God’s Overflowing Love

Compassion – Matthew 9:35-36

**35﻿ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ﻿36﻿ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ﻿**

*The word “compassion” is filled with rich meaning. In the original Greek, the word literally means to be moved in the gut; to have your insides ache. It refers to the inner organs. The Latin literally means to “suffer with, to feel the pain and suffering of another.” This word indicates an intensely emotional reaction of unbridled sympathy and heartfelt concern for another.*

Jesus had been busy. Verse 35 tells us that “He went through all the towns and villages.” He knew His time on earth was limited and did not want to waste a minute of it.

The words “teaching,” “preaching,” “healing” (v. 35) sum up Jesus’ entire ministry in Galilee. He had done and seen much.

As Jesus looked out on yet another throng of people, He had compassion on them. The reason for the kind-heartedness in this case was that the crowds were “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (v. 36).

The word “harassed” has the meaning of being flayed – skin torn off which sometimes happened when sheep would go through brambles or rocks.

The word “helpless” means to be thrown prone or exhausted. When sheep have a lot of wool on them it is easy for them to fall and not be able to get back up.

This people in this crowd were also in need of true shepherds. The Scribes and Pharisees were bombarding them with laws and rules unending. This only led to despair.

There are times when we or those around us feel hassled and totally stressed out. We, too, are inundated with negative messages from everywhere and overwhelmed with the pressures of this world. It feels as if all of our efforts fall far short and leave us powerless.

He comes to us at times like that with His compassionate Words of reassurance, **"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”** (Matthew 11:28). The rest our Good Shepherd gives us is not only physical but also spiritual. He holds us securely like a parent embraces a child. His love drives out all fear and provides all that we need.

We can totally depend on Him as Deuteronomy 31:6b assures us: **He will never leave you nor forsake you.”**

Prayer:

Lord, there are times when our world is a mad house and we feel torn to shreds. Thank you for reminding us that at times like that that you are the only ‘port in the storm’ that can really give us comfort. Help us to trust enough to come running to you. Amen.