

Breaking Open the Word

Pentecost 5C, Proper 10, Ordinary Sunday 15
13th July, 2025



Transformative Compassion begins with the heart

A weekly reflection and sermon,
with study and prayer guides
following the RCL Lectionary

Dennis Webster



Revised Common Lectionary Related

**Pentecost 5C,
Proper 10,
Ordinary Sunday 15**

Deuteronomy 30.9-14

Psalms 25.1-10

Colossians 1.1-14

Luke 10.25-37



Book of Common Prayer (1662) Collect

BCP

O God,
the protector of all that trust in thee,
without whom nothing is strong,
nothing is holy:
Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy;
that, thou being our ruler and guide,
we may so pass through things temporal,
that we finally lose not the things eternal.
Grant this, O heavenly Father,
for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord.

INTRODUCTION

What if the decision to stop and help a stranger could alter your life's path?

This week, we are invited into a poignant exploration of transformative compassion through a vivid scenario: driving alone on a desolate road and encountering a stranded man, possibly an outsider in need.

The true challenge lies not in the jerry can of fuel but in what's stirring in our hearts. He emphasises that authentic compassion requires action — it is not a passive feeling but a deep, heart-driven choice to risk and serve those around us.

Drawing from biblical insights in Deuteronomy, Psalms, Colossians, and the parable of the Good Samaritan, the reflection highlights that compassion is an essential

command, leading us to reflect God's mercy through humility and genuine acts of love.

The message resonates with our community initiatives, urging us to embody compassion towards every neighbour, especially the vulnerable.

In keeping with the call to act with compassion, the sermon passionately concludes, the call to action is clear: "Go and do likewise," encouraging us to take on the mantle of transformative compassion in our daily lives.

Let us respond to God's heart and make a commitment to love and serve without boundaries.

Prayer Point

- Pray for strength to show transformative compassion in our daily lives.
- Ask God to help us recognise and act on opportunities to serve others.
- Pray for humility to learn from our experiences and grow in compassion.
- Lift up any personal prayer requests that you may have..

God of Creation, breathe into us, made of clay,
your gift of life so that we, made in your image

may become your eyes, ears, hands and voice.

Transformative Compassion begins with the heart.

Transformative Compassion should be our guiding principle.

On Tuesday, after our morning service and study, I presented a scenario for the group to analyse. It wasn't just about solving a problem; it explored fear, uncertainty, and the difficult choices we face when making decisions with potential positive or negative consequences.

When sharing your story, there's no judgement about your actions. The main message encourages you to let your heart respond first, then evaluate the situation realistically, safely, and compassionately.

Imagine driving alone on a long, isolated red-dirt road in the outback—possibly between Broken Hill and Tibooburra—at midday. The sun is harsh, and you haven't encountered anyone for an hour.

Up ahead, you spot a ute pulled over to the side. A man—possibly a refugee or migrant worker—stands beside it, waving his arms. He's run out of fuel, doesn't speak English well, and is nervous. He might even look suspicious because he's different.

You have a jerry can in the back—enough fuel to get you both to the next town.

Here's your choice:

- Do you drive past, justifying it as someone else's problem, fearful of what might happen?
- Or do you stop—exposing yourself to possible risk—and offer help?

At that moment, the issue isn't just what's in your jerry can. The problem is what's in your heart. Your heart will want to decide:

- Is he worth the risk?
- Is he one of "us" or one of "them"?

- Does he deserve my help?

Compassion can be either a genuine act or a fleeting thought.

These aren't distant stories; they're people suffering. God asks, 'What's in your heart? Will you stop?'

Moral of the Story:

'The Heart Has to Get Out First'

Before the jerry can is lifted, the heart must be removed from the car. Prejudice keeps us locked in, but compassion rolls down the window, pulls over, and acts.

Jesus calls for this transformation. This kind of heart inherits eternal life, not because it earns it, but because it reflects God's mercy.

What does it mean to be compassionate? Not just to feel it, but to act with mercy, across boundaries, at cost to ourselves?

Compassion moves, humbles, and demands. However, biblical compassion is transformative, costly, and often demands self-sacrifice

for life, not just for ourselves, but for others as well.

Today's readings show compassion is not optional. It's not a bonus to our faith. It's the path to God's heart.

1.The Law of Compassion is Near (Deuteronomy 30:9–14)

Deuteronomy reminds us that God's command is near, in our mouths and hearts.

The command is love—for God and neighbours, especially the vulnerable. It's practical, affecting how we treat widows, orphans, and strangers, and our response to suffering. How do we act when no one watches?

God has planted compassion in our hearts. The challenge is to take action.

2.Mercy Starts in Humility (Psalm 25:1–10)

The psalmist pleads with God to show mercy and steadfast love. He says, 'Good and upright is the Lord, so he instructs sinners in the way.'

Genuine compassion comes from humility, not pride. Those who receive God's mercy can show mercy to others.

Have we forgotten that we, too, are recipients of grace? God instructs sinners, not the perfect, powerful, or put-together.

The psalm teaches us to learn compassion. It's not automatic; it requires a soft, teachable spirit.

3.Compassion as a Transformed Life Fruit (Colossians 1:1–14)

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul prays for their strength and thanksgiving to the Father, who has enabled them to share in the inheritance of the saints.

He wants them to bear fruit in every good work. Compassion is not just an emotion; it's a fruit that grows from our relationship with Christ. It's like the new life, possibility, and hope that spring brings to a tree's leaf.

Note: This fruit grows in challenging places. Compassion requires endurance, patience, gratitude, and a willingness to take risks.

Paul reminds us that we've been rescued from darkness and brought into light. This isn't just a theological truth;

it's a new identity—a compassionate people shaped by grace.x

4.The Samaritan: Compassion That Costs (Luke 10:25–37)

Finally, we reach the story of the Good Samaritan.

A man is beaten and left for dead. Two religious men pass by, perhaps afraid or justifying their actions. But a Samaritan, an outsider, is moved with pity.

What does he do?

- He stops
- He risks touching a possibly dead body
- He pours oil and wine—costly healing agents
- He lifts the man, takes him to the shelter
- He pays for his care
- And promises to come back

Sacrificial mercy transcends ethnic boundaries, risks ritual impurity, disrupts personal plans, and involves resource sharing. Jesus concludes with the challenge: 'Go and do likewise.'

This isn't just about being nice; it's a complete reorientation of how we see others, not through bias or

fear, but as image-bearers of God.

Conclusion:

Compassion leads to the possibility of inheriting eternal life.

A lawyer asked Jesus, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus' answer: 'Live a life of mercy.'

We don't earn salvation through mercy; we walk in the way of eternal life by aligning with God's heart.

True compassion:

- Risks crossing boundaries
- Puts aside personal prejudice
- Sees the image of God in the other
- Costs us something
- And transforms us in the process

Friends, the word is near to you, in your heart. Transformative Compassion begins with the heart.

Who is my neighbour? The compassionate one. Jesus concludes the lesson with a simple commandment: 'Go and do likewise.' Be in peace, love, and serve the Lord.



Discussion Questions

What does Transformative Compassion mean to you, and how can it guide your daily actions?

- Transformative Compassion should be our guiding principle and begins with the heart.
- Can you think of a situation where you felt compassion but hesitated to act? What would you do differently now?

Why is it important to see others through the lens of compassion instead of fear or prejudice?

- Jesus challenges us to reorient our perspective on others, viewing them as image-bearers of God rather than through bias.
- How do you think viewing others compassionately could change your relationships?

In what ways can you show compassion to those who may be seen as 'others' or different from you?

- The sermon encourages us to act with mercy across boundaries, making sacrifices for others.
- Reflect on a time when you felt uncomfortable helping someone who seemed different. What held you back?

How does the story of the Good Samaritan illustrate the idea of compassion that costs us something?

- The Samaritan risked personal plans and shared resources to help the beaten man, showing sacrificial mercy.
- What sacrifices are you willing to make for someone in need, and how can you prepare yourself to take those steps?

According to Deuteronomy 30:9–14, how does God command us to act with compassion towards others?

- Deuteronomy reminds us that God's command is love, especially for the vulnerable.
- How can you actively practice compassion in your community, and what first steps can you take to do so?

Five-Day Devotion

This five-day devotional will be taking a transformational challenge into the sermon from this weekend. We will explore the transformational nature of compassion and how it begins in the heart, encouraging us to reflect on our actions and decisions towards others.



Day 1 Deuteronomy 30:9–14

In today's reflection, we begin by understanding that the command of love given by God is not distant or abstract; it is very close to our hearts. The essence of compassion is rooted deeply within us, calling us to act with love towards our neighbours. Compassion is not simply a feeling, but a movement of the heart that spurs us into action, particularly towards those who are vulnerable and in need.

As we meditate on this scripture, we are reminded of our responsibility to love and extend kindness proactively. It's a challenge to examine our reactions in moments of discomfort and fear. Are we willing to stop and extend help, or do we let prejudice and judgment guide our decisions? Today, let us invite God to search our hearts and awaken the compassion that He has planted within us.

- What fears or biases might be holding you back from showing compassion?
- In what ways can you act out love to those around you who may be suffering?
- How can you make compassion a guiding principle in your life?
- Pray for openness to God's call to act in love.
- Seek strength to overcome any prejudices you may have.

Day 2 Psalm 25:1–10

Today's scripture emphasises the importance of humility in our pursuit of mercy. As the psalmist calls upon God, he highlights the connection between recognising our own need for grace and extending that same grace to others. Genuine compassion arises from a heart that understands its vulnerability and dependence on God.

We are often quick to judge and condemn those who are struggling. However, the reminder here is that none of us is perfect; we are all in

need of God's mercy. Allow this message to soften your heart and inspire you to adopt a posture of humility when relating to others. The more we acknowledge our shortcomings, the more we can extend genuine kindness and empathy to those around us.

- Who in your life needs your compassion right now?
 - How can acknowledging your own need for grace help you to extend it to others?
 - What practical steps can you take to cultivate humility?
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- Pray for a humble heart that seeks to serve, rather than to judge.
 - Ask God to help you see others through His eyes.

Day 3 Colossians 1:1–14

The theme of today's reading is the transformative power of a compassionate life. Paul's prayer for the Colossians emphasises the importance of a life that is fruitful and deeply connected to Christ. This compassion is not merely an emotional response but the natural fruit of a thriving relationship with God.

When we allow our lives to be shaped by grace, we become vessels of compassion in a world that desperately needs it. This transformative process requires us to endure and persevere, especially in challenging circumstances. Let us reflect on how our compassionate actions can bear witness to the hope and joy we find in Christ, giving life not only to ourselves but to others around us.

- In what areas of your life can you bear more fruit in compassion?
 - How does your relationship with Christ influence your ability to show mercy?
 - What challenges do you face in pursuing a compassionate life, and how can you overcome them?
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- Pray to bear good fruit in your interactions with others.
 - Seek God's guidance as you respond to opportunities for compassion.

Day 4 Luke 10:25–37

In the story of the Good Samaritan, we encounter a profound illustration of what it means to show compassion at significant personal cost. The Samaritan's actions challenge us to look beyond societal boundaries and prejudices, reminding us that love transcends race, religion, and status. He stops to help where others pass by, prepared to bear the expense and risk involved in his act of mercy.

As we reflect on this narrative, let us challenge ourselves to think about who we consider "our neighbour." Are we willing to act with compassion even when it disrupts our plans or demands something from us? Jesus calls us to emulate the Samaritan's example - a call that may require us to step outside our comfort zones and risk vulnerability. Embrace the challenge to live out compassion in our daily lives.

- What barriers do you face in reaching out to others in need?
- How can you actively seek to be a neighbour to those who are different from you?
- What does it mean for you to "go and do likewise" in your community?
- Pray for courage to respond to the needs around you.
- Ask God to break down any barriers that prevent you from showing compassion.

Day 5 Matthew 22:34–40

As we conclude this devotional series, we return to the foundational commandment of love, encapsulated in Jesus' teachings. To inherit eternal life and align our lives with God's heart, we must live out a love that goes beyond mere feeling. Genuine compassion requires action that embodies mercy and love for our neighbours.

The call to love cannot be an isolated part of our faith; it is the very essence of being a follower of Christ. Reflect today on how your life can be a testament to the kind of transformative compassion that Jesus exemplified. It is not just about crossing physical boundaries but also about overcoming personal biases and extending a genuine embrace to all of humanity.

- How can you incorporate more acts of love in your daily routines?
 - What areas of your life may still need to be aligned with Christ's command to love?
 - How can your community benefit from your actions of compassion?
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- Pray for God to lead you to those who need your love today.
 - Seek ways to express kindness and mercy in practical ways this week.

End notes and further reading

Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Luke (St Paul's Press) (Johnson)

The Gospel of Matthew

The Gospel of John

Rev Dr Andrew McGowan: Andrew's Version: <https://substack.com/@abmcg>

David Adams, Glimpses of Glory, Year C

The following authors as featured at The Worship Cloud

www.theworshipcloud.com

N. T. Wright,

Jane Williams,

P James Woodward,

Paula Gooder

Mark Pryce,

David Perry



Brabarlung Totem

This is produced on Gunaikurnai Country and our respects are made to the First Nations people everywhere.

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Email: dennis-at-stpetersbythelakeanglicanchurch.org

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