

Unfiltered Compassion

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SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Based on the message by Pastor Willie Russell

1. SERMON RECAP

Pastor Willie Russell challenged the congregation to move beyond passive sympathy toward active, unfiltered compassion -- the kind that interrupts schedules, crosses social divides, and refuses to be stopped by judgment or distance. Drawing from the parable of the Good Samaritan, he reminded us that compassion is not a feeling but an action, and that the culture of God's kingdom is best summed up in that one word: compassion. He urged every believer to close the distance between their comfortable lives and the real needs around them, trusting God with the results while simply showing up.

2. KEY SCRIPTURE

Luke 10:33-34 (NKJV)

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him."

3. ICE BREAKER

Think of a time when someone showed up for you completely unexpectedly -- maybe at an inconvenient moment for them. What did that feel like, and what did it mean to you?

4. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The Difference Between Sympathy and Compassion

Pastor Willie drew a clear line between feeling sorry for someone and actually doing something about it. He described sympathy as a passive emotion and compassion as an active response. In your own life, where do you find yourself stopping at sympathy when compassion might be calling you to take a step further? What makes that step feel difficult?

2. The Busy Obstacle

Pastor Willie pointed out that the priest and the Levite in the parable likely weren't bad people -- they were probably just busy people with somewhere to be. He asked whether we allow compassion to interrupt our schedules. When has being busy caused you to miss what might have been a "now by chance" moment? How do you think God views those moments?

3. The Judgmental Obstacle

He noted that the lawyer in Luke 10 wanted to "justify himself" before even asking who his neighbor was -- suggesting he already had someone in mind he didn't want to help. Pastor Willie challenged the group to consider whether we ever measure compassion by the expected results -- wondering if someone will waste our time, our money, or our effort. How does Jesus' example in Matthew 14 (healing the crowds even while grieving John the Baptist's death) reshape how we think about results-driven compassion?

4. The Distance Obstacle

Pastor Willie highlighted that the Samaritan "came where he was" -- he literally closed the gap between himself and the suffering person. He suggested that distance -- physical, emotional, or social -- is one of the biggest barriers to genuine compassion. Is there a person or a group of people in your world that you have been keeping at arm's length? What might it look like to "cross the street" toward them instead of away from them?

5. Compassion as Kingdom Culture

Pastor Willie described the kingdom of God as "God's system of operation" and said that if you want to understand the culture of heaven, you can sum it up in one word: compassion. He connected this to the World Harvest vision of having "a passion for God and compassion for people." How does the way your group, your church, or your family currently live reflect -- or fall short of -- that kingdom culture? What would need to change?

6. Leaving the Results to God

One of the most freeing things Pastor Willie said was, "Don't worry about the results. Leave the results to God. You just show up." How does releasing the outcome to God change the way you approach acts of compassion? Is there a situation in your life right now where you need to simply show up and trust Him with what happens next?

5. APPLICATION CHALLENGE

This week, identify one specific "now by chance" opportunity -- someone in your neighborhood, workplace, family, or community who has a visible need -- and do one tangible thing to meet it. It doesn't have to be large: a meal dropped off, a phone call made, a bill helped with, or simply sitting with someone who is lonely. The goal is to close the distance and take action rather than simply feeling sorry. Come back next week ready to share what happened.

6. PRAYER POINTS

- For soft hearts: Ask God to reveal any areas where busyness, judgment, or distance have been keeping you from showing genuine compassion to those around you.
 - For courage to act: Pray that each group member would have the boldness to respond to at least one "now by chance" moment this week without waiting for a more convenient time.
 - For those who are suffering: Lift up anyone in the group, the church family, or the broader community who is in a season of pain and is in need of someone willing to "come where they are."
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7. MEMORY VERSE

Luke 10:27 (NKJV)

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

Leader's Note: Pastor Willie shared this message out of a deeply personal place, caring for his wife during her recovery. He reminded the group that compassion often becomes most real to us when we are on the receiving end of it. Create space in your group for people to be honest -- both about where they are struggling to show compassion and about where they have needed it themselves.