



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

September 23, 2007

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The compassion of Jesus

by David King

"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest'" (Matt. 9:36-38).

"And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things" (Mk. 6:34).

These two passages, although very similar, are describing separate incidents in the life of Christ. Together, they teach us some important lessons about the role of compassion in the ministry of Jesus, and how that example should guide our own dealings with others.

First, consider the metaphor the authors use to describe the multitudes: "like sheep having no shepherd." This figure of speech pretty well sums up how most people go through life: wandering about with no well-defined sense of purpose or direction. That sense of aimlessness exposes them to temptation, sin, and all its evil consequences. They are not just scattered — they are "**weary** and scattered," tired of life and its hassles.

Second, notice how Jesus expressed His compassion to these lost souls: He **taught** them. Of course, Jesus did more than just teach people. Other passages describe how Jesus' compassion led Him to heal the sick (Matt. 14:14) or feed the hungry (Matt.

15:32). But these were temporary fixes for a deeper, more serious problem, namely, the people's lack of purpose in life. The solution was not food or medicine, but instructions on how to live. Survey the teachings of Jesus and notice the themes that come up again and again: attitudes, relationships, money, preparing for life after death. These are the issues that need to be addressed if people are to find meaning in their lives. In His teachings, Jesus helped them deal with those issues.

Finally, we can learn a lesson from what Jesus did **not** do in response to the people's plight. He did not ignore them. He did not look down on them with contempt or disdain. He did not brush them aside as ignorant rubes who got what they deserved. These were weak, misguided people who could give Jesus nothing in return; yet He genuinely cared for their well-being, and took the time to help them. The fact that He took any interest in them at all is a remarkable testament to the depth of His love for humanity.

Jesus was a realist. He knew that not everyone was a "lost sheep" who needed compassion. Some were scoundrels who needed a good scolding, and He could dish it out when necessary (Matt. 23). Others were lazy opportunists who were just looking for a free lunch. He refused to play that game (Jn. 6:26-27). But to the rest, Jesus was a friend who was genuinely interested in their welfare, and expressed it in the guidance He provided them. If we are serious about following His example, we should go and do likewise.

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.