

Session 6: Costly Compassion

INTRODUCTION

Recap

Last time, we heard a challenge to be a community that seeks reconciliation.

Share: Did you have an opportunity to use any of the reconciliation practices we discussed last week? If so, what happened?

Vision + Objective

Communities flourish when followers of Jesus practice compassion. We see and act, embodying what it means to love God and love our neighbors. We extend compassion to all, even when it is costly or risky.

Opening Discussion

Reflect individually, then share:

- What comes to mind when you hear the word "compassion"?
- Who is it easy to have compassion for? What keeps you from feeling compassion?

Pray to transition.

PASSAGE STUDY

Background

- Samaritans: viewed as non-Jewish and syncretistic, resulting in deep tension between Jews and Samaritans. "Samaritan" was even considered a derogatory term to Jews.
- Road to Jericho: an infamously dangerous road, often beset by bandits.
- Expert in the law: someone who loved the Scriptures, memorized them, and tried to put them into action in their lives.

Read Luke 10:25-37

Observation:

- What stands out to you in the passage?
- How do the actions of the Samaritan compare to the actions of the priest and the Levite?

Interpretation:

- What is significant about Jesus highlighting the Samaritan as the hero of the passage?
- What might Jesus be trying to teach the expert by answering a different question?

Application:

- If our church was known for showing costly compassion to all, how would it impact our community?
- What challenges or inspires you from today's discussion?

RESPONSE**Activity**

What would it take for action-driven, costly compassion to become second nature? Too often, we hesitate or get stuck in our heads when faced with an opportunity to show compassion. As a group, discuss where you see a need for compassion. Make a list of common situations where you could act (a friend struggling, a homeless person you pass daily, overhearing a racist or inappropriate comment, etc.).

- In pairs, choose two situations and brainstorm four different actions to respond.
- Name the barriers that stand in the way of doing these actions.

This activity is not about cheap charity or feeling good about ourselves. Practicing overcoming barriers with small acts prepares us for when we are faced with costly or risky opportunities to show compassion.

Action Step

Pray that God would give you an opportunity to show compassion this week. Commit to responding in action when an opportunity arises. Pray that the Holy Spirit would help you overcome any barriers you may encounter. Additional Challenge: Read *Compassion* by Henri J.M. Nouwen.

Prayer