

**THE BIG IDEA: When overcoming indifference, compassion makes the difference.**The Take-Off

Many of us would agree with the statement that the world is a less caring place than it was 50 years ago

That's why we nod our heads in agreement when we hear what Matthew wrote in Matt. 24:12

But if we take a deeper dive, we suddenly realize that this isn't a statement about out there, but about in here

- The Greek word for "love" is agape - it's the love that God gives - the world doesn't have it
- It's the love in the church that grows cold because of the lawlessness in the world
- And it grows cold - the Greek used here implies a gradual process - not the blowing out of a light, but the dimming of a light
- This is important - we don't lose the love, we lessen the love
- Romans 5:5 / God has poured agape into us - it's a done deal (like the tense of "It is finished" on the cross)
- One commentator wrote that "agape love is always shows by what it does"
- When we are indifferent or apathetic, we are dimming God's love in us

Matthew 24:12 isn't a prophetic word about the world; it's a prophetic warning about the church

Indifference is a toxin, a poison that gradually dims God's agape love in us, and we need to remove it

Thankfully, God's word has the prescription to do just that

We're going to be in Luke 10 this morning, and we're going to talk through a story that will be familiar to many, and might be new to some

Jesus tells a story about an unlikely hero, and we've come to know it as the story about the Good Samaritan

In the story we'll see apathy, and we'll see empathy, and we'll see this Big Idea:

**When overcoming indifference, compassion makes the difference.**

Let's read Luke 10:25-37, and then we'll explore the context and suggest some takeaways.

**1. The context**

- a. As with any passage, what's going on before and after a verse is crucial.
- b. The whole thing was setup to test Jesus (v. 25) / experts test; children trust
- c. The expert knew the answer, but this wasn't a test about knowing, but doing what we know (v. 28)
- d. The deeper motive is revealed in v. 29
  - He wanted to justify his lack of doing, or partial doing
  - Loving God and loving others is so much more than a mission statement that we memorize
  - It's the living out of those commands that brings life
  - Jesus said, "DO THIS and you will LIVE." (v. 28)
- e. The expert had a "love gap" in his life; a noticeable difference between what he knew and what he did
- f. Jesus tells this story TO HIM (and now, to us) to expose that gap
- g. To do this, Jesus talks about three main characters who all had the same information (they all saw the man), but very different responses (there's the gap).
- h. The difference was COMPASSION - the Samaritan felt something
- i. **Luke 10:33** / "took pity" means "felt compassion"
- j. One last thought before we jump into the takeaways: each of the 12 times this word is used for compassion in the NT, it's associated with an action
  - Matt. 9:36 / Jesus told the disciples to pray for laborers (v. 38)
  - Matt. 14:14 / Jesus healed the sick
  - Matt. 18:27 / The master released the slave and forgave the debt
  - Mark 6:34 / Jesus began to teach them many things
  - Luke 7:13 / Jesus raised the widow's son from the dead (v. 14)
  - Luke 15:20 / The prodigal's father ran to him, embraced him, and kissed him
- k. Compassion leads to action, so it wasn't a lack of knowledge, but a lack of compassion - love grown cold

**2. The takeaways**

- a. #1: **Compassion goes beneath the surface**
  - The meaning of the Greek word means to be moved deeply

- Literally, “to be affected deeply in one’s inner being, bowels”
- It doesn’t just feel something; it FEELS something!
- b. #2: **Compassion moves closer**
  - Notice the wording... the priest and Levite saw the man, and passed by; the Samaritan came where the man was, and when he saw him
  - As Christine Caine says, “Compassion crosses the street.”
- c. #3: **Compassion gets messy**
  - Don’t miss the mess in verse 34 / he bandaged his wounds, poured oil and wine
  - Parents know what it’s like to lose a garment because you held a hurting, bleeding child
- d. #4: **Compassion pays the price**
  - No detail is meaningless... he put him on his “own” donkey ... he stayed the night (canceled his own plans!) ... paid for it with his own resources and promised to pay more
- e. #5: **Compassion follows up**
  - He didn’t say “if” I follow up, or “when I send someone else” or “bill me”
  - He said “when I return” - he was going to follow up

### The Landing

If we were to sum this all up, we’d simply say that compassion makes the difference, and is the cure for the toxin of indifference

But let’s end this with good news: guess where that compassion comes from?

Our Father (Exodus 34:6), and that means that compassion and mercy are in the DNA of His sons and daughters!

If compassion is lacking in you, if you feel like your love has grown cold, like indifference has become toxic in you, the answer isn’t trying to “work it up,” but to “act it out.”

Not in a fake way, but in doing what you already know to be true of who your Father is, and who you are!

Let’s pray and ask God to help us see people, feel His compassion for them, and then move in, get messy, and pay the price for them to be whole.