

"The Guts – Living Compassionately"

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Scripture Reading: Matthew 9:35-38 NRSV

³⁵ Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. 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 ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Discussion Questions:

1. What jumped out at you about this passage?
2. What's the gutsiest thing you've ever done?
3. What were the three main verbs of Jesus' ministry in this passage?
4. One translation says that Jesus toured all of the cities and villages in the region. How do you think he and the disciples organized it?
5. How much of the things do you think that Jesus said and did are *not* recorded in the Scriptures?
6. What are the reasons in verse 36 for why Jesus had compassion on the multitudes?
7. If you could summarize Jesus' ministry in one word, what would it be?

Background: The Greek word *splanchnizomai* found in our Scripture literally means "to have one's bowels move" or "gut response." *Splanchnizomai* refers to feeling and action that come from the deepest depths of our being. The NRSV translates it as "compassion." But it goes deeper than that. It's a fierce word, almost reminding one of a mama bear. In fact there are scholars that argue the entirety of Jesus' ministry can be summarized with this one word: *splanchnizomai*. Six times that word is used of Jesus. *Splanchnizomai* conveys so much more than mere sympathy. It's a practical response that meets a dire need. It starts with emotion and finishes with effective action.

8. What moved or *splanchnizomai-ed* Jesus in our passage and throughout the gospels?

More background: Jesus *splanchnizomai-ed* or moved to compassion by the world's **pain**, the world's **sorrow**, the world's **hunger**, the world's **loneliness**, the world's **confusion**, and the world's **oppressed**.

9. How might we cultivate more compassionate living like Jesus in our living today?
10. What do you think Jesus meant by "*The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few?*"
11. What two responses are Jesus asking for to this need?
12. What do you think of this statement: God answers prayer and the church should also answer prayer. In fact, Jesus' prayer is directed to the church and is answered by the church. How does prayer move us to action? Our middle to younger generations are increasingly less involved in communities of faith (Gen X; Millennials; and Gen Z). How might Christians go to these generations, our modern-day harvest?