

Good morning! We are in week two of our new series: Inside Out.

Before we get into the meat of things, I just want to present two thoughts to place in the back of your mind. But not too far back. Because I am believing that as we move through today's discussion it's going to all tie together. I'm sharing this with you right at the beginning simply because, initially, it will sound odd.

So here's the thing as I was preparing for this message, the Lord kept bringing people in front of me, wearing their clothes - inside out. Inside out shorts, inside out shirts, OMG! And I've needed to tell them, felt the responsibility to tell them, that their clothing might be inside out. There was even 1 situation where the person was sitting in front of me talking and the entire time all I could think about was do I tell 'em. Good thing I didn't. Because that was the style! Certain seams were sewed purposely inside out and others sewn the right way. And I thought, hey, this is what this series is about. Letting your inside, showing what might be going on in your heart out through our actions.

Then interestingly, this scripture comes:

Colossians 3:12: "Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience."

Cool right? Because that is what we are discussing being clothed in compassion. Okay, so that's that ...

Then, I was reminded of when Jesus was asked by an expert in the law, "what is the greatest commandment?" Jesus' replied,

Matthew 22:37-40: ³⁷ "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

What P. Earl discussed last week, illustrated this scripture - for us to love our God with every part of ourselves (take in His word and let it affect us) and as we do so, His love and heart for people (His children) will overflow us to our loving our neighbors, our family, and all those He brings before us.

Then, there's that part about the law and the prophets are based on these two scripture. Wow! So that means the law that God initially gave to Moses and all that the Lord's Prophets have spoken exist to support those laws. To love the Lord our God with every cell of our being and to love others as we would love ourselves.

God is compassionate and in His image we are compassionate. So, it is altogether proper then, if we want to know what compassion looks like, we can look to Jesus as our model of expressing compassion.

Compassion (v): Recall, compassion is recognizing the suffering of others, deeply caring, and then taking action to help. It's a tangible expression of love for those who are suffering or in need. Can we have compassion without Christ? Yes. But it is just charity. Compassion with Christ is true love.

When we look to the original language we gain greater insight on the depth how Jesus may love:

Rachamim – Ra-cha-min Compassion/mercy in Greek – same root word as deeply moved ra-kem. Rachamim - To be deeply moved.

Splagchnizomai – Blue Letter Bible (verb) (splangkh-nid-zom-ahee) – Greek, V. Moved with compassion. Moved from the bowels.

In the word there are 12 instances where splagchnizomai is used (3 times in His parables; 4 in miraculous feeding stories; 4 in healing/raising stories; 1 is found in

Mark 6:34 ³⁴ When Jesus went [a]shore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt **compassion** for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.

Matthew 14:13-14 Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had **compassion** (splugchnizomai) on them and healed their sick.

Matthew 20:29-34 Two Blind Men Receive Sight

²⁹ As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰ Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

³¹ The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

³² Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

³³ "Lord," they answered, "we want our sight."

³⁴ Jesus had **compassion** on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

This same word for compassion was also used in the parable of the good samaritan that P. Earl shared last week. The samaritan was moved to compassion (Splugchnitzomai) to come to the aid of his neighbor.

From these scriptures we see key aspects of what it looks like to move in compassion like Jesus:

- **Jesus saw everyone as =:**

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” – Galatians 3:28,

- **He touched the untouchables and treated everyone with dignity and respect.**

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed, free to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18–19).

Jesus is proclaiming good news to the poor, captives, blind, oppressed; those who would be considered untouchable by society. Those discriminated against and treated unfairly. While He brought hope, He also brought Truth. That is compassion as well.

- **Jesus expressed unconditional love:**

Just like you wouldn't withhold love from yourself based on your flaws, this concept encourages offering love to others regardless of their imperfections.

- **Compassion/mercy:**

More than a feeling. Every time Jesus feels compassion an action is done to meet the need of the person in need.

- **Jesus was not about himself (Compassion is not about self-centeredness rather humility):**

Compassion to a degree involves recognizing your own flaws and limitations but it's not about prioritizing your own needs over others; rather, it's about using your self-awareness to better connect with and care for others.

- **Jesus was about Service and sacrifice:** Be willing to put others' needs before your own and actively serve them through actions, not just words.
- **Forgiveness:** Practice readily forgiving others, just as Jesus forgave those who crucified him.
- **Love your enemies:** Extend love and kindness even to those who may not like you back.
- **Compassion is messy.** It's important that we don't allow the messiness to keep us from moving in compassion.

VIDEO: PASTOR DRESSES AS HOMELESS MAN RUN TIME: STOP AT 1:57

POSE THE QUESTION OF HOW WE LOVE those who look like us, versus those who look differently. Do we take the time to listen? Those who look like us? Those who don't? Watch what this church did.

PLAY VIDEO: START AT 4:04 TO 6:11

How to cultivate this kind of love:

- **Be ready to be inconvenienced.**
- **Study the life of Jesus:** Learn about his actions and teachings to understand how he loved others.
- **Self-awareness:**
To truly love others as yourself, you need to be aware of your own needs, desires, and limitations, and apply that understanding to how you treat others.

- **Prayer and reflection:** Spend time in prayer asking God to help you develop a Christ-like love.
- **Practice intentional acts of kindness:** Look for opportunities to show love to others in your daily life. Pray and move as the Lord leads.
- **Seek community support:** Connect with other Christians who can encourage and support you in your journey to love like Jesus.

Colds have symptoms: When I am sick what are the signs? (coughing, sneezing, fever, headache – something is going on inside so you have symptoms outside)

Same with Compassion. **It's more about what is happening inside than the outside action.** Compassion is an outpouring from what is happening inside the heart and, if in Christ, will reflect our relationship with Jesus.

The Word says Jesus has a deep yearning for us so much so that He would give His life for us. When we did not yet know Him, His yearning, His deep visceral compassion (splanchnizomai) drove Him to grieve far beyond human comprehension. As He sacrificed His life for us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What did God reveal/speak to you through this week's message?
2. Take the attached Compassion Assessment. Did anything surprise you? What is God showing you? If sharing your results, remember we are not in competition with each other. Compassion is NOT something we should compare with each other. Rather, what areas do you wish to nurture and grow in?
3. What ways was Jesus moved to compassion? What were the results? Is God calling you to perhaps show compassion? Explore and consider ways aside from almsgiving and charity to show compassion.

4. What are your concerns, fears, and/or preconceived notions when it comes to showing compassion to others?
5. Consider different people in your life. Consider those who look like you and those who do not. Are there any groups of people or individuals that you respond to differently because they “look” like us or don’t “look” like us? What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?
6. Have you experienced a “splanchnizomai” situation? What did you do?
7. Pray and ask the Lord to reveal to you what deeply moves His heart. Pray for His revelation in this area. Pray for others in your group or family.

The Compassion Scale (CS)

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully before answering. Indicate how often you feel or behave in the stated manner. Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be.

	<u>Almost Never</u>			<u>Almost Always</u>	
1. I pay careful attention when other people talk to me about their troubles	1	2	3	4	5
2. If I see someone going through a difficult time, I try to be caring toward that person.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am unconcerned with other people's problems.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I realize everyone feels down sometimes, it is part of being human.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I notice when people are upset, even if they don't say anything.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I like to be there for others in times of difficulty.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I think little about the concerns of others.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I feel it's important to recognize that all people have weaknesses and no one's perfect.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I listen patiently when people tell me their problems.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My heart goes out to people who are unhappy.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I try to avoid people who are experiencing a lot of pain.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I feel that suffering is just a part of the common human experience.	1	2	3	4	5
13. When people tell me about their problems, I try to keep a balanced perspective on the situation.	1	2	3	4	5
14. When others feel sadness, I try to comfort them.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I can't really connect with other people when they're suffering.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Despite my differences with others, I know that everyone feels pain just like me.	1	2	3	4	5

Coding scheme:

Kindness items: 2, 6, 10, 14

Common Humanity items: 4, 8, 12, 16

Mindfulness items: 1, 5, 9, 13

Indifference items (reverse-coded): 3, 7, 11, 15

To compute a total compassion score, take a grand mean of all items.

Reference: Pommier, E., Neff, K. D., Tóth-Király, I. (in press). The development and validation of the Compassion Scale. *Assessment*.