "God is compassionate." Says, "We saw Him showing compassion." So it's other people expressing that attribute of God and attributing it to Jesus, but never, except this time do we have Jesus, God in human flesh saying, "I feel compassion."

So we need to look at, real quickly here, what that term compassion means, just to make sure we're all on the same page with it. It is to be moved with compassion or to feel sympathy towards someone who is in a certain condition. You're feeling sympathy. You take pity upon someone. So you look at the condition of an individual, and you feel internally something for them, and it moves you to action. That's what it means to be compassionate. You feel sympathy because of someone's condition. The root of the term that's used here, it's it has to do with the inward parts, sometimes referred to as the heart or the bowels, the liver. And it is only plural in the New Testament, that is inside all of me, I am feeling this. Literally, the intestines, or the viscera, the inward parts of the body, located in the belly, if you were to, if you were to have your child fall, and I actually had this, my daughter, Esther, I broke her arm one day. No, I'm not a mean Dad, it's just what happened. We were bouncing on the trampoline, and we were playing crack the egg, and so she's all rolled up into a ball. I double bounce her and launch her up into the air, and she comes down open wide and lands directly on her arm on the second double bounce, and

it fractures it. I had the most sickening feeling in my stomach, in the inward parts of my stomach, because instantaneously I felt compassion for her plight. That's the descriptive language that's being used here. Jesus, as He is sitting with His disciples, He is telling them, "I see the condition of these people, and I am moved with compassion for them." It's intensely personal. No one can have that feeling for you. When you see the condition of your child or a loved one, you can't impose this feeling on anyone else. And so I really want to get you to have stressed within your heart and mind that this is an internal feeling of God, that He is feeling this toward these people.

Why is it significant? Well, first, He's communicating to His disciples that God's compassion is for the Gentiles, right? That heart of compassion, that that they have known, that Israel has known, that He is compassionate as a father is compassionate toward their child. They have always known God is compassionate. But now Jesus is expressing that He has it for Gentiles; it's a big deal for them. Psalm 78:38 with regard to Israel's compassion that God showed toward them. He says, The psalmist says this, "But He" that is God, "being compassionate," and listen to what the caveat is, not just for any reason, but there's a reason why He's compassionate. "Being compassionate, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them." That's interesting. "And often He restrained His anger and did not arouse all His wrath. Thus He remembered that they were," what? "flesh, a wind that passes away and does not return." And so in this condition here, God looks down upon mankind, primarily Israel, here at this point, and He sees their plight. He sees their absolute life of iniquity and transgression, law breaking, desperately sick, dead in their sin, He looks down and He sees them, and instead of because of their actions, acting on them as He is totally just in doing, He's sick to His stomach about it. Looks upon them, and He sees their condition, and He says, "No, they're just flesh. No, instead, I'm going to make a way to make it right." That's the heart of compassion that we're talking about here, God's heart of compassion for Israel, Yahweh's heart of compassion. And Jesus is expressing that now to a different people group. The Jews knew it for them, but now the disciples needed to know that this heart of compassion that they have known is also for the dogs, the nastiest of the human race.

Exodus 33:19 talking about who God is. When God is talking to Moses. When Moses wanted to see God, Yahweh says to Him, "I will Myself make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of Yahweh before you. And I will be gracious to whom I'll be gracious." And listen, "I will be compassionate, to whom I'll be compassionate." This is a decision that God made. This is a life choice, if you will. I will be compassionate on whomever I choose. And at this time for the disciples, the Lord Jesus Christ is telling them, "I'm compassionate for these people. I feel for them and their condition."

Second, as I said before, it gives expression that this attribute is intensely personal. First person singular, "I feel compassion."

Thirdly, it is unique to our God. Don't miss that this attribute is possessed by no other made up God. Only ours, only Yahweh. No other God in the religious realm has compassion upon its worshipers, none

other. It is His, and it is His alone. He looks upon the sad condition of His creation, and His heart literally aches for them.

Now, beware to not make God out like a human. That's not what we're talking about here, but He has written this so that we can understand that feeling inside, that heart of compassion, the aching inside for those things that He loves. You feel it, and I feel it because it's His right. We are created in His image, and so we're actually able to feel like this in some human way that He has given us. This is a communicable attribute. You can feel compassion because He's compassionate, and He's allowed you to do that; but His compassion is so far greater than ours. I can never feel this way toward my kids as He can. You can never feel this way toward your spouse or a loved one as He can. His heart of compassion is far superior to ours.

So for three days, these people have been consumed with His teaching and His miracles, consumed with it, so much so that they're fine just sleeping out on the ground for three days, right? They never left Him. They're out sleeping out on the ground. Probably, maybe there'd be a tent around, maybe a blanket, I don't know, but at this point it is in the later fall, and so it's probably pretty cold out, but they don't eat anything either, and they're hungry. So Jesus acknowledges a basic need that they have as a created being. He knows their internal components right now are on fire.

This is a most amazing time. Some of you may understand fasting; some of you may not, but between that 48- and 72-hour period of time when you're fasting, I'm just going to illustrate for you some of the things that are going on in the body. We have a couple of doctors here, so I got to be careful. In that 72-hour period. In that three-day period, the body enters what's known as just survival mode. It's recognized. I haven't had food in a while, and there is a change that takes place inside of you. Your body actually starts eating fat. It becomes hungry to where it starts to consume the fat that has been there, which is reserved, that's all fat is, it just reserves. It begins to eat fat, further amplification of things that are taking place in the body. There's a term called auto phagei. It's a Greek term *auto*, it means self; *phagos*, it means to eat. You're literally eating yourself. Your cells during this time are actually eating damaged cells, disfigured cells, ones that aren't functioning properly. Your body is actually correcting things that are wrong. It says, "Okay, we're taking a break here now." I'm gonna consume those things that are actually consuming energy, I'm going to eat them. That's what your body is entering into for survival. This time in fasting is actually a really good thing for your body because when it's eating those damaged components, it's actually remaking new ones. What an amazing illustration of the creativity and genius of God and the human body. Slowed metabolism so everything is focused on the internal core survival. Like, I don't have energy, I don't have food, everything is going inside: focusing on heart rate, mental stability is actually slowed down there in this time because everything is going to the core. I need to focus on surviving. That's where these people are at. The vital process is to keep you alive. That's what your body is doing. It is literally eating itself. It's eating its reserves.

And so He's concerned about them. Have you ever been in that few days fasting period and you stand up really fast? You can black out. You gotta pay attention to what you're doing. The reason is because you've got all that energy going down in here into the cores. And so Jesus is saying these people, they've been with me three days now, and if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. That's literally what would happen to some of them. They would faint on the way because their body is starving. It's in survival mode. And some of them are at a great distance, and so Jesus is concerned about them.

As I was studying this, my mind actually went to Matthew chapter six, "Seek first," what? "The kingdom of God and all these things," what are all these things? Food, shelter and clothing, right? These people were actually seeking the Kingdom of God. They were focused on this One who was doing and saying things that they had never heard before. They knew that they were in the presence of something great, and they were seeking the Kingdom of God. And here Jesus, His heart of compassion, He displays for them what it looks like to be compassionate. What a God who is compassionate looks like. He's going to provide for them.

So let's move on. Number two, that's our second point. We saw His compassion expressed. He feels compassion for them. And now let's look at compassion displayed. What's He going to do?

Verse four says, "And His disciples answered Him, 'Where will we be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?'"

Now let that settle in what the disciples just said. They have been witnessing some of the greatest miracles that Jesus ever did mass, like the numbers of people affected that they will ever see. He just got through with feeding almost 20,000 people out of nothing, ex nihilo, out of nothing, literally. Here's five loaves and two fish, and He just kept giving, just kept giving, just kept giving they just saw it. This is shocking disbelief to me. I mean, even as an unbeliever, I would think if I saw this thing that He actually did, that there would be no surprise whatsoever. We just witnessed it take place, and they say to Him, "Where is anybody going to find enough bread in this desolate place?" I don't know. This is shocking disbelief. Utterly shocking.

Now, some have posited. I have read some commentators that I strongly disagree with, but I'm going to tell about them anyway because there's multiple of them. Some say that this statement here is some kind of tongue in cheek sarcasm. Like they look at Jesus and they say, "Well, where are we going to find enough bread for all these, like we just did it for the 5000?" I don't think so.

And the reason why I don't think so is in the context, look down to verse 14 through 21 with me there, chapter eight, verse 14 to 21 says this, and they and this is where they get into the boat after this incident.

“And they had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them.” So Jesus and the disciples, they hop in the boat again, they only bring one loaf of bread with them. Listen what He says,

And He was giving orders to them, saying, “Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” They *began* to discuss with one another *the fact* that they had no bread. And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you discuss *the fact* that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember, when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?” They *said to Him, “Twelve.” “When *I broke* the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?” And they said to Him, “Seven.” And He was saying to them, “Do you not yet understand?”

What didn't they understand? Creator God is here with you. Why are you even thinking about bread? I just fed possibly 40,000 people out of nothing. How in the world can you be missing this? That's what He's saying to them, their heart of unbelief, seemingly, is shocking, even to Jesus. With all of this evidence, why are you even talking about bread? Do you not yet realize? And so, no, I don't think this is tongue in cheek. I think they are still dark and hardened in heart.

We, of course, don't want to be too hard on the disciples. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit had not yet come, right? When, of course, they do receive the Spirit, they get it, and every single one of them will be executed for it, save one which he might as well have been dead all the things that He went through. That's Apostle John. However, they had not yet received the Spirit of God in the indwelling sense, where He's permanently in them, the Spirit of truth that would cause all things to come to their remembrance, that everything that He told them, they would get, they would understand. So it will happen. It will happen.

So moving on, verse five to seven, He says.

And He was asking them, “How many loaves do you have?” And they said, “Seven.” And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people. They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He ordered these to be served as well.

So we have seven loaves instead of five. We have seven loaves that's those cakes that are like flat cakes. And then we have the fish that's like pickled herring. And we have basically the same thing that we had with the 5,000 as far as quantity, it's just a kid sack lunch. That's all it was. And so He takes all of those, He looks to heaven, and He blesses them, and He starts distributing them to the disciples. Basically the same lunch, no more food than could *possibly* and that's the key term, no more food than could possibly

feed one or two people. That's it. However, out of a little, this little bit, the entire crowd was satisfied, literally ate until completely full is what that term satisfied means.

Now, this miracle, as with all miracles, is not something that can be explained naturally. Do not try to explain it naturally. This is a supernatural event where God in human flesh steps in, reaches into the natural and does something supernatural. Well, who can do that? Only God can do that, right? So we should not expect to be able to explain this in any way, humanly speaking in the natural realm; it can't happen. Just as creation took place with God speaking all things into existence this here Creator God, from His hands, made food. It cannot be explained in human terms. So don't try to get in an argument with somebody that doesn't believe in the miracles and explain this in some scientific reasoning way. It cannot be explained in that way. This is God doing something extraordinary, miraculous.

Now I want you to think for a minute about these fish and this bread. It came pre-baked. It didn't start out as wheat. Nobody crushed this into flour and mixed it with ingredients to create bread. This bread had never gone through that process. I want you to think about these fish. These fish have never lived a day in their life. They were created dead. These fish were probably, I'll say probably, because they're not certain, but they were probably pickled already. He created them pre ready to eat. This is the best prepackaged food that you could ever find, and it's good for you. These people have never had a meal like this. That's what the language actually describes, as they were fully satisfied. It's like, after you eat that Thanksgiving meal and the tryptophan, or whatever it's called, kicks in, you're just like, "Oh, that was so good." These people had the greatest meal that they've ever had in their life, and it was created out of nothing. The One who knows every molecule in the natural realm formed it through genetic coding that He wrote. And that's as far as I can take it because now my mind's already blown. This is a supernatural event that God in human flesh did. It cannot be received any other way than by faith, right? Because we can't explain it. You can read it, and you can believe it, but the second that you try to explain it how it happened, you've failed, and you've also succeeded in removing God's creative power in your mind. So don't do that. It's simply something that's meant to be received by faith. We can't explain this.

So no wonder the people were saying in the end of chapter 15 of Matthew, they kept saying, "He does all things well." They have never tasted food like this before. They have never seen healings like this before. They have never heard anyone teach like this before. He does all things well.

Let's move on. Let's look at a different component of this. And they ate and were satisfied. Verse eight, "And they ate and were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces." So in the 5,000 that He fed, there is 12. There's two different terms, by the way, this basket here in Mark is a large basket, the basket that's spoken of in feeding of the 5,000 it's a smaller basket. One was primarily meant for food, actually food that was meant to be ceremonially clean, so a Jew would carry along their food in this basket, smaller. So there was 12 of those when He fed the 5,000. And now there is seven of these, what we would call, like a clothes hamper, even a little bit

bigger than a clothes hamper. A Jew would carry this hamper and put all of His provisions in there, blankets, clothes, extra shoes, those kinds of things. So seven large baskets full. That's the difference between those two terms.

This illustrates, once again, that the disciples, number one, Jesus in His *exacting* miracle. Now remember that, because there is probably around 20,000 people, He kept distributing the food, and then He stopped, stopped making, stopped distributing, and then the disciples go out into all the crowd, and they collect, and they come up with exactly a lunch for each of them. Think of how exacting that is, that Jesus stopped at the exact moment that the disciples were going to need for their food, expressing to them that He was providing for them. And then now here, He has seven large baskets full. What does that really matter? Well, it matters because now this thing that I am doing in the world, as Jesus is saying, as the message is going out, and it's going to go out, you're going to send it out. This thing that I'm doing in the world is going to be in abundance for everybody. The call is going out to everyone. There is going to be provision for all. No one is going to be left out. And I think as well that time that we're going to get to where they got, get in the boat and they're worried about food, this would also illustrate for them that He provided more than enough for them, more than enough.

Verse nine, "About 4,000 were there and He sent them away." Once again, this is 4,000 plus. How do we know that? Matthew 15:38, if you want to write it down. The account says this, "And those who ate were 4,000 men." Remember they only count heads of households when they're doing stuff like this in ancient near Eastern context. The heads of household would be the only ones counted, "And those who ate were 4,000 men." And then listen, "besides women and children." So like 12 to 15,000 people. Once again, this is a massive miracle that takes place.

"And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha. So the miracle is done." The people were satisfied. The crowd disperses. They all go home, and He and the disciples get into the boat, probably one of the disciple's boats, because it's always referred to as *the* boat, not *a* boat. Gets into the boat, and He goes to a region called Dalmanutha. Now in Matthew chapter 15, Matthew calls this area Magadan. So that's where Mary Magdalene was from. So where is this Dalmanutha? It actually doesn't exist today, but there's archeological evidence underwater that has names that are the same as Dalmanutha, so we know exactly, at least under water, where it would have been, and this is the region between Magdalia and Capernaum. So if you go along the Sea of Galilee here, and where He sat in the Decapolis, they go across in the boat over here to Magdalia. That's where Dalmanutha is on the northeast shore of Galilee.

So why does that matter? He's done in the Gentile area. That's why it matters. He has left the Decapolis, and He's now going back to Capernaum. In a couple months' time, Jesus and the disciples covered this region of the Gentile regions, proclaiming this message, healing, showing the disciples that this gospel is for the Gentiles as well. And so they're done with that time. He's going to go to Capernaum, and when He gets there, He's going to spend a little bit more time up in that region of Galilee, but then He's going

to travel south. He's a little less than a year away from the cross, and so He's going to go south. He's going to be in the region of Jerusalem and the surrounding areas there, still proclaiming the message, still calling the Jews to repentance, still doing some healing, but most of His time now, for the remainder of this year is going to be focused in on the disciples, getting them ready for what's about to take place. He has a few other exchanges with the religious leaders, and, of course, the main exchange where they condemn Him to death, but primarily He is going to be spending all of His time with the disciples.

So what does this mean for application for us in this passage?

One of the things that I was thinking about mostly is I know in my heart when I, especially as a young believer, whenever I would see people that are outcasts in a society, in a community, maybe homeless people on the street got sores all over them from the abuse of drugs and alcohol, I would have a heart of, "Man, how can God save somebody like that?" Just a horrible, wicked heart toward them, not understanding God's heart of compassion as a young believer, and certainly not remembering what He saved me from.

If you have a high view of self, you won't have God's heart of compassion. If you have a view of your sin in your life that it's not that bad. It's really not as bad as that guy. If that's your view of sin in your own life, you're not going to have God's heart of compassion. There's no way. That pride that you just expressed of not being as bad as that other person. There's a really interesting passage in the Bible, in Proverbs, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." That term resist is actually a military term. What it means is God is standing ready to fight against the proud. So when you have a proud heart and think that you're better than someone else, that you're better off than they are now, don't get me wrong, if you're a Christian, you are better off than those who are dead in their sin. But as far as intrinsically, as a person, to think that you're better than anyone else, God says that He is standing ready to fight against that. It's a dangerous place to be in. And so as we look upon the apostles, as they are viewing the Gentiles, Jesus wants them and through them, for us to know that there is none who are outside of God's saving, compassionate, grace and mercy. Not one. The only one who is outside of that is the one who rejects Christ their entire life, and they die in their sin. There is no second hope. That's the only one who's outside of it. So be careful how we look at outsiders, or who we would consider outcasts, or who we would think are so dead in their sin that they have no hope, lost in darkness. Children of the devil, and they are, that's the reality of it. Those who are lost are children of the devil. But you, Christian, you were there once too. I was once there. My father used to be Satan. That's what the Scripture teaches us. So beware of viewing people in such a way that you are better than them, and them being undeserving of God's compassionate mercy, because He was full of compassion when He came to you, wasn't He? In your condition, whether you were three or 99, He came to you with a heart of compassion, seeing your need, and He met that need.

Let's pray.

Father, we are grateful that we, those who are in Christ, can be fully confident of our sonship, that we are sons and daughters of the Most High God, that You have paid the price for our sin, and that that great transaction has taken place. We have received Your righteousness; You have taken our unrighteousness. What a wonderful reality that is for those of us who are in Christ. And for those of us here who may not be in Christ, that must take place before you die, otherwise your last breath will be met when your eyes open and you are faced with a holy God, and His eyes will burn through your wicked soul and your rejection of Him, and there will only be judgment. Now is the time for mercy. Now is the time to receive His compassion. Look to the Lord Jesus Christ. He's worthy. He's proven himself over and over again. He's done everything that you need to be saved. Yours is simply to trust.

Father, thank You so much for the reality that there is one way, the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, as we prepare our hearts right now to partake of communion as we remember the sacrifice that You made on the Cross where You shed Your blood, Your physical body was shredded for sinners such as me, sinners such as us. Lord, help us to prepare our hearts for that. May we do it all to the glory of Christ and God's people said, Amen.