

MARK 3:7-12

THE COMPASSIONATE CHRIST

⁷ Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. ⁸ When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. ⁹ Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. ¹⁰ For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. ¹¹ Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." ¹² But he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was.

Those in need will always be attracted to those they think can meet their need. Conversely, those who are comfortable the way things are will be likely to reject those who come offering to meet their unacknowledged needs. We see this in stark contrast as Jesus moves from the synagogue to the streets and fields. Condemned and rejected by the religious leaders, he is welcomed and sought after by the people (they came from a huge geographic area).

Jesus' compassion as the Messiah blossoms forth in these verses. After being rejected by those whose motives should have been pure, he turns to those whose needs are certain, although their motives are questionable. I do not believe the boat was Jesus' escape module from the crowd, but rather a platform if he should be inadvertently driven into the sea. True compassion comes from a love of and desire to care for the people. Sure he knew that they were coming to him for all the wrong reasons, but he also knew that they had very real needs that he could meet; needs that they would have to have dealt with before he could address their invisible spiritual need. By so doing, Jesus elevated our physical needs to the throne room of God. He cares about every aspect of who we are, spiritual, emotional, psychological and physical.

As I come before you, Lord, with all my petty petitions, I hesitate to put them before you. Why should you bother yourself about my headache, my job situation or my Aunt Gertrude's visit? Yet you have shown yourself to be the God of compassion, and the God who is interested in my every thought and concern. Embolden me to love you so much that I will not try to keep anything from you, but will constantly reveal my heart to you. Amen.