



## THEME: CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

### Bible Study 10 : Answered Prayer – A Heart of compassion.

**INTRODUCTION** When we seriously look at prayer we see that real prayer is more than just form or duty. What we discover is that authentic prayer is a process by which the Holy Spirit changes and informs our hearts and minds with the thoughts and heart of God. As we seek the Lord in prayer we find that the Holy Spirit does indeed do heart surgery on us releasing a deep down empathy with the heart of God and releases deep prayer that is founded on the compassion that the LORD has for the person or the situation. When this release of godly compassion is released within regularly within the heart of the prayer we see the prayer transcends good intention and guess work and becomes heart felt intercession that leads us down the pathway of answered prayer.

**DISCUSS** – How sensitive do you think the average Christian is to the heart of God?

What do you think can stop or undermine our heart growing in this compassion and sensitivity?

How do you think we can actively grow and cultivate?

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS** – Psalm 103 v 2 – 5, 13 Psalm 116 v 5 – 6, Psalm 145 v 8 – 9, 2 Corinthians 1 v 3 – 5, Isaiah 49 v 13, Isaiah 51 v 11 – 12, Isaiah 66 v 13, Psalm 119 v 156

**TEACHING SLOT** – The Lord has compassion for His people.

When we look at the nature of our Father in heaven we see that His actions towards His creation and towards His people is full of compassion, mercy and justice. It needs to be understood that every action is governed by a motive and a desire. This is no different with the Lord God. As we read scripture we see time and time again that His loving action towards His people, to heal, restore, forgive, correct, provide for are governed by His great heart of persevering compassion. This is important to us when we come to the area of prayer because it shows us that God does not make decisions just based upon cold detached observation, but actually has love, compassion, faithfulness and mercy governing His actions and His responses to the cry of His people's heart. If we are to learn to pray in line with His will then we need to understand His heart and allow these heart responses to become our heart responses.

**DISCUSS** – If you had to describe the nature of Jesus from the evidence of the New Testament how would you describe Him?

How do you think this knowledge should shape our actions and prayer lives as Christians?

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS** – Matthew 9 v 35 – 36, v 14, Matthew 15 v 29 – 39, Matthew 20 v 29 – 34, Mark 1 v 40 – 42, James 5 v 11

**TEACHING SLOT** – Jesus demonstrated this compassion in His ministry

It comes as no surprise that when you look at the life and ministry of Jesus, that as God incarnate, He shows the same mercy and compassion to the downcast, the widow, the sinner and the sick. Jesus ministry shows the Father's heart in action as time and time again He was stirred with compassion for the lost, sick and outcast. This compassion was not just a deep feeling of empathy but a force which stirred Jesus to dynamic action as He responded to the needs around Him and declared the heart and the Kingdom of God by miracles that met the needs of all around Him. As His followers and disciples we are called not just to feel the same compassion as Jesus, but to allow that same compassion to stir us into action to continue His ministry today here on earth. That compassion is meant to stir us into heart felt prayer in the knowledge that In Jesus we have one who not only sympathises with our weakness, but cares enough to work on our behalf. Jesus is ALIVE and He has not changed. He IS the same yesterday, today and forever. Seated at the right hand of God He makes intercession for His people and we can be assured that as we grow in His nature, through His Spirit, both compassion, action and power will be released in our lives to reveal the Father's heart today.

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS** – Ephesians 4 v 32, Colossians 3 v 12 – 14, 1 Peter 3 v 8 –9, 2 Corinthians 1 v 3 – 5

**TEACHING SLOT** – At the core of true Christian Service and Prayer the compassion of Jesus should be both the motivating force and the dynamic expression.

Here is the wonderful truth of the Christian heart that by the Holy Spirit the Lord creates His heart, His actions, His purposes in the lives of His people. We need to understand that real dynamic prayer and ministry comes as we grow in the compassion that God has for the world, people and situations. This is important because real Christians should have a great sympathy and responsiveness to the plans, will and purposes of God. As we understand the reality of His Kingdom reign and purposes we are led into a position in our hearts and desires where we want what God wants and actively pray into existence the revealed will and purposes of God over a person's life. It has often been said that if you don't like a person you should pray for them. The reason for this is that as you approach the Lord to share with Him, He mellows your heart and shows you His heart, His . You begin to see the difficulties and challenges in that person's heart and you find yourself praying for them in the Love and compassion of God. Real answered prayer is a journey of discovering not only the will of God but the heart of God for His creation. This leads us into a place before the Lord where His compassion, love and mercy are created within our lives and understanding. Answered prayer does indeed change situations BUT it also changes us.