

JESUS' COMPASSION FOR THE CROWD (Jesus' authority from his shepherd heart)

Mark 4,1 - 8,30

Key verse 6:34

"When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things."

In preparation for the May Bible Conference and for the GLE Forum 2021 we want to study the Gospel of Mark. In 5 lessons we will reflect on where Jesus' spiritual authority came from and how we too may have such authority. In the first lesson we learned that Jesus' spiritual authority came from the hope of God. Jesus called 12 ordinary and faulty men as his disciples with God's hope to raise them up as fishers of men and shepherds for God's flock of sheep. He called them apostles, i.e. messengers, because he had the hope of God to send them out into the whole world and through them change the history of the world.

Today, in chapters 4 to 8, we want to learn about Jesus' authority in his early messianic work. We learn that Jesus' authority came from his compassionate shepherd heart for the people who, like sheep without a shepherd, were disoriented and orphaned. Jesus ministered to different kinds of people from his shepherd heart to lead them to healing and new life. He helped his disciples that they might know his shepherd heart and have faith and in turn be used as shepherds for the needy people. Business-minded People only want to get benefits through others. From Jesus we learn his shepherd's heart which is to give spiritual food to the needy people and lead them to blessedness in the kingdom of God.

1. Jesus taught the kingdom of God (4:1 - 5:43)

In chapter 4, Jesus taught the people five beautiful parables about the kingdom of God. Let's read Mark 4:33: "With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as

much as they could understand." Jesus taught from his shepherd heart through these parables how the kingdom of God grows and how to possess the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is not a natural phenomenon because people lost the kingdom of God through the Fall. But through the Word of God, the kingdom of God can be implanted anew in a person's heart. It can grow and become strong and eventually produce much fruit. The most important precondition for a person to receive the kingdom of God is the right attitude of heart. Where the heart is hardened, where thorns grow or only stony ground exists, growth is stopped. But where a person has a good soil of heart, the Word of God can penetrate the ground, take root, grow and eventually bring forth much good fruit. Let us read 4:20 together, "Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop--thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

Who then possesses this good soil in the heart? It is the disciples of Jesus who have a good soil of heart because they listen to the words of Jesus. Verse 9 says, "Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."" God has given us two ears, not so that we might put in earplugs, but so that we might listen to God's word with reverence and be saved. Jesus' disciples did not just hear an interesting story from Jesus, but thought about it and asked questions until they understood. Above all, they accepted God's word personally and were changed by it. They probably wrote a personal testimony with repentance and prayer topics. They got up early in the morning and ate the Daily Bread first, listening to Jesus' words. They lived with Jesus 24/7. In this way, the

Kingdom of God could grow in their hearts and they could be used as workers of the Kingdom of God. Although this seed was as small as a mustard seed in the beginning, it grew in them into a great tree through which eventually many people could find the shadow of the Gospel. The disciples were changed into the great apostles who not only received the kingdom of God themselves, but also learned Jesus' shepherd heart and could be used as Bible teachers for all nations. In this sense, our Bible study with testimony writing is very precious, because as the kingdom of God can come and grow in our hearts.

Besides hearing the Word of God, the second important quality of Jesus' disciples is faith. Jesus gave his disciples training in faith so that they could grow and produce good fruit. In verses 35 to 41, Jesus invited his disciples to sail across the lake. While doing so, they got caught in a life-threatening storm that almost sank them. In the middle of the storm, the disciples became fearful while Jesus was sleeping peacefully in the boat. They woke him up and complained that he would not help them. Jesus commanded the storm to be quiet. Then he rebuked his disciples for their lack of faith. Let us read 4:40: "And he said to them: Why are you so fearful? Have ye not yet faith?" Faith is crucial.

In chapter 5 we read of a woman with bleeding who had faith that she would be healed if she could just touch Jesus' garment once. Jesus blessed her faith and called her his daughter. The ruler Jairus had faith that Jesus could heal his terminally ill daughter. Despite the bad news, he walked with Jesus to the end and learned that Jesus raised her from death. Jesus sometimes takes us to our limit in our lives, be it in studies, exams, work life or raising children. Why? He wants us to live victorious and overcoming lives through faith in Him as the Almighty God. Through faith alone we can experience the power of God. Through faith we can overcome the world and see the kingdom of God.

When we look at all these incidents, we realize that Jesus had a compassionate

shepherd heart for the people. Jesus showed his compassionate shepherd heart for a man whom everyone avoided and had given up on. They were very afraid of him. But Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" Jesus was genuinely interested and understood his possession to be among a legion of evil spirits torturing him. He invested much to help this one person and sacrificed 2000 pigs for him. Jesus helped with the shepherd heart the bleeding woman that she was not only healed secretly but could come before Jesus and confess the grace of God, thereby receiving inner healing and peace in Jesus. He also helped Jairus to have faith until the end. Jesus' shepherd's heart brought about a great work of God in each case.

2: You give them something to eat (6:1 - 8:30)

Chapter 6 is about the next step of Jesus' discipleship, namely his shepherding. Jesus was a good shepherd to many shepherdless and lost sheep. So far, the disciples had only observed, but Jesus wished his disciples to share his compassion shepherd heart and also to grow to be good shepherds for God's flock of sheep.

Jesus first trained his disciples by sending them out two by two. In doing so, he gave them power over the unclean spirits. He taught them to follow his instructions carefully and thus to experience the power of faith. On their missionary journey, they preached repentance, cast out evil spirits and made many sick people well. It was a mighty work of God through which the disciples could learn that God is with them when they obey Him and depend completely on Him. Nevertheless, they still had much to learn.

The following incident showed how different Jesus' shepherd's heart is. Jesus wanted to have fellowship with his disciples in a lonely place. But a large crowd came unannounced and out of place, disrupting their fellowship. When our plans are disrupted, we often react unwillingly and discontentedly. The disciples wanted to send these people away

immediately. But Jesus did not send them away. Rather, he received them as they were and began a long sermon. Let us read verse 34 together: "When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things." When Jesus saw the people he had compassion on them. Jesus did not see them as a disturbing crowd. Rather, he saw their inner desire to hear the Word of God. He knew that without God's Word they were disoriented and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Here "compassion" means something like deep pity or sympathy. Perhaps there was one among them who was just about to throw his life away because he could not find any meaning. Another one had a serious tic problem. And yet another was trapped by the love of money as if in an invisible cage. Who could help these sheep? But Jesus saw beyond their momentary situation that without God's Word they would be eternally lost in their sins. Therefore, he could not remain silent, but was eager to give them God's Word, which could open the door to the kingdom of God for them. This is the reason why Jesus preached the Word of God to them all day long until the sun set. He wanted to help them to know God's love, to come back to Him and to take hold of eternal life.

This compassionate heart is also the heart of God. God saw that the people rebelled against him with their sins. That is why they lost paradise and had to live miserably in the world, finally going to eternal damnation. But God did not say, "It is their own fault." Rather, God's heart was on fire and he sought the way to save the people. Finally, out of his shepherd's heart, he sent his only Son as the Lamb of God, even though it meant that he had to suffer and die. John 3:16 said. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Martin Luther had a compassionate shepherd's heart for his people who were going astray because of false teaching, trying to

buy the kingdom of heaven with money. He gave his whole life, and bore many misunderstandings and persecution, to teach the people God's Word and translate the Bible into German. Because one man, Martin Luther, had such a shepherd's heart, many people were able to hear and understand the Word of God and take hold of the saving grace by faith. William Tyndale struggled with that shepherd's heart to translate the Bible into English, though he paid for it with martyrdom.

Last week we heard a presentation about August Herrmann Francke. He had a shepherd's heart for many orphans in Halle. Out of his shepherd's heart he could not remain idle, but began to give school lessons to 4 children in his own home. Eventually he built an orphanage where many young people received an excellent education according to the principles of the Bible.

A servant of God had a compassionate shepherd heart for the students who were helpless in unbelief and deceived by humanism. Therefore, he began to teach them the Word of God through one-to-one Bible study. He devotedly served a drug-addicted hippie for many years to teach him the love of God and give him a new beginning. With this shepherd's heart he ministered to various hopeless young people through common life until they could be changed in Jesus, even be raised as responsible leaders for the work of God. He received many misunderstandings and persecutions because of this. He could have thought about himself and given up. But he did not want to save himself, he wanted to continue to serve the next generation so that they could grow up to be global spiritual leaders for the revival work.

I know a student who is hurt in his heart because of the wickedness of the world. His studies often brought him to his limit. What he needs is a good shepherd to teach him the Word of God and lead him to the fresh water. He testified that Bible study has given him true hope. May God help each of us to learn Jesus' shepherd heart so that we can be used as shepherds and Bible teachers for

the young people in sins and disorientation as Jesus said, "Feed my lambs!" (John 21:15)

In the evening of that day, Jesus did not seem to be able to finish his sermon at all. So far, the disciples had listened patiently. But now they came to Jesus and told him to send the crowd away. They should go to the surrounding villages and buy bread. It was a sensible and pragmatic suggestion. It would solve the crowd's food problem and give them peace of mind at the same time. The disciples thought it was okay to think of themselves for once. But Jesus was different. Jesus gave them a surprising command. Verse 37a says, "But he answered, "You give them something to eat." He was not satisfied with what he had done and how much he had already given himself for them. Jesus wanted to go one step further, to serve them once more, in this case to provide for their supper. In this way he wanted to help his disciples to know his shepherd heart and to work together for the work of God.

Let us read 6:37 together: " But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" For the disciples, Jesus' command, "You give them something to eat" was a great challenge. Some grumbled and thought it excessive or impossible. They argued with their minds and their wallets. Jesus already knew that they did not have enough money. But he did not give up teaching them the faith. He asked them again, "How many loaves do you have?" Now Andrew went off and came back with a little boy's food box: "Five loaves and two fish." It looked kind of funny. But Andrew had faith that Jesus could do something with those 5 loaves and 2 fish. Jesus was amazed by his faith. Jesus accepted the small gift, gave thanks for it and had the disciples distribute it to everyone. Under Jesus' blessing, the loaves were multiplied so that five thousand people were fed and even twelve baskets

remained. When they came to Jesus by faith with 5 loaves and 2 fish, Jesus blessed this abundantly for a great multitude.

Here we learn about Jesus' leadership through shepherding. Jesus gave his disciples shepherd training so that they could learn his heart for the sheep and be used as shepherds. He challenged them, "You give them something to eat!" and "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus' authority comes from his compassionate shepherd's heart. Jesus wanted his disciples to know his heart too, finding a way to serve this crowd with a giving spirit and a sense of responsibility.

God was working very powerfully in Korea in the 1970s. At that time, Korea was a poor third world country. Therefore, it seemed impossible for the students to give to others. But Dr Lee and Mother Barry helped them from their shepherd's heart to obey the Word of God and live a giving life. When they obeyed, they did not remain dependent on others. They were able to start living a giving life and send out many missionaries for the world mission, so Korea is still used as a royal priesthood today.

Jesus also desires us to grow as shepherds for his flock of sheep who have shepherd's heart, giving spirit and sense of responsibility. He asks us: How many loaves do you have? You give them something to eat! Jesus wants us to feed God's flock on campus with our five loaves and two fishes of one-to-one Bible study, to form 10,000 ZBS teams, moreover, even to build three bases for M-Mission.

As a young man, I led a self-centred life, seeking pleasure through studying, the happiness of the world and human recognition. I thought it was OK to think of myself. But I had no heart for others. When I focused only on my ego, I became a hurtful and cold-hearted egotist whose heart did not move even when a friend almost died of anorexia. Jesus visited me at the beginning of my studies and invited me, asking me personally through John 5:6, "Do you want to get well?" Jesus

laid down his life on the cross for me to save me and restore my broken relationship with God. Jesus' love changed my life so that I could begin to see others with Jesus' love, even be used as a shepherd and Bible teacher to students. I still often think in business or organisational terms. But here I learn again Jesus' shepherd's heart, namely to give the spiritual food of the Word of God to the students, which alone can bless them and save them.

Many people subsequently came to Jesus because they recognised his authority and saw in him the good shepherd who has a compassionate shepherd's heart for the sheep. But the Pharisees came only to criticise Jesus and his disciples. Jesus rebuked them that their hearts were unclean. Some Pharisees demanded a sign from Jesus. Jesus had already done many signs, but they did not want to believe, but criticised Jesus out of their self-righteousness. They were like the people who constantly demand "proof" but in truth do not want to believe. Jesus warned his disciples about the bad influence of the Pharisees, which was like yeast.

In this environment of unbelief, Jesus helped his disciples through life fellowship. Finally, he asked them an important question. Let us read 8:29 together: "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." Most people had a high opinion of Jesus and thought he was a prophet. But Jesus helped his disciples to see who he really was by living together. Finally Peter testified, "You are the Christ!" This was the most important knowledge and confession. Knowing and confessing Jesus is all-important. The crowd had only a superficial opinion of Jesus. But the disciples had experienced Jesus through shepherding and from their practical experience they made the confession that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus also desires us to recognise who he is. He is not just some good person from whom we can get help or where we can eat bread. He is not just giving us some good advice or life wisdom. He is the Christ, the promised Messiah, who came into the

world to save us from the power of sin and to give us eternal life. This Christ, out of his love, gave his life as a ransom sacrifice for you and for me.

In today's passage, we learned that Jesus' authority came from his compassionate shepherd heart. Jesus received the great multitude and ministered to them from the shepherd's heart with the Word of God. Jesus helped his disciples to overcome their limited and selfish mindset and learn shepherd's heart, responsibility and faith for a large and demanding crowd. God bless each one of us to put on Jesus' shepherd heart for the young people, that we form 10,000 one-to-one bible study teams with them so that they may be spiritually awakened, even used as shepherds for Europe and for the Muslim-world.