Equipped to Care- Session One  
June 18, 2014  
Grace Summer Bible Study

Overview
  June 18- Why care for others? Brad Evans  
  June 25- How to care for others I, Dr. Jon Bergeron  
  July 2- How to care for others II, Chaplain Don Breland

Introduce yourself. Why are you here?  
Ask: What is care/compassion?

III: Unique to Christianity- Joel Mathai quoted a Christar survey: “Muslims & Hindus who came to Christ asked if there was a verse that impacted them. 80% put Matt. 11:28-30. Why? Because a caring, loving and compassionate God was new to them.

Love- one of God’s principle attributes. Effects:
  1. Grace  
  2. Goodness  
  3. Patience- God is slow to anger; OT- Hb. word means “long” or long-suffering; to give us time to repent.  
  4. Mercy/Compassion- providing care and comfort to those in need.

In the Bible, compassion is not only the feeling/emotion that is evoked, but it is the appropriate action on those in need. Author of Lamentations (probably Jeremiah) is about as low as someone can get. He feels as if God is cut off from him…all alone. Lamentations 3:1-24; esp. 21-24

Lament. 3:21-24 This I recall to my mind,  
Therefore I have hope.  
The Lord's lovingkindnesses (chesed) indeed never cease,  
For His compassions (racham) never fail.  
They are new every morning;  
Great is Your faithfulness.

What caused such a dramatic shift in the author? He turned from his misery to what is true about the LORD!

God’s love cannot fail…

Isaiah 54:10
  "For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake,  
  But My lovingkindness (chesed) will not be removed from you,  
  And My covenant of peace will not be shaken,"  
  Says the Lord who has compassion (racham) on you.

I. Compassion Experienced- Through a Relationship with Jesus  
Mercy/Compassion must first be experienced through a relationship with Jesus Christ.  
When Jesus came to planet earth, who did He hang out with? Sinners- tax collectors, prostitutes, and everyday common people.
Mark 2:17 And hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."
"Lord Jesus, I need You! I am a sinner in need of Your grace!"

Ill: "In Need" song by Ross King
Eph. 2:4 “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which he loved us”
Eph. 2:8-9 “For by grace you have been saved…”
Experiencing God’s mercy/grace/compassion brings life…eternal life.

II. Compassion Expressed- Becoming Compassionate People
To Express compassion, I must become like Jesus

Six “Snapshots” of Jesus Loving Well- Extending Compassion

1. Matthew 9:35-38 For a Crowd- And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd.
   Jesus...
   1. saw their needs- distressed & downcast; sheep without a shepherd
   2. was moved in his gut- felt compassion
   3. did something about it (v. 35)- teaching, healing, Gospel, giving His life away

   Love is ACTION- expressed by actively showing compassion.
   Ill- “people don’t care how much you know until they know that you care.”

3. Matt 18:21-35 Parable of Talents- God’s anger when man received forgiveness/compassion, but did not extend it to another

4. Luke 7:13- For an Individual- When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, "Do not weep." And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!"

James 1:27 What is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of God? To visit orphans and widows in their distress, and not to be stained by the world (greed, lust).

   Good Samaritan- lesson to disciples: they were to show compassion toward anyone that needed their help; compassion results in action

   Passage hinges on this verse. Father extended undeserved, lavish, unimaginable love and compassion to the prodigal son- the Father “felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him”
   Do I love my children this way? Do I love others this way? NO- unless I have experienced the Father’s embrace.

Shepherding Tips from the Good Shepherd- Caring for the sheep is in the JD for shepherding. Jesus to Peter- feed my sheep
Ill: checking cattle- took skill to notice symptoms. My level of attention skyrocketed when I purchased my own steers- motivated. Jesus, as the Good Shepherd promises to care for His own.

English word picks up on this…Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary

**compassion**

\n from Latin *com- + pati* to bear, suffer — *patient*] “sympathetic consciousness of others’ distress together with a desire to alleviate it”

**Great Commandment**- Love God, Love our neighbor

1. Who are our neighbors? Look around you- hi, neighbor.
2. My capacity to extend care for you, or to walk across the street and get involved in the person that lives next to me is directly proportional to how well I am loving and worshiping God.

I have to die to myself- narcissistic culture. Compassion is costly.

**Qualifier**- We are not to fix people’s problems or to try to rescue them. Sometimes we need to let natural consequences take place. But, we’re always to point them to Jesus. We are the hands and feet of Jesus Christ…sometimes we’re the only Jesus they will see.

**Paradigm Shift**- whose responsibility is it to care for our congregation? Our community? Our World?

Two types of change-

Care ministry IS Discipleship-

God wants to use us- we are the hands and feet of Jesus

Psalms for Hurting People- 6, 10, 18, 22, 23, 25, 28, 31, 34, 38, 42, 57, 69, 77, 86, 88, 103, 116, 121, 139, 143, 145

**Applications**

1. **Experience Compassion**- believe in Jesus
2. **Express Compassion**- toward others
   - Pray for one another (James 5:16) Ask, “How can I pray for you?” Listen, and then do it.
   - Love one another (John 15:17)
   - Bear one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2)
   - Forgive each other (Eph. 4:32)
   - Care for one another (1 Cor. 12:25)
   - Challenge- one act of care/compassion toward someone this next week

1. Compassion leaves no room for selfishness…
2. Be there- don’t say, “Let me know if you ever need anything.” Go. After Elizabeth’s death- I had a friend come immediately; on hardwood floor and cried with me.
3. Do something tangible- write a card, make a phone call, make a meal, give them a restaurant gift certificate.
4. To be compassionate, to pity; to be kindhearted, to have a tender heart. It means to be tenderhearted; to be sensitive and affectionate toward the needs of others; to be moved with tender feelings over the pain and sufferings of others.
Conclusion

Psalm 103:13 “Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.’

[OTHER EXAMPLES IF TIME ALLOWS]
Following Jesus is radical & counter-cultural!!

➢ Raise & cash bonuses- instead of buying one more laptop for the kids or a bigger car I give it away to Missionaries; Habit-for-Humanity; Food-Pantry; Aggieland Pregnancy Outreach; Hope Pregnancy
➢ I “invest” my vacation days by serving- Short-term mission trip
➢ I model compassion for my kids by adopting a needy family at Christmas
➢ Instead of buying a bigger house, I sell my existing house and move into a smaller one- give the difference to help others
➢ I spend my evenings serving a military family- spouse overseas & wife & kids has projects
➢ My Home Church or Bible Study adopts someone in need
➢ I take a meal to a sick/needly family

Pray
➢