

# The Shepherd's Compassion

Read Matthew 9:35 – 10:8

Jesus was traveling all around Galilee, in the northern portion of Israel, teaching and healing. Huge crowds followed Him. How utterly exhausting that must have been for Him! He could have easily begun seeing the crowds as an inescapable burden. But how did Jesus see them?

*Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36, NASB)*

He saw them with the eyes and heart of a caring shepherd. He saw their great need, and He longed to gather them all to His Father. He told His disciples:

*The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest. (Matthew 9:37-38, NASB)*

Jesus did more than feel sorry for them. He took action, using what He had at hand. He sent His disciples out to all the surrounding villages with these instructions:

*“As you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.” (Matthew 10:7-8, NASB)*

Elsewhere, Jesus reveals His Shepherd's heart with these words:

*“What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. and when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” (Luke 15:4-7, NASB)*

Jesus saw sinners, not as enemies, but as lost sheep needing a shepherd. He looked at them, not with anger or disgust, but with compassion. To the shepherd, each sheep is precious.

Never forget that God has sent you out into this evil world to gather His lost sheep. His heart longs for them, so He has sent you. Go with His deep love and compassion for the lost sheep. Don't condemn them. Gather them to the Shepherd.