

Memphis Through Jesus' Eyes

We often wonder what Jesus was really like. This is more than mere spiritual curiosity, for when we discover what He was really like, we know that we must also be like Him. Our text today gives us a great insight into what Jesus was like and how His heart and life would affect our city.

Matthew 9:35-38

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. **36** When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. **37** Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; **38** therefore spray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

I. We see where Jesus went (v. 35a)

Jesus went to all the cities and villages in Israel; that is, He went everywhere. He started among His own people, but His ministry continued to all the world (Matthew 28:18-20). We too must go to every neighborhood in our area: Orange Mound, Lauderdale, Alcy Ball, South Memphis, Frayser, Hickory Hill, Berclair, etc.

II. We see what Jesus did (v. 35b)

Jesus' ministry consisted of teaching, preaching, and healing (see also Matthew 4:23).

It is vital that a Christian ministry include both a verbal proclamation and also practical mercy ministry. In Jesus' ministry, this was clearly the case.

III. We see how Jesus felt (v. 36)

We are told that Jesus had compassion upon all the people, and that He saw them in a particular way—that they were harassed and helpless, and ultimately they appeared to Him to be sheep without a shepherd. We know that sheep without a shepherd are vulnerable to all of the animals and elements that can destroy them. Jesus saw the poor and lost people of His day in this way.

IV. We see what Jesus taught (vv. 37-38)

Jesus taught that the greatest way in which we can engage the lost and poor world in which we live is through prayer—earnest prayer and purposeful prayer. We must pray that the Lord Himself will raise up workers for the field and send them out.

Discussion Questions

1. Since Jesus went to "all the cities and villages" what does this imply about our ministry today? What are some ways in which Christians in Memphis today should be involved in the external mission of the Gospel?
2. Of what does the ministry of Jesus consist? What happens when we fail to include all three elements in our mission to the unbeliever? What happens when we fail to include all three elements in our ministry within the church? Describe how Memphis needs the ministry of Jesus.
3. Why is it important for us to know from verse 36 how Jesus felt when He saw the crowds? How does His affection for poor, lost people challenge us today? How do we sometimes feel toward lost and poor people?

4. If Christians felt consistent compassion for the lost and poor people in Memphis, how might our conduct change? (See verses 37,38)

5. What about this lesson challenges you the most?

Going Deeper

1. How does your attitude toward ministry in Memphis need to change in order to conform to Jesus' example?

2. What are some steps you can take to engage Memphis as a Christian in the Christian mission?