

Who Is Jesus?

Jesus Is Compassionate to the Needy

Many of us are somehow involved in a giving or caring effort. If you're a science major, you probably give thought and care to the environment. Or perhaps you're an advocate of universal healthcare. If you're a social science major, you may give significant time to figuring out how we can lower domestic unemployment. If you're a technical major, maybe you care about helping people become more efficient with their time and efforts. Whatever your major, maybe you care about poverty. Maybe you are most concerned about war and its damaging effects. Whatever it is, if you look back and think through the examples mentioned (or fill in your cause), you can see that all these issues are about maintaining and or enhancing life.

These causes are worth our time because doing something to end hunger, war, the deterioration of our planet and other such things sustains life. And, what is more important than life? Without life, there is nothing. Our hearts of compassion to help sustain and enhance the lives of others are admirable. But we must admit that they are not entirely effective. That is, neither our compassion nor the efforts it produces can sustain life forever. Whatever we do, we will never be able to rid our world of death itself.

Don't read that as a sad thought. Though many of us like to think that we are shapers of the condition of human life or of human destiny, the God of the universe is the true author and sustainer of all life (see Psalm 104). Since the beginning of time, He has done everything possible to grant all people (not to mention the trees!) what they need to sustain and enhance their lives. The culmination of these efforts lies in His decision to inhabit the world as a man, Jesus. In Jesus, compassion and empathy meet because God is able to say, "I know what it's like to be human, and I can meet all of your needs."

Jesus came that all human beings may have "life...and life abundantly." (John 10:10) Jesus' life was lived in utmost compassion, as He was constantly reaching out to the sick, weary, lost, and outcast. Yet for him, there was no impediment to his compassionate efforts—He carried that heart of compassion all the way to the point of conquering death! He thus, is able to offer eternal, abundant life to all. Now that is compassion!

Jesus performed many miracles to demonstrate the power of His divine compassion. When the crowd became weary from following Him for three days, He had compassion on them and fed them (Mark 8:2); when Jesus went out and saw a great multitude gathered, "He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick." (Matthew 14:14) In another case, for twelve years a woman had been impure due to her constant bleeding. She was an outcast and couldn't be touched. Yet hoping to be healed, she reached out for the hem of Jesus' garment in a large crowd. Immediately, the woman stopped bleeding, but this didn't satisfy Jesus—he wanted to greet her and heal her of her social wounds too. (Matthew 9:20-22 and Luke 8:43) He restored to her both her health and the dignity of being received.

Jesus' compassion for us greatly exceeds the goal of just healing us of bodily ailments. Jesus' miraculous healing was intended to testify to His divinity and give people the courage and faith to follow Him and receive eternal life. In one case, two blind men asked for sight and "Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him." (Matthew 20:34) If Jesus' goal was simply that humans would be cured of their temporary ailments with death looming on the horizon, His entire life would have looked radically different. Instead, His compassion is complete because He tells people, "Follow me" (Matthew 16:24, 19:21; Mark 8:34, 10:21; Luke 9:23, 18:22; John 10:27, 12:26, 21:22) so that we can share in His conquering of death. If we follow Him, He is able to grant us eternal life!

Jesus didn't just come to meet our basic needs to restore to us our basic life. He cares about the quality of our life. He heals the blind that they might have the joy of seeing. He seeks the lost, that they may understand the meaning of life. He comforts the weary and lonely, that they may have abundant hope. He gives His children all that is His, that they might know what it means to be loved. **He completes the work of compassion, that we may know that we can trust in Him.**

The God of the universe, Jesus, wants and is able to meet all of our needs. All He asks is "Follow me."

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