

## Ripon and Lower Dales Methodist Circuit

Worship at Home  
13<sup>th</sup> February 2022

### Compassion

During February, our Circuit Mission & Ministries Team have arranged for ambassadors from the charity Compassion UK to come and speak during some of our church Services. This means we have the opportunity to learn about their work, perhaps support them financially, and also prepare to use their resources to guide us through Lent this year. I thought it would be good to make sure those of our Circuit family not attending church in person, had the opportunity to share this experience too.

So today, we read about the work of Compassion, consider the compassion of Christ, and reflect on our own compassionate nature.

### Call to worship (2 Cor 1:3-4)

We come to praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

### Hymn (StF) 403 God is love, his the care

- 1 God is love : his the care,  
tending each, everywhere.  
God is love — all is there !  
Jesus came to show him,  
that we all might know him :  
*Sing aloud, loud, loud !*  
*Sing aloud, loud, loud !*  
*God is good !*  
*God is truth !*  
*God is beauty ! Praise him !*
- 2 None can see God above ;  
neighbours here we can love ;  
thus may we Godward move,  
finding him in others,  
sisters all, and brothers :

- 3 Jesus came, lived and died  
for our sake, crucified,  
rose again, glorified ;  
he was born to save us  
by the truth he gave us :
- 4 To our Lord praise we sing —  
light and life, friend and king,  
coming down love to bring,  
pattern for our duty,  
showing God in beauty :

Percy Dearmer (1867–1936)

### Prayers of adoration, Thanksgiving and Confession

Lord we praise you, not only for creating the world and all that is in it, but also for making us and giving us life. We praise you that the world in which you have placed us has been filled with so many things and so many kind and beautiful people. We praise you for your grace to us and your compassion towards all that you have made. We praise you that when your world turned its back on its Maker, you did not reject or hide your love from us.

In Christ you entered our world and shared every experience of our lives.

We thank you for his life, death and resurrection.

We thank you for the Holy Spirit who transforms our lives, gives us strength to grow and be empowered in the name of Jesus.

We thank you for the gifts of the Spirit, that allow us to bring our witness, worship and compassionate actions to others, and bring you glory.

But we do not always show true compassion, forgive us when we turn our backs on those we could help, forgive us when we ignore your call to serve, forgive us when we ignore the neighbour in need.

Lord, you assure us of your forgiveness, fill our lives with your holiness and your Holy Spirit, that our lives might echo your love and care for each other and all creation. Amen.

Compassion is a Christian children's charity. At their heart is a relentless compassion to empower every child left vulnerable by poverty. Their approach to fighting poverty is highly focused and personal. Since 1952, they've been giving children the opportunity to escape the suffering and fear poverty brings through one-to-one child sponsorship. They believe every child matters and deserves to be safe, fed, educated and empowered. Working in partnership with local churches in developing countries, a child in critical need is linked with a caring sponsor. Each sponsor enables Compassion to provide exceptional care for their sponsored child through every stage of their childhood.

The charity began when, on a war-torn Korean street in 1952, God moved Everett Swanson with compassion. Watching city workers scoop up what looked like piles of rags and throw them into the back of a truck, he walked over to take a closer look. Swanson was deeply troubled to see that the "piles" were not rags, but frozen bodies of orphans who had died overnight in the street.

On the airplane home, Swanson heard a simple message resounding in his head. As the engines whirred, he heard the challenge, "What are you going to do? What are you going to do?" over and over again. By the time his plane landed, Swanson had made a decision: God had moved him with compassion so he needed to take action.

Swanson knew he could not turn his back on these children. He took a stand, vowing to find a way to help them. He raised money to support a Korean orphanage and soon established a unique programme, linking each Korean orphan with a caring individual whose generosity provided them with education, food, clothing, shelter and medical care.

The very same belief drives the charity today. Swanson's initial act of compassion has grown to a movement releasing more than 2 million children from poverty in 25 developing countries. There are thousands of Compassion graduates who've been released from poverty

and are bringing change to their families, communities and nations.

Compassion wholeheartedly believes the Church matters. The Church is the only institution ordained by God Himself to bring his Kingdom to earth. It's God's plan to bring hope to a hurting world. That's why they work exclusively in partnership with local churches in developing countries to deliver their programmes. And why they work tirelessly to support and equip churches here in the UK to fulfil their mission.

A wonderful thing about this charity, is that by helping one child, all the family benefit, and later the community that child grew up in, can change for the better too.

### **Hymn 256 When I needed a neighbour**

1 When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there ?  
When I needed a neighbour, were you there ?  
*And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter, were you there ?*

2 I was hungry and thirsty, were you there, were you there ?  
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there ?

3 I was cold, I was naked, were you there, were you there ?  
I was cold, I was naked, were you there ?

4 When I needed a shelter, were you there, were you there ?  
When I needed a shelter, were you there ?

5 When I needed a healer, were you there, were you there ?  
When I needed a healer, were you there ?

6 Wherever you travel I'll be there, I'll be there,  
wherever you travel I'll be there.  
*And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter, I'll be there.*

Sydney Carter (1915–2004)

In our Bible, there are quite a few instances where it is written "Jesus had compassion on them". I wondered which to choose as our focus today. Should it be the time he felt compassion for the crowd on the mountain

who listened to him for days – he fed them, all 5000. Or what about one of those deaf, blind, disabled, demon-possessed people whom Jesus healed. I decided on this on ...

### **Bible Reading Luke 7:11-17**

#### **Jesus Raises the Widow's Son at Nain**

<sup>11</sup> Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. <sup>12</sup> As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. <sup>13</sup> When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." <sup>14</sup> Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" <sup>15</sup> The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. <sup>16</sup> Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has looked favourably on his people!" <sup>17</sup> This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.

#### **Word**

Jesus arrives at Nain, at the town's gate, where he no doubt stepped aside as a funeral procession approaches. There's a cart with a body placed on it, and behind a mourner – a woman, distraught, full of grief. There are others behind her, but no one beside her supporting her in her grief. Jesus feels the same compassion that Everett Swanson did when he saw the bodies in the back of the truck. Those children had no one to mourn them, but this son does. A mother, standing alone. Jesus has compassion for her, not just because her son has died, but also for the change in her circumstances she may face. A widow in those days has no State Pension, no Bereavement Benefit, might even become homeless if there are no close family members prepared to take her in. Many widows could end up begging on the street to survive. In his

compassion Jesus is urged to action. "Don't weep" he tells, and going to the bier he says "Wake up, young man, arise!". The crowd were amazed, the mother rejoiced, and the son was no doubt glad to be feeling well again.

The compassion that Jesus felt has an effect on everyone present, and when we are compassionate it can be a benefit for many. The Compassion charity find that by helping one child, they also help the whole family. There are better life chances for them all, which can also be seen in the community too. As others see what is happening, they may seek to find sponsorship for their family too. They learn new ways of employment, how to keep healthy and the children grow to become valued members of the community by bringing new skills and better prosperity.

By returning the son to his mother, Jesus has improved her life chances, but there may have been others to benefit too. Was he married, or about to wed, so had others to support, did he have a skill that many relied on? The compassion shown by Jesus can reach far, because compassion urges action. A caring response that can seek to help, to heal, to combat injustice. This is very much part of what it is to live in God's kingdom, and often happens to us as we go about our daily lives. Meeting someone in the street, or speaking on the phone, we hear of someone who is struggling and would welcome our friendly voice and support. We hear on radio and TV about issues we feel strongly about, and compassion urges us to write to our MP or donate to charity. Most of all, it compels us to pray. We can't always see a way we can help, but our compassion for injustice does mean we can bring our prayers to God, He will always listen, and find the answer. Where will your compassionate nature lead you today – in action or prayer?

#### **Hymn 693 Beauty for brokenness**

1 Beauty for brokenness,  
hope for despair,  
Lord, in your suffering world  
this is our prayer.  
Bread for the children,

justice, joy, peace,  
sunrise to sunset,  
your kingdom increase !

- 2 Shelter for fragile lives,  
cures for their ills,  
work for all people,  
trade for their skills ;  
land for the dispossessed,  
rights for the weak,  
voices to plead the cause  
of those who can't speak.

*God of the poor,  
friend of the weak,  
give us compassion we pray :  
melt our cold hearts,  
let tears fall like rain ;  
come, change our love  
from a spark to a flame.*

- 3 Refuge from cruel wars,  
havens from fear,  
cities for sanctuary,  
freedoms to share.  
Peace to the killing-fields,  
scorched earth to green,  
Christ for the bitterness,  
his cross for the pain.
- 4 Rest for the ravaged earth,  
oceans and streams  
plundered and poisoned —  
our future, our dreams.  
Lord, end our madness,  
carelessness, greed ;  
make us content with  
the things that we need.

*Refrain*

- 5 Lighten our darkness,  
breathe on this flame  
until your justice burns  
brightly again ;  
until the nations  
learn of your ways,  
seek your salvation  
and bring you their praise.

*Refrain*

Graham Kendrick (*b.* 1950)

## Prayers of Intercession

Loving, compassionate God, we bring before you our world, broken and damaged as it is. We pray for nations to have leaders who will work together to combat climate change, and talk together to cease conflict and war; We pray for governments who will strive to improve the quality of life for their citizens, And for wealthy nations to help those countries less fortunate than themselves. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Loving, compassionate God, we bring before you the church. We pray for local mission work to support the vulnerable in our society, providing space to pray, times to meet up for fellowship and initiatives to help local concerns such as helping refugees or supporting Foodshare. We pray for the world church, especially for those seeking to act with the Compassion Charity to improve the lives of vulnerable children; for those bringing the Good News of Jesus to those without hope. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Loving, compassionate God, we bring before you ourselves. May the compassion of Christ enter our hearts, so that we can reach out to those we meet with love, care and consideration. May the Spirit empower us with action to speak up for the injustice we see, And may we continue to grow in love and service to the God who created us to be as loving and compassionate as his Son demonstrated when He lived among us. We ask these prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray ...

## Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the  
glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Hymn 407 Hear the call of the kingdom**

- 1 Hear the call of the kingdom,  
lift your eyes to the King ;  
let his song rise within you  
as a fragrant offering  
of how God, rich in mercy,  
came in Christ to redeem  
all who trust in his unfailing grace.
- 2 Hear the call of the kingdom  
to be children of light  
with the mercy of heaven,  
the humility of Christ ;  
walking justly before him,  
loving all that is right,  
that the life of Christ may shine through  
us.

*King of heaven, we will answer the call.  
We will follow, bringing hope to the world,  
filled with passion, filled with power to  
proclaim salvation in Jesus' name.*

- 3 Hear the call of the kingdom  
to reach out to the lost  
with the Father's compassion  
in the wonder of the cross,  
bringing peace and forgiveness,  
and a hope yet to come :  
let the nations put their trust in him.

*King of heaven, we will answer the call ...*

Keith Getty (b. 1974), Kristyn Getty (b. 1980) and  
Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

### **Blessing**

Lord, fill us with your compassion,  
Fill us with your power  
As we begin this new week,  
So that the life of Christ may shine through us.  
And may the blessing of God, the Father, the  
Son and the Holy Spirit be among us and  
remain with us always. Amen.

Kathy Lowrie