**Consider Christ, Consider Compassion**

LGBTQ . . . RSTUVWXYZ . . . There aren’t enough letters in the alphabet to assign to all the perverted notions now rising to the surface in our culture.

Black Lives Matter . . . BLM . . . it could just as aptly stand for Basically Lost their Minds . . . fomenting hate in the name of equality.

And all the political rhetoric . . . let’s not go there this morning . . .

It would be real easy to allow our minds and our hearts to “justify” bitterness and animosity toward people who promote such immorality and bigotry masquerading as a fight for equal rights.

And we could take the rest of the time in our service this morning to point out how utterly unbiblical and sinful these positions and lifestyles are, justifying our righteous anger and indignation against what we know God considers to be the behavior of those who are bound for hell.

While we would be correct in our conclusion, let me suggest that if all we do is focus on how unbiblical some behavior is without being willing to address the issue by reaching out to the people involved in the behavior, we are sinning by omission. In other words, there is more to our responsibility as a believer than just being able to identify right from wrong. We must also do right.

Doing right in the case of our attitude and approach to these discernably unbiblical movements and practices involves exercising compassion for the spiritual plight of those involved. Why? Because they, like us, are equally God’s image-bearers, marred by sin and destined for hell if not for the Holy Spirit’s intervention. Are we willing to consider that our Spirit-filled attitudes and actions might be part of that intervention? Or that our fleshly/selfish attitudes and actions might be a hindrance, grieving the Spirit?

These are hard things to consider because it is just plain easier to come to a biblically right position, or to biblically identify a problem, than it is to then be used by the Spirit of God to also be part of the solution. It’s just easier, perhaps, to be like Jonah: not wanting people to respond to God’s compassionate message of mercy because you want them to experience God’s judgment; because, after all, that’s what they deserve!

The brute fact of the matter is, so do you, and so do I!

**1. CONSIDER YOUR STATE OF BEING PRIOR TO SALVATION**

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, **2**in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. **3**Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

**2. CONSIDER GOD’S COMPASSION ON YOUR PLIGHT**

**a. Consider God’s Compassionate Character**

2 Corinthians 1:3

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

Psalm 103:8

The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.

Psalm 116:5

Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate.

Lamentations 3:22

The Lord’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail.

Nehemiah 9:17, 19, 27, 31

**17**“They refused to listen, And did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You had performed among them; so they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But You are a God of forgiveness, Gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness; And You did not forsake them.

**19**You, in Your great compassion, Did not forsake them in the wilderness;

**27**“Therefore You delivered them into the hand of their oppressors who oppressed them, But when they cried to You in the time of their distress,
You heard from heaven, and according to Your great compassion
You gave them deliverers who delivered them from the hand of their oppressors.

**31**“Nevertheless, in Your great compassion You did not make an end of them or forsake them, For You are a gracious and compassionate God.

**b. Consider God’s Action**

Psalm 51:1

Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

Psalm 103:8-14

**8**The Lord is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. **9**He will not always strive *with us*, Nor will He keep *His anger* forever. **10**He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. **11**For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. **12**As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. **13**Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. **14**For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are *but* dust.

Ephesians 2:4-7

**4**But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5**even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), **6**and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, **7**so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

**3. CONSIDER OTHERS WHO ARE IN THE CONDITION YOU WERE**

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Ephesians 4:17-20

**17**So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, **18**being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; **19**and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. **20**But you did not learn Christ in this way,

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

**9**Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, **10**nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. **11**Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

**4. CONSIDER YOUR COMPASSION (OR LACK OF?) TOWARDS THEM**

 **a. Consider Christ’s Compassion**

 Matthew 9:36

Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they weredistressed [harassed] and dispirited [thrown down] like sheep without a shepherd.

 Matthew 23:37

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.

 Matthew 14:14

When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.

Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin.

**b. Consider Other Examples**

Luke 10:33-37

**33**But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, **34**and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on *them*; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. **35**On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.’ **36**Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ *hands*?” **37**And he said, “The one who showed mercy toward him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and dothe same.”

**c. Consider God’s Commands**

 Micah 6:8

He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Zechariah 7:9

“Thus has the Lord of hosts said, ‘Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother;

Colossians 3:12

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience

1 Peter 3:8

Now finally, all of you should be like-minded and sympathetic, should love believers, and be compassionate and humble,

To be Christlike, genuine compassion is to be a characteristic of every believer, even in the midst of a culture where the both the concept and application of compassion is twisted.

And, as much as we are to have compassion on those in the world, let us be reminded that it starts here at home—in our body of believers. If we can’t or won’t be compassionate here, we will not be compassionate to those outside.

I’ve asked Sarah to sing again the song that she sang before the message, ***A World We Never Touch****.*

As I said in the introduction to this message, there is more to our responsibility as a believer than just being able to identify right from wrong. We must also do right.

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**A World We Never Touch**

**1st Verse**: He walked along the shores of Galilee
From clay He formed the healing balm
That caused the blind to see
When stones of wrath lay heavy in their hands
He knelt to write His mercy in the sand
Jesus came to set the captives free
Showed us by the way He lived
The way we need to be
Oh love is more than words could ever say
We must touch them with compassion
To help them find their way

**Chorus**: How can we reach a world we never touch?
How can we show them Christ
If we never show them love?
Just to say we care will never be enough
How can we reach a world we never touch?

**2nd Verse**: Could we be so busy being saved
Trying to impress a world that's long since lost its way
We pride ourselves in being set apart
Yet we don't have time to touch a broken heart
Even if we found the time to care
Would we take the risk involved in always being there
Oh we hold the very thing they need so much
Sometimes the Word of life can pass
Through just a simple touch

**Repeat Chorus**

**Bridge**: We hide behind these walls
And the security of friends
While beyond the stained glass windows
The world is lost in sin

**Chorus Once More**