

Compassion for People
Matthew 15:29-39; Mark 7:31-8:9

A Continuing Journey

In our study last week, we saw the mercy of God spilling over to a Canaanite woman whom Jesus described as having “great faith.” She had the kind of faith which all believers should exhibit. She had come with a repentant spirit for she had to turn away from her pagan idols in order to plead to Jesus for mercy and deliver her daughter from the demon that cruelly oppressed her. She was respectful toward Jesus calling Him “Lord” and by His proper Messianic title of “Son of David.” She was persistent even when Jesus ignored her and then disparaged her position of being outside the house of Israel. She was humble in bowing down to Jesus and begging for mercy even if it was only scraps of it from the table of God’s blessing. For these reasons Jesus not only granted her request at that very moment, He also exalted her for her exceptional faith.

This week our study will reveal that the mercy of God continued to spill over to the Gentiles as Jesus travels to another area outside the land of Israel. We again find that Jesus has compassion for all people. Put a marker at Mark 7:31 for and then turn to Matthew 15:29. We will be looking at both passages.

A Continuing Ministry - Matthew 15:29-31; Mark 7:31-37

“And departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up to the mountain, He was sitting there.”

Matthew’s description here is very general. In context, it simply tells the reader that Jesus left the area of Tyre and Sidon and had gone back along the Sea of Galilee to an unnamed mountain. We do not know how long Jesus was in the area of Tyre and Sidon, but He is now somewhere along the Sea of Galilee sitting on a mountain. Mark gives us more detailed information stating that Jesus *“had went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis.”* That does not tell us exactly which mountain Jesus he was on, but it does give a better understanding of the general area to which He had traveled. Tyre and Sidon are on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in an area known as either Phoenicia or Tyre at that time. Decapolis was a region that extended from the southwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee south down the Jordan River and southwest out into the Eastern Desert. It was named for a league of Ten cities (Deca = 10; polis = city) in the area of what is now the country of Jordan. Jesus would have most likely traveled from Tyre back to Capernaum and then around the northern end of the Sea of Galilee and then south along its shore and up onto the ridge of mountains either south of Gergesa or south of Hippos which is a distance of at least 40-50 miles.

The importance of Jesus’ location is that it lets us know to whom He is ministering. As Jesus stated in Matthew 15:24, He was *“sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* Until Jesus went to the region of Tyre in His effort to find a place where He and His disciples could have some peace and quiet, Jesus had consistently been ministering only in Jewish areas. Jesus was neither teaching nor healing the people in Tyre. It was only because of the extraordinary faith and diligence of the Canaanite woman that He had ministered to her and cast out the demon from her daughter. Neither Matthew nor Mark give any indication why Jesus left Tyre. Perhaps casting out the demon brought a lot of public attention to Jesus and made it difficult to have peace and quiet. Neither text indicates why Jesus passed through Galilee which was a Jewish area and continued on to Decapolis which was a Gentile area. Perhaps He was still trying to gain some peace and quiet and knew that would not happen anywhere in Galilee. We can only speculate because the text does not say, but whatever the specific reasons, Jesus is again in a Gentile area and the people that Jesus will end up ministering to throughout the rest of these sections of the Scriptures are Gentiles, but even so, we find that Jesus has a continuing ministry.

Matthew 15:30-31 records, *“And great multitudes came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, dumb, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and he healed them, so that the multitude marveled as they saw the dumb speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.”*

Notice that last phrase in verse 31, *“they glorified the God of Israel.”* This makes it clear that these people are Gentiles for the Jews just glorify God and it is the correct God. The Gentiles are pagan with many gods so they must distinguish which God they are glorifying. They recognize that all the miracles Jesus is performing is due to the mighty hand of the God of Israel and not by any of their gods.

Mark 7:32-37 recounts a specific healing done at this time. ³² *They brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they implored Him to lay His hand on him.* ³³ *Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva;* ³⁴ *and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him, “Ephphatha!” that is, “Be opened!”* ³⁵ *And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly.* ³⁶ *And He gave them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it.* ³⁷ *They were utterly astonished, saying, “He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”*

These additional details add to Mark’s purpose in demonstrating the power of Jesus to His Roman readers. Jesus is the Son of Man, but He is not an ordinary man for He has power that only belongs to God. An idiom is used to describe this restoration of hearing as if something had closed off his ears which was suddenly removed so that they are now open so that he can hear, but this is not some case of severe ear wax build up. This is giving the man an ability that he previously lacked. Giving him the ability to speak is similar. The man had some sort of physical incapacity of his tongue, possibly demonic in origin, that made it very difficult for him to speak in a way that anyone could understand him. His attempts to speak would have been more noise than words. That is why they are astonished. There are no stories of any of their pagan deities accomplishing such a feat through any of their prophets such as what Jesus did in healing this deaf man and giving him the ability to speak plainly. That is why they spread the news about Jesus even though He told them not to tell anyone about it. Once this previously deaf man could hear and speak clearly, there was no stopping him or his friends from telling others about the marvelous miracle Jesus had done for him.

These Gentiles of the region of Decapolis were much like the Canaanite woman we saw last week. They quickly turned from the worship of their idols and turned to Jesus because they believed something about Him that so many of the Jewish people that Jesus had ministered to had not believed. They recognized that Jesus was sent from God.

However, there are also some differences here too. Jesus had prompted the Canaanite woman to express a deeper faith than just asking Him to heal her daughter. Jesus’ response had brought out from her the depth of her faith in recognizing that Jesus was the master. She fully recognized and agreed that she was unworthy, but humbly requested a crumb of God’s blessings and received it. These people expressed their faith in bringing to Jesus the lame, crippled, blind, dumb and many others and then with urgency laid them down at Jesus’ feet. They could not reach Jesus too soon or be too close to Him. But Jesus does not challenge them as He had the woman in Tyre. The text simply says, *“and He healed them.”* He healed them as He had so many before, but these were Gentiles. The blessings of God to Israel were already overflowing to the nations through Jesus even before He would pay the sacrifice for sin and enable Gentiles to be grafted into the root of Israel (Romans 11:17).

One other thing to point out here is the nature of Jesus’ healings. They were of such a nature as to cause the multitude to marvel, be amazed, and to glorify the God of Israel because as they watched the dumb began to speak, the crippled were restored, the lame were walking and the blind could see. These were miracles that took place all at once. They are presented as occurring one right after the other and without mention of the person’s faith in advance of being healed.

This is important to point out because we live in an age where charlatans abound with many of them claiming to be able to work miracles like Jesus or the Apostles. No doubt some of these men and women may even be sincere in what they are saying, but neither Jesus nor the apostles did things half way or over some period of extended time. Those who could not speak were now shouting praise to God, and those who could not walk were now leaping for joy. Consider as well that Jesus not only healed diseases, blindness, deafness, dumbness, but also the lame and crippled. Lame here is from *kwloV* / *xōlos* which includes being maimed or having a foot missing. Crippled is from *kulloV* / *kullos* which means “crooked” and includes disability due to mutilation. You will look in vain for verified accounts of faith healers causing missing body parts to grow back.

Why do I mention this? Because the claims of some that they have Apostolic power and can do what Jesus and the Apostles did are false. Too many people end up distracted by such faith healers and supposed miracle workers and follow them instead of following God. Authority rests in the Scriptures, the Word of God, not in people’s false claim to it. My authority as a Pastor comes from God’s word, not my ability or inability to do miracles, and even if you see someone that does some amazing things, keep in mind that truth is not determined by experience, but by the Word of God. Jesus’ miracles attested that His claims about Himself were true not simply because He did them, but that they were the fulfillment of what the Old Testament prophesied about Him which includes that He would perform these healings out of compassion for people.

There is a great point of contrast between these Gentiles and the Pharisees and other religious Jews. These pagan Gentiles are praising God for these miracles of healing, but the Pharisees who claimed to worship the true God had also seen Jesus also do these kinds of miracles, but their reaction was to claim that Jesus was performing miracles through the power of Satan (Matthew 9:32-34; 12:22-24). The people of the region of Galilee had also seen Jesus do all kinds of miracles in abundance, yet they rejected Jesus’ claim to have come from heaven and that He was “*the bread of life*” and the source of eternal life (John 6). How is it that these religious Jews that claimed to know and follow the true God could not recognize the truth about Jesus and His origin, yet these pagan Gentiles that grew up worshipping false gods and knew the power of Satan immediately recognized that Jesus’ power came from the God of Israel and not one of their pagan deities?

A Continuing Compassion - Matthew 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-9

Jesus not only had compassion upon these Gentiles in healing them of their diverse diseases and afflictions, but He also shows compassion to feed them in a miraculous way just had He had done for the more than 5,000 near Bethsaida only a short time earlier. “*And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, ‘I feel compassion for the multitude, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not wish to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.’ And the disciples said to Him, ‘Where would we get so many loaves in a desolate place to satisfy such a great multitude?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘How many loaves do you have?’ And they said, ‘Seven, and a few small fish.’ And He directed the multitude to sit on the ground; and He took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, He broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples in turn, to the multitudes. And they all ate, and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full. And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. And sending away the multitudes, He got into the boat, and came to the region of Magadan.*”

Matthew and Mark both record Jesus declaring that He has compassion on the multitude because they had been with Him for three days and He was concerned that after such a length of time the people might faint from hunger on their way home if they did not get something to eat. The main problem was that they were in a desolate place. That area was largely uninhabited at that time and it was also sparse in vegetation. That meant they could not forage for food and there was no nearby town or village in which they could purchase food. The dialogue between the disciples and Jesus in Matthew 15:33-34 makes that

point very clear. The disciples would not have forgotten what Jesus had done only a short time earlier that year in feeding the five thousand, but neither do they presume that Jesus will perform another such miracle. Their question to Jesus declares that they do not have the resources themselves and they are looking to Jesus to give them direction on what He wants them to do. Jesus asks them what they do have available and then proceeds to direct them in preparation for the miracle that would follow.

The feeding of this multitude is carried out in the same manner as the first miraculous feeding of a multitude. While they have more food and fewer people to feed than the earlier event, it is still as impossible to feed more than four thousand with just seven loaves of bread and a few small fish as it is to feed more than five thousand with five loaves of bread and two fish. The need cannot be met unless God intervenes, and in this case, He does. Jesus has them sit down on the ground and then He gives thanks followed by breaking the bread and giving it to the disciples to distribute to the people (Matthew 15:35-36; Mark 8:6). The text does not say how the food was multiplied, but if it followed the Old Testament examples, the food continued to multiply as Jesus gave it to the disciples. That is what happened for the widow woman of Zarepheth whose jar of flour and jar of oil never ran out though there was little in them and she used them for a whole year (1 Kings 17:10). It is also what happened in the case of the multiplied oil for the prophet's widow when Elisha had her continue to pour oil from one container and fill up a room full of vessels. The oil multiplied even as she poured it out (2 Kings 4). I think it reasonable that the same occurred here with the food multiplying in the basket even as Jesus distributed it to His disciples.

Jesus can do whatever He wants whenever He wants to whomever He wants as often as He wants in keeping with God's commands and His own character. God is not limited in power or resources so He can have compassion on whomever He desires. In this case, His compassion and blessings spilled over in abundance to Gentiles.

Why would Matthew and Mark include this story in their accounts of Jesus' life? Some have foolishly said that this event never took place claiming that there was confusion about the feeding of the five thousand which took place earlier, but you see, such a claim is built on the false premise that the apostle Matthew did not write his account and that whoever compiled Mark's account was only recording oral legends about Jesus. How foolish men prove themselves to be when they profess themselves to be wise!

While there are some general similarities between the feeding of the 5,000 in Matthew 14 and Mark 6 with the miracles recorded here, there are many very specific and definite differences. The general similarities include: A) Jesus teaching on the side of a mountain in a remote place where sufficient supplies cannot be purchased. B) They only have a very small amount of loaves and small fish available. C) there is a large multitude of people. D) Jesus has them sit down. E) Jesus gives thanks and breaks the bread. F) He gives the bread to the disciples who distribute it to the people. G) After everyone is satisfied, I) the disciples pick up full baskets of the leftover pieces.

The specific differences include: A) The location is now in Decapolis instead of near Bethsaida Julias in Gaulantis. Because of those differences in location, B) this crowd is largely Gentile while the previous group was mostly Jewish. C) The people have been with Jesus three days instead of just an afternoon. D) The disciples have seven loaves of bread and a few small fish instead just five loaves of bread and two small fish. E) There are four thousand men besides women and children instead of five thousand men besides women and children. F) They pick up only seven large baskets full of leftovers instead of twelve regular baskets full of leftovers. G) After the people are fed, Jesus gets into the boat with the disciples instead of going back up to the mountain to pray.

I mention both these general similarities and drastic differences because they make it very clear that Matthew and Mark both record two similar but distinct miracles that occurred on two different occasions. This is the miracle of feeding the more than four thousand on a mountain in Decapolis with just seven loaves of bread and a few small fish as contrasted with the earlier feeding of more than five

thousand near Bethsaida with five loaves of bread and two small fish. Take warning and be very careful what you read or hear from people who claim to be Bible scholars but are in fact what my father often called educated fools. They go through great mental gymnastics trying to prove their theories and miss what is very obvious. They do not in fact believe the Bible so their speculations and musings are worse than worthless for they are dangerous doctrines that seek to lead astray even the saints. Be Bereans who check every teaching against the Word of God.

Matthew and Mark record this miracle because it demonstrates at least two important things about Jesus. First, Jesus is powerful. He is not only able to perform a mighty miracle in multiplying food as did the prophets Elijah and Elisha, but He can repeat such miracles according to His own desire. Second, this miracle demonstrates that Jesus' compassion extends even to those outside of Israel's covenant with God. That is extremely significant in helping Matthew's Jewish readers to move past their ethnocentric view of life and understand that God's mercy does extend to the Gentiles. It was also important to Mark's Roman readers to see Jesus' miraculous powers extended to Gentiles.

This story of Jesus' compassion on the people of Decapolis has many possible applications to this story: The importance of glorifying God for what He does for He is worthy of worship; We can rely on Jesus to provide for our needs because He cares for us and His resources are unlimited; We should make ourselves available to Jesus for service as did the disciples and then marvel at what Jesus does. However, the application I want to stress is the example of compassion that Jesus has set for us here, for there is a continuing charge to follow His example.

A Continuing Charge

I have pointed out on many occasions from Romans 8:29 that the purpose of God saving us from our sins is that we might be "*conformed into the image of His Son,*" or as stated in Ephesians 2:10, we are "*His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*"

For far too many people who profess to be Christians, the claim of that designation is merely a social or intellectual one. There is little reality in their claim for they in fact do not actually follow Christ and exhibit little desire to do so. They are not concerned that their lives are nearly indistinguishable from non-Christians. There are others for whom the claim to be a Christian is true, but immaturity due to either ignorance or complacency hinders them from following Jesus as they should.

Be neither ignorant nor complacent in this matter. By definition, a Christian seeks to be like Christ, so following His example is very important. You are to do this out of a response to His love for you and understanding that such is your Creator's will for you. You have seen this morning another example of Jesus' compassion for other people, - and in this case, people that would be considered unholy for they were Gentiles. They were also unlovely for they had various physical problems such as being blind, dumb, crippled and maimed. They were also uncultured for they lived in a remote area far from the centers of cultured society. These are not the kind of people you go out of your way out to make friends with, yet the Savior is in the midst of them ministering to their needs and having compassion for them. Should our response to the needs around us be any less?

James 1:22 commands, "*prove yourselves to be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*" He adds in verse 27, "*This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.*" James 2:15-16 adds that a person who sees a brother or sister in need of clothing or daily food and says to them, "*Go in peace, be warmed and be filled*" without helping to meet their need has a useless faith. As a Christian, you are to strive toward holiness and reach out to those around you who cannot repay you the benevolence you bestow upon them. The apostle John states in no uncertain terms that the love of God does not dwell in a person who has the world's goods, sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him. Christians are to "*not love in word or tongue, but in deed and truth*" (1 John 3:17-18).

How can you fulfill Jesus' example and follow the commands of these Scriptures and so many more like them?

First, understand that it is proper to be involved in providing social services. Certainly care must be taken in which social service groups to be involved with because: A) What many well meaning groups do is actually detrimental to those they are serving in the long term. B) Many groups are opposed to the gospel and restrict you from telling others about Christ. C) Even Christian organizations can lose focus and forget that the gospel is the reason for all that we do resulting in acts of kindness being done with wrong motivations and without mention of Jesus. We are to serve other people in the name of Christ for His glory following His examples of compassion. As followers of Jesus Christ we are to have compassion for the multitudes of lost, hurting people and put that compassion into action in both meeting their physical needs and declaring the truths of God's word to meet their spiritual need for following Him.

I am glad that this church does have involvement with groups such as the Life Saver Ministries, Care Net, Samaritan's Purse, IFCA Benevolence, Slavic Gospel Association and other organizations as specific needs arise. However, our involvement needs to be more than one organization supporting another, and that brings me to my second point.

Second, you need to personally respond in compassion to the needs around you. The particular thing that God prompts you to get involved with varies from person to person, but each of us needs to be involved. You will never know what that will lead you too.

This begins by meeting needs personally as you have ability and opportunity to meet the need and share the gospel. This means that instead of giving money to those asking for a handout, you offer to meet their stated need and then talk with them. If they need food, then buy them something to eat and talk with them while they eat it, or purchase groceries for them and then tell them why you are doing it before you hand it over to them. If they need gas, talk to them as you pump gas into their car. Perhaps they have need of some other material item you have that you can share or give to them, but be sure to talk to them about Jesus when you do so. Perhaps the need is for help with cleaning, organizing or repairing something at their home or for medical care. All of those require you to physically go and help. But keep in mind that social service should open a door for a gospel and not be an end to itself.

Personal involvement may also mean getting involved with an organization that has a focus on social services such as Care Net, Samaritan's Purse, a shelter or soup kitchen. Personal involvement may mean that you start such a ministry or form such an organization.

A third point that must be made if you are to follow Jesus' example of compassion, then you must be willing to sacrifice for others. Christians are often blocked from following Christ in these things because of their own selfishness. You must not think more highly of yourself and your desires than you do of others and their needs.

If you can go out and spend \$20, \$30, \$40, \$50 or more on dinner and not think much of it, then it should not be any big deal to give the same amount to someone in need. I am neither saying that you should not go out to eat nor that you should respond to every pan-handler you meet. However, I am saying that selfishness blocks too many professing Christians from the kind of sacrifices that should be made and will be made if we are really following Jesus' example in this. Remember, on both this occasion and when He fed the more than five thousand, Jesus had the disciples give to the multitudes everything they had, and God multiplied it to be not only enough for crowds, but also for them too. You cannot out give God. As Paul told the Philippians who generously shared with him, "*my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:19). It is because I can trust God to meet my needs as I seek first His kingdom and righteousness that I can have confidence to joyfully give even sacrificially to meet the needs of others and be at peace. If Jesus can feed both the more than five thousand and the more than four thousand, then He can meet both my needs and those he prompts me to show compassion.

Sermon Notes: *Compassion for People*
Matthew 15:29-39; Mark 7:31-8:9

A Continuing Journey - Matthew 15; Mark 7

The Canaanite woman was repentant, respectful, persistent and _____ - and she received God's mercy

Jesus travels to another _____ area in which God's mercy spills over to them

A Continuing Ministry - Matthew 15:29-31; Mark 7:31-37

Jesus travels from Tyre by the Sea of Galilee to a mountain in _____

Matthew 15:30-31 - The multitude of _____ glorified the God of Israel

Mark 7:32-37 - a specific healing of a _____ man who spoke with difficulty

Jesus is the Son of Man, but no ordinary _____ has such powers

The Gentiles of the region turned to Jesus and recognized that He was from _____

Jesus did not require from them what He prodded the Canaanite woman to do - He _____ them as they came

Jesus (and the apostles) healed instantly and _____ including the lame / maimed and crippled / mutilated

Beware! _____ abound who claim to do what Jesus did - but they cannot

These Gentiles recognized Jesus was from God - while the Pharisees & religious Jews _____ Jesus' claim

A Continuing Compassion - Matthew 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-9

Jesus has compassion on the multitude to feed them, but they are in a _____ place without adequate food

This miracle is carried out in the same _____ as the previous one in feeding the five thousand

It is reasonable to think the food _____ as it did for Elijah (1 Kings 17:10) and Elisha (2 Kings 4)

Jesus can do whatever He wants when He wants to whom He wants in keeping with His _____ character

Some " _____ " claim this is a retelling of the same miracle as the feeding the five thousand

There are general _____ between the two miracles: a mountain, a remote place,

small amount of bread and fish, many people, sitting down, giving thanks, distribution by disciples,
everyone satisfied, baskets full of leftovers.

There are many _____ differences: Decapolis vs. Bethsaida; Gentile vs Jewish crowd;

three days with Jesus vs an afternoon; 7 loaves & a few fish vs. 5 loaves and 2 fish; 4,000 vs 5,000;

7 large baskets vs 12 regular baskets of leftovers; Jesus getting in boat vs going up the mountain

These are two distinct, _____ miracles - Be careful what you read / hear. Be a Berean

Jesus is powerful and able to _____ miracles according to His own desire

Jesus' compassion extends to _____ - a correction of Jewish thought and an encouragement to Gentiles

There are many possible applications, but a key one is following Jesus' _____ of compassion

A Continuing Charge

Romans 8:29; Ephesians 2:10 - _____ are to become like Jesus & do the good works God has prepared

Some falsely profess to be a Christian, while some Christians are _____ by ignorance and complacency
Jesus' example includes compassion on people who were _____, unlovely and uncultured
James 1:22, 27; 2:15-16 - professed faith without corresponding action is a worthless _____

1) It is proper to be involved in providing social services - but be _____

A) Many well meaning groups actually cause _____ in the long term

B) Many groups oppose and restrict the _____ - man's only true hope

C) Some Christian groups have lost their gospel _____

2) You need to be _____ respond with compassion to the needs around you

Be careful to meet needs in a way that you have opportunity to talk about _____

This could also mean _____ with a social service organization or starting a ministry

3) Jesus' example of compassion demands the willingness to _____

Do not let _____ block you from being compassionate toward others

You cannot out give God - He will meet your needs even as you _____ to meet the needs of others

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Count how many times "compassion" is mentioned. 2) Discuss with your parents how you can be compassionate toward others

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What attitudes did the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28) show toward Jesus before He granted her request? Why did Jesus go to the region of Tyre? What are some reasons He might have left? Where is Decapolis in relationship to the region of Tyre and what route might Jesus have taken to get there? What are some reasons that might explain Him going to Decapolis instead of staying in Galilee? What kind of people lived in Decapolis? What was the response of the people to Jesus healing the sick among them? What made that unusual? What reasons might explain Mark including a story about a specific healing that took place during that time? What did Jesus require of the people of Decapolis before He healed them and how was that different than what He required of the Canaanite woman? Can anyone now heal people in the same way as Jesus or the apostles? Explain. Contrast the response of these Gentiles in Decapolis to that of the Pharisees and religious Jews to Jesus' miracles. Why did Jesus have compassion on the multitude? What did He want to do for them? Why would it take a miracle to do this? What similarities does this event have with the feeding of the 5,000? What differences are there between these two miracles? Could these two events be the same? Explain. What Old Testament miracles might explain the manner in which the food multiplied? What is God's purpose in saving people from sin? What does God want Christians to become like? Why must true faith be demonstrated in action - see James 1 & 2? What cautions should you take before becoming involved in a social service organization? How can you personally respond with compassion to the needs around you and make sure your ministry is gospel centered? How have you shown compassion to others? Why does compassion require sacrificial giving? What promises has God made to Christians that will enable you to follow Jesus' example of being compassionate? Are there any ministries of compassion you would like to be involved in? What steps are you taking to become involved?