

FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE #5

What did Jesus Say and Do? (Part 2)

In the last issue of “*From a Christian Perspective*” #4 we focused on Jesus’ teaching about forgiveness. This includes God’s willingness to forgive us when we are repentant and ask for His forgiveness. It also presented Jesus’ teaching that we should forgive one another.

Let us now look at one outstanding trait of Jesus, his COMPASSION for people especially those who are suffering. Jesus was particularly compassionate when he saw anyone who was suffering, and when he saw how unaware people were of God’s love for them. Every one of the four Gospels brings out this compassionate nature of Jesus. And since Jesus is a Divine person that means that he revealed that God is compassionate toward us. More than once Jesus provided food for a large crowd who had been following him.

From John’s Gospel 6:2-15 we read the story; “*A large crowd followed Jesus, because they saw the signs (miracles of healing) he was performing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. When he raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip. “Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?” He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, “Two hundred day’s wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little bit.” One of the disciples, Andrew, said to him, “ There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?” Jesus said, “ Have the people recline.” Now there was a great deal of grass in that place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks , and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted. When they had their fill, he said to his disciple, “Gather the fragments that are left over, so that nothing will be wasted.” So they collected them and filled twelve wicker baskets with the fragment from the five barley loaves and two fish that had been more than they could eat. When they saw the sign (miracle) he had done, they said, “This is truly the prophet,, the one who is to come into the world.”*”

Jesus saw himself as a shepherd who loves his sheep (we are his sheep) so much that he would offer himself for them.

In John's Gospel 10: 11-15 we hear him speaking to the people. *"I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd, and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father (in heaven) knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep."*

There was a man who was blind from birth and Jesus gave him sight for the first time. (John 9: 1-40).

We also recall the Gospel story of a person caught in adultery and the crowd was ready to stone her. Jesus skillfully intervened and freed her. (John 8; 1-11).

On more than one occasion Jesus healed those with leprosy. (Mark 1:40-45). He also had compassion on paralytics and healed. (Mark 2: 1-12).

Jesus compassion not only extended to those who were ill, but he also saw how much they sought to hear his words, the good news he taught. On one occasion Jesus and his close disciples got in a boat on the small Sea of Galilee and rowed across. A crowd saw them coming and gathered on the opposite shore waiting for him to arrive.

The story continues in Mark's *Gospel (Mark 6; 34)* *"When Jesus disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity of them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things."* This large gather of people later led into another occasion when he multiplied food to feed the people because they were in an isolated location with no other source of food available.

There is a beautiful scene of Jesus' compassion in Matthews gospel (MT 20: 29-33)

“As Jesus and his disciples left Jericho, a great crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by they cried out, “Lord, Son of David, have pity on us!” The crowd warned them to be silent, but they called out all the more, “Lord, Son of David, have pity on us!” Jesus stopped and called them and said, “What do you want me to do for you?” They answered him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.” Moved with pity, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight, and followed him.”

I think it is worth noticing that the two men who were given their sight did not leave and go back to their town, they immediately followed Jesus. They were grateful and they probably also wanted get to know him better and hear him teach so they followed him.

We can also get to know Jesus by reading the story of his life in the New Testament of the Bible. Jesus rose from the dead and is living today. We can get to know Jesus today through personal time sent in conversational prayer to him. He is our only source of eternal life.

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