

WHY SHARE JESUS FOR LIFE?

Talk 1 – Compassion - Matthew 9:35-38

Small group questions

Leaders – Choose *some* from the following. Don't feel the need to work through each one!

If the questions make no sense or you don't know the answer,
please contact bishop@bathurstanglican.org.au

What are some common reasons people hesitate to share their faith? How do these reasons resonate with your own experiences?

Read Matthew 9:35-38

1. How clearly are you seeing?

- a. What was the 'good news of the Kingdom' Jesus was proclaiming?
- b. What did Jesus mean when he described the crowds as *'harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd'*?
- c. Why did Jesus have such a strong reaction to seeing the crowds? (What is behind the word used?)
- d. **Modern Day Perception:** How can we train ourselves to see people around us as Jesus saw the crowds? Share an example of a time when you recognised people as "harassed and helpless."
- a. **Superficial Appearances:** Why might people not appear "harassed and helpless" on the surface? How can we look beyond superficial appearances?

2. What's your response to what you are seeing?

- a. Why don't we have the same reaction as Jesus did?
- b. How do non-Christian funerals demonstrate the reality of people who are 'sheep without a shepherd'?
- c. Jesus said that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few and that we should ask the Lord to send more workers. Why don't we? What does he mean by 'workers'?
- d. **Becoming the Answer:** In what ways might we be the answer to the prayer for more workers? How can we prepare ourselves to take on this role?

3. How's your compassion?

- a. Our hearts go out to those on our TV who have lost everything in flood and bushfire. Why don't they go out in the same way to those who have no shepherd?
- b. When (if) we do begin to feel a great compassion the shepherd-less, what might result?
- c. **Sharing Jesus for Life:** Discuss practical steps our small group can take to share Jesus more effectively in our community. How can we support each other in this mission?
- d. **Identifying Opportunities:** How can we become more aware of opportunities to share Jesus in our everyday lives? What obstacles might we need to overcome?

Lord, give us a real heart-felt compassion for those we know and love, who don't know and love you. Send more workers into the harvest field to tell more people about where they can find a shepherd who will meet all their needs. And may compassion stir us up and embolden us to invite others share something of Jesus with others. Amen.

NOTES

1. How clearly are you seeing? (Matthew 9:35-36)

a. What was the 'good news of the Kingdom' Jesus was proclaiming?

Jesus was proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God, which includes salvation, reconciliation with God, and the promise of eternal life through faith in Him.

b. What did Jesus mean when he described the crowds as 'harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd'?

Jesus observed that the people were distressed, aimless, and in need of guidance and care, much like sheep without a shepherd who protects, guides, and provides for them.

c. Why did Jesus have such a strong reaction to seeing the crowds? (What is behind the word used?)

The word used indicates that Jesus was deeply moved with compassion. His reaction stemmed from His love and concern for the people, recognizing their spiritual and physical needs.

d. Modern Day Perception: How can we train ourselves to see people around us as Jesus saw the crowds? Share an example of a time when you recognized people as "harassed and helpless."

To see people as Jesus did, we need to cultivate compassion and empathy. This involves looking beyond outward appearances and recognizing the deeper needs and struggles people may be facing. For instance, noticing someone who is isolated and lonely, despite appearing well put together, might prompt us to reach out with compassion and support.

e. Superficial Appearances: Why might people not appear "harassed and helpless" on the surface? How can we look beyond superficial appearances?

People often hide their struggles behind a façade of normalcy or strength due to societal expectations or personal pride. We can look beyond superficial appearances by engaging in genuine conversations, actively listening, and showing genuine interest in others' lives.

2. What's your response to what you are seeing?

a. Why don't we have the same reaction as Jesus did?

Often, we may be preoccupied with our own concerns or lack the same depth of compassion as Jesus. Our response can be shaped by self-centeredness or fear of rejection.

b. How do non-Christian funerals demonstrate the reality of people who are 'sheep without a shepherd'?

Non-Christian funerals can reveal the lack of hope and assurance of eternal life that comes through faith in Jesus Christ. They highlight the spiritual void and the need for true shepherdship.

c. Jesus said that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few and that we should ask the Lord to send more workers. Why don't we? What does he mean by 'workers'?

Jesus refers to workers as those who proclaim the gospel and disciple others. We may not ask for more workers due to complacency, lack of understanding of the urgency, or fear of stepping out in faith.

d. Becoming the Answer: In what ways might we be the answer to the prayer for more workers? How can we prepare ourselves to take on this role?

We can be the answer by actively sharing our faith, serving others, and living out the gospel in our daily lives. Preparation involves prayer, studying the Scriptures, and being open to God's leading in opportunities to share our faith.

3. How's your compassion?

a. Our hearts go out to those on our TV who have lost everything in flood and bushfire. Why don't they go out in the same way to those who have no shepherd?

Often, we can be more moved by visible, immediate crises than by ongoing spiritual needs because spiritual needs are less apparent and may require deeper empathy and understanding.

b. When (if) we do begin to feel a great compassion for the shepherd-less, what might result?

Greater compassion can lead to action—sharing the gospel, supporting missions, and actively engaging in disciple-making.

c. Sharing Jesus for Life: Discuss practical steps our small group can take to share Jesus more effectively in our community. How can we support each other in this mission?

Practical steps include prayer, intentional relationships with non-believers, hosting outreach events, and participating in local ministries. Supporting each other involves encouragement, accountability, and sharing resources and experiences.

d. Identifying Opportunities: How can we become more aware of opportunities to share Jesus in our everyday lives? What obstacles might we need to overcome?

We can become more aware by being attentive to conversations, needs, and invitations for deeper discussions. Obstacles include fear of rejection, lack of knowledge, and cultural barriers.