



These words of lament were shared by Jesus on the Tuesday of Passion Week. With only a few days remaining before the celebration of the Passover meal and the arrest, trial, conviction and crucifixion that would soon follow, Jesus paused to express his own sorrow over the “waywardness” of his own people. On Friday, many of those who loved Jesus the most would find themselves deep in grief, but for Jesus, it was his own grief that had led him to the cross.

Jesus uses an interesting metaphor to describe what he had “longed” to do with the people of Israel. What is it? What does this picture say to you about what Jesus was feeling in this moment?

Yesterday we noted that empathy involved the sharing of feelings whereas compassion always includes action. How does the grief expressed here by Jesus reveal his deep love for humanity?

GPS for Families

GrowPrayStudy.org/family

Deuteronomy 6:5-9 is the instruction scripture for families. It tells us to share our faith while we are at home, when we walk along the road and when we get up and lie down. This message God gave to Moses for the Israelites is a guide to sharing your faith with your kids.

God gave parents clear instructions that are more important today than ever. Your kids are surrounded by a worldly influence that is impacting them whether you like it or not. So, give the instructions from God a try with “week-long” family devotions. This may sound crazy at first, but many find it a simple way to instill biblical values in their family. Pick a simple scripture that resonates with you. Then tell everyone we are going to look for ways to apply and use this scripture this week. For example, if you choose Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength,” remind each other where you get your strength when someone is discouraged or tired. Pray for strength when you need it. Ask each other each day when you needed Christ’s strength or when you felt his strength. Remind each other that the scripture says “all” things, not just some things when we feel like it.

As you complete one week, find another inspiring verse and start all over. Infusing scripture into your everyday lives will ensure the principles found in the Bible will stick.

MESSAGE “Set Apart for the Work”

SCRIPTURE Acts 13:1-3

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Key Principles

- 1. It starts with worship.
- 2. Offering comfort often requires us to be uncomfortable.
- 3. Consider the question, “Who is God sending you to?”

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PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Lord, remind me this day that the model you have given for the full life is a life shaped by love. Give me empathy, Lord, to share the hurts of a broken world. Give me compassion, Lord, that inspires the actions necessary to continue your work of transformation. Lord, as my heart continues to break for what is broken, remind me this day that you have sent me to participate in the restoration. Use me today, Lord, to heal, to help and to hold those most in need of your grace, mercy and love. AMEN.

Is your life ever busy? Do you ever find yourself thinking, "I do not have time for [fill in the blank]." Abraham was busy focusing on the Lord when he saw three men standing nearby. What might have been seen as an interruption was immediately understood by Abraham to be a visible sign of God's presence. Because of this moment of recognition, Abraham had the honor to literally "entertain angels."

Often our lives are driven by tasks rather than relationships. What we have to do is given higher priority over who we are becoming. Looking back over the last three weeks, would you say your life has been more driven by the tasks you have to complete or the relationships you value in your life?

What value do you place on seeking to be a person of graciousness and peace in your interactions with others?

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Look out for yourself. Take care of #1. Don't let anyone take advantage of you. We assume that this is the way the world works, and the sooner you can learn that, we think, the safer you will be. But then Jesus comes and says, "With you, I want you to live differently." In Luke 9, Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

All of us can recall countless examples of moments in our lives when we either desired or fulfilled the principle of an "eye for eye and tooth for tooth." Can you think of any experience in your life where your response was closer to these instructions from Jesus? How did that situation turn out?

In your own thinking, why is forgiveness, grace and generosity a better way to live?

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In verse 36 of our passage today, we find the instruction to "use honest scales and honest weights." Within Israel at this time there was not a standardized system of measurement and weights. As a result, people were routinely cheated during their regular business transactions. The "alien living with you" was particularly vulnerable to such unfair practices which are condemned in this section of the law.

Have you yourself ever been "cheated"? Take a moment this morning to reflect on that experience. How did it happen? How did you feel about being treated so dishonestly?

Look back at verse 34. On what basis does God instruct the Israelites to "love him [the alien living with you] as yourself"? How do you see your growing relationship with God as well as your developing understanding of God's grace influencing your relationships with those you perceive to be "different" from you?

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Jesus did countless works in his life that we would describe as amazing, yet John identifies just one act that clearly and definitely testifies to the love of Jesus for each and every person who ever lived. In the 10th chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus describes his sacrificial act in this way, "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord." Prior to his death, Jesus wanted his disciples to know that his death was central to God's plan to save the world.

Empathy involves the experiences of sharing someone's feelings. It's an important gift we share, but compassion takes it a step further. Compassion, born out of real love, acts. What expectations does God have for how you lay down your life?

Who can you look at in your life as a model for this type of sacrificial love?

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