

IS COMPASSION A THING OF THE PAST?

To open your eyes is to risk living with a broken heart for the sake of the lost. C.S. Lewis said, “To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to be sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. Be in that casket – safe, dark, motionless, airless – it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable.” In short, Lewis was saying: You will die a slow death – unhappy and lonely – no one to comfort you in your closing hours, because that is what people thought you wanted.

When you get time, read Luke 10:30-37. In this story of the Good Samaritan, we see how easy it is for religious people to avoid looking upon the pain of another. Both the Levite and the priest refused to look because they were drained of compassion. They refused to let anything, and anyone get close to their heart – why should this concern them anyway? On the other hand, however, the Samaritan took pity on the hurting man; he saw the man and didn’t look away. In fact, verse 10 says, “he had compassion on him.”

When we look and not glance, we see the person, not the problem. When we see the person, we see that they matter to God and ought to matter to us. Look around, the world of people is hurting all around us. What about the married couple who is struggling? What about the single mother who waits on you at the restaurant even though she has no idea how she and her child will eat tomorrow after her tips buy food tonight – what about her problem?

We can’t help everyone, but we can have compassion and do what we can. And sometimes it’s just a kind word, a kind smile, or maybe an extra dollar. Who knows, it could be only a brief prayer to God on their behalf. Do not let compassion be something of the past.

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