***Matthew 9:35-36 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 36But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.***

Do we see people with the compassion of Jesus? Do I see people with the compassion of Jesus? I would tell you that there are times in my delusional pride that I begin to entertain the thought that I am within seeing distance of the compassion My Savior showed to me. Then, God humbles me and clears up my misunderstanding and I realize the wretched thoughts I truly have toward the multitudes I see. This question must haunt us day and night, night and day. Charles Spurgeon once said that, of all the verses of the Bible, verses 36, 37, and especially 38 haunted him the most. If we are ever to do the Holy work of Jesus, we must, as God allows, see and understand as Jesus sees and understands. So, I ask myself again, “Do I see others with the same compassion Jesus demonstrated to me?” And I would tell you the answer is a woeful no. It is a place I can do much work and make much improvement for sure.

In verse 35 it says - *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.* In Jesus day, there were essentially two parties with regard to religion – Pharisees and Sadducees – Pharisees were more liberal, Sadducees more conservative. Telling the Truth could get you killed. The courts favored the wealthy. There were haves and have nots. Rulers dictated what people could and could not do. Many were desperately poor, and taxed everywhere they turned. There was immorality. Religious rules took priority over compassion. An eye for an eye was the prevailing mindset. And into this stepped our Savior, correcting the spiritual perversion of both Pharisee and Sadducee, bringing the Truth, respecting no social status, loving the poor, and showing compassion no matter the cost. He did not condone. He did not condemn. He did not conform. His teachings, preaching, and love of the sick and the diseased was completely counter to the culture around Him. He was in the world, but not of the world. He met real people, in real trouble, right in the real place they found themselves.

The time of Jesus sounds oddly similar to our time today. His heart turned neither right nor left, but stayed upwardly focused. He experienced all the societal, political, and cultural pressure that everyone else experienced, yet His eyes remained fixed on that which is above. Are my eyes fixed on that which is above, even as culture shifts, and politics spew, and society decays? Is my compassion steadfast, without condoning, condemning, or conforming? Is my heart that of the Good Samaritan, unwilling to step over or around, but insisting that I step in to help instead? It’s something to consider.

Verse 36 we see Jesus’ heart - *But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.* He saw the multitudes, filthy in sin, perverted in thought, misguided and lost and He – condemned them all? No. Looked at them condescendingly? No. Condoned their sin and said – live and let live? No. He was moved with compassion. To feel compassion is to see another’s suffering, even when that person does not fully see that suffering, and to want to help alleviate that suffering. Jesus’ heart was broken for what He saw. He saw burdens these people were being crushed beneath that He was willing to bear. He knew that they could come to Him and He would give them rest. He saw lostness, and trouble, and distress, a sense of being dispirited. And He felt – compassion. He saw them as sheep having no shepherd.

An interesting note about sheep – did you know that, when they faint and get turned on their backs they cannot get back on their feet without help? They’ll just flail until the shepherd arrives and shows compassion or they die. This is known as being cast down. Predators love to find sheep in this situation. I would tell you… Satan loves finding us weary, scattered, troubled, vexed, so busy with the woes of this world that all we do is flail, never crying for the Shepherd.

Do we see others, those we disagree with, those struggling with sickness, addiction, disease, or lostness with compassion? The first question is – do we see? To really see the multitudes, Jesus first had to look intently. Do I look intently or, when I am repulsed by what I see on the surface, do I look away? And, when I look intently, do I feel compassion and desperate broken heartedness for the lost and the backsliding… the spiritually weary, exhausted, scattered, and flailing.

This week, let’s consider the compassion Christ showed us. You see, we were once part of that multitude that Jesus looked intently upon. He saw me weary, scattered, cast down, and flailing. He looked at me while I was still in rebellion and at enmity with God and He showed compassion. Are we, am I, showing that same compassion to all I meet? Am I truly looking intently upon the multitudes and choosing compassion? Jesus saw our suffering and gave us His free gift of Peace. Does our compassion point others to Christ that He may do the same for them?