

Poem, Reading or Film

- “The Guest House” by Rumi
- The Good Samaritan (Luke 10)
- An extract from Sam Wells’ Being With
- A story of hospitality, welcome, or reconciliation from your local community

Practical Action

What could we do as individuals or as a church to live out this Gospel?

Who might need noticing?

Who might need encouragement?

Where could we offer welcome, peace, or companionship?

What is our community already doing that reflects Christ’s compassion?

Prayer

(2–3 minutes)

Invite people to name aloud people, places, or situations that came to mind during the session.

Compassionate Christ,
You saw the crowds
and refused to turn away.
Open our eyes
to those we overlook.
Open our ears
to stories we have not yet heard.
Open our hearts to the work
your Spirit is already doing.
Help us to recognise your image
in friend and stranger alike.
Teach us to be people of peace,
hospitality, and hope.
And help us join your work
of healing and reconciliation
in the world.
Amen.

Sending

(1 minute)

“As we go, may we carry Christ’s compassion into the week ahead. May we learn to see more clearly, listen more deeply, and love more generously. May we discover God’s heartbeat already at work in our community. Go in peace.”



www.heartedge.org

Image: Getty Images, Unsplash.com



HeartBeat

What Does Compassion Look Like?

Sunday 14th of June

Lectionary Reading:
Matthew 9:35–10:23

Welcome and Settling (2–3 minutes)

Gather the group and create a welcoming space.

Light a candle if appropriate and invite a moment of stillness.

“We gather to listen—to scripture, to one another, and to our own hearts.

We take a moment of quiet, asking God to help us see the world as Christ sees it and to open us to whatever the Spirit wants to show us today.”

Opening Prayer

Loving God,
You see what we often overlook. You notice those who feel forgotten, hear those whose voices are ignored, and move towards those who are hurting.

As we reflect on this Gospel, help us to see with the eyes of Christ, listen with open hearts, and discover where your Spirit is already at work around us.

Opening Icebreaker (5 minutes)

Think of a time when someone genuinely noticed you. Perhaps they listened when you needed someone to listen, offered encouragement at the right moment, or simply made you feel seen and valued.

What happened, and what difference did it make?

Invite brief sharing in pairs or small groups.

Reading the Passage (3–5 minutes)

Read Matthew 9:35–10:23 slowly. Allow a short silence. If appropriate, read the passage a second time using a different voice or translation. Invite people simply to notice what stays with them.

Wondering Questions (15–20 minutes)

Choose the questions that feel right for your group.
Allow silence after each question.

I wonder

- what Jesus saw when he looked at the crowds.
- who might be “harassed and helpless” in our community today.
- where God is already at work bringing healing, hope, and reconciliation.
- what compassionate discipleship might look like for us this week.

Background Notes (Optional)

This Gospel begins with a remarkable observation. Before Jesus teaches, heals, or sends disciples, he notices people.

Matthew tells us that Jesus looked at the crowds and was moved with compassion because they were “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

The word translated as compassion is one of the strongest emotional words in the New Testament. Jesus is deeply moved by what he sees. He does not look away from suffering or reduce people to problems to be solved. Many contemporary theologians sug-

gest that the crowds were burdened not only by personal struggles but also by wider social pressures.

They lived under Roman occupation, economic hardship, debt, illness, and exclusion.

Everything that follows flows from compassion.

Jesus gathers ordinary people and invites them into God’s healing work.

They are sent not with wealth, status, or power, but with peace, hospitality, and trust.

The harvest is already there.
God is already at work.

The challenge is learning to notice where healing, hope, and reconciliation are emerging and then joining in.

Connecting with Life (20 minutes)

Who are the people we may overlook? Who might be “harassed and helpless” in our neighbourhood, town, or community today?

Where do you already see signs of healing, hope, or God’s presence around you?

How does Jesus’ approach to power differ from the ways power is often used in society?

What might it mean for us to travel lightly and depend more on relationships than possessions or status?

Listening for the Heartbeat (3–5 minutes)

Invite the group into silence.
“We pause and listen.
What is the heartbeat of God in this Gospel—for us, for our church, and for our community?
What invitation might Christ be placing before us today?”

Allow a few moments of quiet before inviting brief responses.

Practical Sharing (15 minutes)

The group makes its own suggestions.

Photo Suggestion

What photograph from your community might capture the heart of this Gospel?

Perhaps:

- A community meal
- A volunteer listening to someone
- An open church door
- Neighbours gathered together
- An act of welcome or hospitality

Music Suggestions

- Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You
- The Summons
- When I Needed a Neighbour
- For Everyone Born
- Bind Us Together