



# SERMON OF THE WEEK

## First Presbyterian Church of Honolulu at Ko'olau

### March 16, 2014

#### "You Are not Alone" (Compassion Sunday)

The Rev. Dr. Dan Chun

**L**uke 10:25 Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Luke 10:26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?"

Luke 10:27 He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

Luke 10:28 And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

Luke 10:29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Luke 10:30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.

Luke 10:31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

Luke 10:32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

Luke 10:33 But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity.

Luke 10:34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

Luke 10:35 The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.'

Luke 10:36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"

Luke 10:37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

This is the word of God.

Now hang in there with me on this thought. I was reading some Tim Keller the other day and this thought hit me like a ton of bricks. He said, "We will not love as Jesus loves until we know that we do NOT love as Jesus loves."

Until we fully comprehend that we do not love, cannot love as we ought, then we will not give our life over to Christ. For as long as we are prideful and think we are always loving and law-abiding, then we will feel no need for him. We will have no reason to commit our lives to Him.

So how does this work? What does it mean that unless we realize we don't love as we should we cannot love

or even follow Jesus? Here's a true story.

In 1741, in Middlebury, Connecticut, an incredible thing happened. There was a farmer named Nathan Cole who thought he was a believer. He thought he was a follower of Christ. He believed being a Christian was being a good person. But get this. One day in 1741, an Anglican priest came to Middlebury. He was the great, famous gospel evangelist/preacher George Whitefield.

Nathan Cole heard him preach, and then Nathan gave his life to Christ. How do we know that? Nathan Cole wrote down the account of his conversion, and it's there today in the archives of Yale University. His account ends with these startling, stunning words: "And my hearing [Whitefield] preach, gave me a heart wound; by God's blessing: my old Foundation was broken up, and I saw that my righteousness would not save me." [The Good Samaritan: On Love The Parables of Jesus (sermon), Tim Keller August 2, 1992]

Did you hear that? Three things. First, he said, "And my hearing him preach, gave me a heart wound." Second, "By God's blessing, my old Foundation was broken up." And third, "I saw that my righteousness would not save me."

When our hearts are wounded and our foundation shaken up, we will see we are not as righteous as we think.

**T**oday's sermon is a check on our hearts. Do we really love people? When we find we don't love people as we ought to, we need to make room for Jesus to work in our hearts.

But how can we love as Jesus loves?

In our Bible passage, a young follower of religious law (that is what this attorney was, more like a seminary professor) asks Jesus, what must I do to inherit life? Jesus lays it out—love God with all of your heart, soul and mind, and love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.

Wow, we all love ourselves a lot so to love others as much as we love, defend, protect, and feed ourselves is a lot. To be sure, when Jesus says it this way, He is not saying the works of love or good deeds will save you. You know we are all saved by grace not works. But the point of the parable is if you really love God, then we will see the EVIDENCE of that in how you love people.

Who are these people, these "neighbors" that Jesus referred to in verse 27? They are those who can't pay you back, those who are really in need, the impoverished, the hopeless, the helpless, and those who feel really alone.

When Jesus told this story it really confused his audience. He was talking to Jewish people, and Jewish people don't like Samaritans! In history we learn that the worst thing a Jew could call a person was a Samaritan. It was a dirty word for them. In John chapter 8 verse 48, when the people got mad at Jesus they called Him a Samaritan and demon-possessed.

It was common practice for Jews to get up early morning and say, "Lord, give me a good day. Give me this day my daily bread. Keep me safe

today. Lord, I pray there will no Samaritans in the resurrection on the last day." Jews hated Samaritans. And here Jesus makes a Samaritan the hero of the story who helped a helpless Jew. Ugh! It's important to know the context of this parable.

In telling the parable, Jesus challenges the Jews to love all people. And notice the way the Samaritan loved the injured Jew. He paid his medical bills, he made sure his wounds were cleaned and would be healed. He tells the innkeeper, "I'll repay you for whatever you spend on this man." This was a darn expensive, sacrificial love. He was saying to the beaten up man – you are not alone. I'm with you.

So Jesus says to the student of Jewish religious law—and He says to us today—if you really have my love in you, you would love like that. You would love at a cost.

When Jesus talks about helping and loving others He is tough. He is strident. He is really clear. Jesus does this all the time. He calls us to radical love. And He calls us to help especially those who feel alone, isolated, rejected, especially those who are poor in this world.

Remember, Jesus told the rich young ruler, "Give away most of your money, and give it to the poor." How serious is God about helping the poor? In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25, Jesus said the same thing.

Matt 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.

Matt 25:32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,

Matt 25:33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

Matt 25:34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;

Matt 25:35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

Matt 25:36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Matt 25:37 Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?

Matt 25:38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?

Matt 25:39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'

Matt 25:40 And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

Matt 25:41 Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels;

Matt 25:42 for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,

Matt 25:43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

**M**att 25:44 Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’

Matt 25:45 Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me

On the last day, the day of judgment, Jesus says He will show up, and He will see all these people in front of Him who claim to be followers of Him. They claim to be Christians. You think they get in because they once said I believe in Jesus or because they have gone to church for a long time, but then Jesus says I will say to some on my right hand, “You can enter into the joy of the Lord. For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.”

And they say, “What? When did we see you in that condition, Lord?”

And Jesus replies “I saw how you took care of others, because you treated the homeless and the hungry and the sick and the poor, the imprisoned and the way you treated them, you treated me this way. So you are saved. You can enter into the kingdom.”

Then He turns to the people standing on His left. And these are also people who think they’re Christians. It’s judgment day and He says to them, “You are baaaaad people because you are like goats and not my sheep.

“I know this because I was hungry on earth, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me drink. I was in prison, and you didn’t come to me. I was sick, and you didn’t take care of me.”

And these people ask in horror, “Try wait, try wait. Eh wow, lau lau, Lord, when did we EVER see you in that condition?”

And Jesus says, “Because of the way you ignored or treated them, you treated Me in the same way.” And maybe they said, “Why, we were tricked! Plus, we were so busy!”

Now hear me clearly again. I am not saying good works gets you to heaven. But I AM SAYING that only a relationship with Jesus, only a full realization that He has chosen you and loves you and that you have now placed your faith completely in Him, that is what gets us into heaven.

But don’t stop there – what Jesus is saying is that just once we have that relationship with Him, we need to go beyond it by loving others. Like the Disney song, Send It On, the first line says, “A word’s just a word unless you mean what you say. Love isn’t love until you give it away.” (from Send It On written by Adam Anders, Nikki Hassman, and Peer Astrom 2009)

What Jesus looks for is the love given away – the evidence, the fruit, the markings of a person who is radically loving like a Good Samaritan to help the poor. For if Jesus doesn’t see that, then He doubts whether a true conversion has occurred. And for those people, they go to a place for eternity that is not nice.

Do we have a heart for the poor? If God were to test us, how would we do? I am not trying to scare us; I am trying to warn us. Read Matthew Chapter 25. Read this chapter Luke 10. Jesus is trying to lay it out as clearly as He can. If we are followers of Him, then will we help those who are desperately in need. We will be evaluated by our works.

Here’s another true story. There was an old woman who had no children and no husband was very

wealthy. Her only heir was a nephew. However, she really didn’t know what kind of guy he was because whenever he was around her, he was polite, courteous and warm.

“She didn’t want to risk leaving her money to a person she didn’t trust yet, so to make sure she really knew her nephew, she dressed up as a homeless lady and sat on the steps of his townhouse to watch how he would treat her when he came out. [To her surprise] the nephew saw her and not knowing she was in disguise, he treated her horrible. He treated her unlovingly. He even threatened her. Then she knew what he was really like.” [The Good Samaritan: on Love, The Parables of Jesus (sermon), Tim Keller August 2, 1992]

That is the pop quiz that Jesus speaks of in Matthew 25. When Jesus says, “As you treated the poor, the lonely, the imprisoned so you treated me,” He is saying, “I am the people in poverty in this world. Don’t look down on them. Don’t ignore them. Don’t be lazy in helping them...because that’s me. The people you least want to help, look closely, in their eyes is Christ the Lord.

“Besides,” says Jesus, “remember you were once pretty messed up and unloved and unloving when I first met you...so can’t you, now that you have been saved, be as nice to others as I have loved you. Let them know they are not alone and help them!”

It is out of a deep love for Jesus and the poor that 55 of us representing our church and seven other churches in Hawaii and the mainland went to the Philippines last month. Part of our group went to Manila to put on a conference teaming with Hawaiian Islands Ministries for ALL of the Philippines Compassion International staff about 90 or so who have been working so long and so hard especially with Typhoon Haiyan hitting their country 6 months ago.

**W**e gave them encouragement and hopefully inspiration and some training. Your mission dollars helped to pay for the entire conference.

This team then flew to the island of Palawan. I was able to preach 3 times to more than 3000, and once in a huge coliseum. It is our sister church, Life Church in Palawan that has really grown. So their second service looks like this with more than 2,000 people. This is just their second morning service. Their other services are about 1,500 combined. We are thrilled with their growth. Many came forward to accept Christ that morning at the worship service in the coliseum.

With HIM, we also put on a conference for 900 church leaders at LIFE Church. And many came forward and flooded the stage every night for healing as or prayer team and staff prayed for them.

Our medical team meanwhile was also working hard. The medical, dental, and community service teams that would be working so hard repairing homes as well as serving medically/dentally more than 2,000 children and their families.

At one point we went into the jungle to go to a distant village that needed our help, Insurgents were there the week before, and yes Al Qaeda is active in the south of the Philippines, and so the Philippine Marines provided safety for us in the jungle Here is one of the few times they were smiling. Oh, I guess that's only me and the halau dancers smiling. I love that shot because in the Philippines I tower over the Marines. (A picture of Pastor Dan with the Philippine Marines was shown.)

We saw the playground that our church paid for but we couldn't install the last time we were there because Philippine Customs wouldn't release it. And now it is up.

We distributed nearly \$10,000 worth of medicine. Children needed their teeth pulled. We only had one dentist, and we had to turn away too many kids. Over the week thousands came. Everyone was trying to help on the dental side. Anesthesiologists, dental hygienists, surgeons were all pulling teeth out because there was such a great need. No comfortable chairs; school tables were used instead.

Surgery was performed when needed: injured arms, legs, minor tumors removed. The demand for medical help was so great that even the halau was asked to help to take blood pressure and assist the doctors. The people lined up for hours in the hot sun, no air-conditioned waiting room, unlike in the US, as they waited for their first medical care in months and for some in a year.

But not only children needed medical care, but their grandparents and parents too. All hands on deck. Even the conference speakers pitched in to help put pills in bags for the patients.

The Community Service Team was busy repairing buildings and also assisted the medical team.

Later we went to the Capitol building of Puerto Princesa where the Mayor allowed us to set up a one-day clinic to receive many of the Compassion churches children and their families. It was there for some reason I choked up. I kept wanting to cry. I saw all the need in one place. While we were in the jungle, we were all spread out. But when we were in the auditorium of the city capitol building, we were all there in one place – the surgery, the medicine, the prayer team.

I also saw some Compassion college kids volunteering, like Queenie, who's being sponsored by our deacons

till she finishes college. (Picture of Queenie was shown.)

Many college kids who are supported by Compassion, who come from poverty homes volunteer their times to help other kids of poverty who don't have compassion help. I met a law student who was volunteering her days to help the medical dental mission. They spent the whole week trying to help us help others. I was proud of our compassion kids.

I was asked to pray for certain families. And the situation of the first family I prayed for was so hard. A mother of 4 children, who had a two-month old baby with pneumonia in her arms. Had an IV in the baby's arm. I asked, "Where is the father?" The interpreter said her husband died of heart problems four months ago. Didn't get the medical help he needed. I said, but how is she going to survive now that her husband is gone...the sole moneymaker. The interpreter said there is no one else but she can get meals except from her parents who also are in poverty.

I saw in her and her baby's eyes the eyes of Jesus, for when we do unto them we do it unto the Lord.

I was very proud of our teams. In a week we had served more than 5,000 people, more than 2,000 medically.

But a strange thing happened when we were about to leave on the last day. I was in my hotel room writing in my journal, when suddenly I began to cry. I was listing all of the things in my journal of what we had done. I was so proud of our team. But suddenly I started crying more heavily and I started to heave as I wept, which I don't do. Because I am a macho man and macho men don't cry, unless you are like Jesus in the Bible.

But I couldn't control it.

I was crying because I was thinking, “We should have done more. We didn’t do enough.” It was like the end of Schindler’s List. When I was supposed to be at the zenith of happiness that we had done so much, that recurring thought came: we should have helped more. We didn’t do enough. We left too many behind. To know and see hundreds that we couldn’t get to killed me.

We only had one dentist and one dental hygienist, and we didn’t have enough doctors and nurses for the thousands. We didn’t have enough volunteers and we left too many standing in the hot sun who never got any help.

And yes, it was like the proverbial starfish story where the girl is throwing stranded star fish on a beach into the sea and was asked by a man why do that you aren’t making that much of a difference as there are so many star fish on the shore who you are not saving. And the girl says but for that one start fish I did save, it makes all the difference in the world.

I do know that we did a tremendous good and for the kids we have helped, it makes all the difference in the world. But I wish I had more money so I could support more children and young moms who have lost their husbands and have a sick child .

But you could help them. You can tell them that they are not alone. You can get to kids our team couldn’t get to whether in the Philippines or in Africa or India or Indonesia or other parts of Asia. You could help release them from poverty for Jesus.

Does supporting a Compassion child really work for \$38 a month? Let me introduce to you a friend by the name of Peter Habyarimana, who was once a street kid who was helped by Compassion. He’s now one of only two

former Compassion children who are now part of the staff of Compassion USA. Please welcome Peter. (Peter Habyarimana shares his testimony.)

For \$38 a month, you can support a child through Compassion International so that the child will get all of the medical help and food and education she needs and the exposure to Jesus. Why do I think Compassion International is the best human relief organization in the world?

For one, the research shows that the best way, clearly the BEST way to help areas of poverty is through child sponsorship. It is specific, strategic, and lasts through all of their teen years.

But what makes Compassion International unique is that it is child-focused. While other organizations build wells or roads and helps villages as a whole which are really important, Compassion on the other hand tracks and follows a child till about 21. It is all about helping that child and his or her family. And building a bond with a sponsor through letter writing where there is someone in the child’s life who says I believe in you, keep after your dreams, keep close to Christ for He will help you.

Compassion is not only child-focused, but it’s also Christ-centered. Last year more than 83,3000 children gave their lives to Jesus. Compassion served 1.4 million children in the world.

Compassion is not only Christ-centered, and child-focused, it’s also church-based. Compassion gives our money not to the government of the country where our child lies, which historically ripped off the people, but it gives it to the child’s church. Wherever there are poor there are churches.

And through the church, babies and children and youth are taken care of. Hence, Compassion builds up the local church and suddenly

there is a boom in growth and hundreds of children and their parents and grandparents start going to the neighborhood church.

Child-focused, Christ-centered, Church-based but also character-centered. Compassion is committed to integrity. Charity Navigator, which tracks most of the nonprofits in our county, always gives Compassion the highest rating for accurate financial records and use of their monies. They are committed to integrity.

Compassion wants to lead kids to Christ; not just give them bread, but introduce them to the bread of life Jesus Christ.

So I ask you today, to please consider sponsoring a child. For \$38 a month, which is about a dollar a day, you can give a child a life and maybe a relationship with Jesus. Just for about a dollar a day.

And for \$300 a month you could sponsor a college student so that they could jump with joy! In fact, if you would like to sponsor a college student here are some pictures of students available today for sponsorship. They will write you four times a month and you can write them also. The eyes of the poor are the eyes of Jesus.

We did so much during this last mission tour. But we left thousands and thousands of kids who did not get treatment. You can help with that by sponsoring some kids.

Yes, I said, kids in the plural. I think most of us in this room can sponsor more than one or at least one. My family sponsors 5. Tried to have one for each member of the family and then some.

The kids really need our help, and we have seen and met them.

**S**o after this service, I ask you to go back to lanai behind this Sanctuary outside and you will see tables out there with a lot of packets of kids waiting to be sponsored at \$38 a month plus the three college students. The packets give a bio of each child and show their birthdate. And just ask God if He wants you to do anything. Jesus said we need to have a heart for those with no clothes or food or drink.

A small number of our packets this morning will be marked with a special logo. A few will have a yellow exclamation point logo which means they are at risk of child rights violations – the live in an area where children are taken into se slavery or to be child soldiers or into hard labor.

A few will be marked with a red cross logo which means they have a medical need. A red ribbon means they live in an HIV infected area, and may have lost one or both parents. A small number have a blue priority badge meaning they have been waiting more than 11 months for a sponsor.

One thing many of us do is they look at the birthday and it might be the same as yours or your kids or of a wedding anniversary or even of the death of a loved one and people sponsor in tribute to one who has died.

Some sponsors in their later years so look at birthdays of teenager who only need a sponsor for a few more years.

I need to say that writing letters are really important. REALLY important. And we even have letter-writing nights here at the church so we can all write together because it is so important. We have one coming up on April 29. It's the only way the kids hear that someone believes in them and that they should keep the faith.

They need letters to keep them going. And they need our support

as you can give a birthday gift, a family gift and Christmas gift to your child too. We spend a lot on our own loved ones. This is a chance to as Jesus said to give to those who are really needy for we give unto him.

So let us pray that God might lead us to do what we need to do in Jesus name. Let's ask Him what He wants us to do to show those in need that they are not alone.

Let's pray. May we say to the children around the world who are poor, hungry, abused, who have lost parents or possibly threatened by sex slavery or hard labor or forced to be in a military: You are not alone. We will help you and try our best to rescue and give you a better life.

Amen.

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*Sunday sermon texts are also available at [fpchawaii.org](http://fpchawaii.org). The audio version can be downloaded from iTunes. It can also be sent to you by e-mail. Request the free audio version at [fpchkoolau@gmail.com](mailto:fpchkoolau@gmail.com).*