

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME TWO

STUDY FOUR

What Key Unlocks the Human Heart?

Mark 6:53–56

Nothing is more Christlike than compassion.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IN August 2010, a cave-in at the San José Mine in Chile trapped thirty-three miners. Rescue workers and mining engineers from around the world converged on the scene to find a way to extract the entombed men from the cavern more than two thousand feet below the surface. The team drilled a shaft through the rubble to let in air, then a larger shaft, and eventually a shaft big enough to bring the men out one at a time.

When the first man was lifted to the surface, the news of his rescue sent waves of celebration around the world. Images flickered across television screens of the man being embraced by family members weeping with joy. Then the next miner emerged, and the next, until, finally, after more than two months of being trapped, all thirty-three were saved.

What rivets our attention to rescue stories like this? Though the people in danger are complete strangers, our hearts join their struggles. We pray for their liberation and hope for the best. Oh, the tears of joy we share when they walk out alive! How loud our cheers when they get to see their family members again and squeeze them in their arms! What links us to the anxious family members and helps us feel their anguish and joy? *Compassion.*

It's easy in local churches to lose our sense of compassion. Our busy schedules and multiple attention-seeking gadgets can crowd our time for personal connection. As we work to meet deadlines, strive to achieve a life goal, or hurry to a worship service, people can appear to be interruptions to our schedule, nuisances to our workflow, or obstacles that slow us down on the road to success.

Jesus was busy too! He spent long hours teaching and traveling. He was on the road much of the time, healing the sick, liberating the demonized, and performing amazing miracles. What kept Him going wasn't a drive for success or fame. It was His *compassion*. His compassion unlocked human hearts and drew the masses. In the passage of this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll observe Jesus' compassion up close and join Him in His rescue operation: the salvation of the world.



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Pause to reflect on God's faithfulness throughout your journey in Mark's gospel. As you breathe in God's steadfast love for you, exhale gratitude. Express your thankfulness to the Lord for His patience, sure guidance, and great compassion.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The passage for our study is [Mark 6:53–56](#). Take a moment to read it.

It reads like a news brief, doesn't it? We've seen these statements before in Mark:

- “So Jesus healed many people who were sick with various diseases” (Mark 1:34).
- “He had healed many people that day, so all the sick people eagerly pushed forward to touch him” (3:10).
- Even the disciples “healed many sick people, anointing them with olive oil” (6:13).

At first glance, our passage doesn't seem that noteworthy. There are no words uttered by Jesus, no dialogue reported between Him and His disciples. No names are mentioned. No major events. We do not even know exactly where the incidents take place.

Yet, as Pastor Chuck explains in his commentary, *Insights on Mark*:

Mark takes care to highlight a profoundly important divine attribute in Jesus. He possessed the nonsensical, irrational, unjust, and costly character trait we call *compassion*.¹

So, let's grab our magnifying glass to discover the significance of these verses to our lives.



Observation: Jesus Heals Many at Gennesaret

Read [Mark 6:53–56](#) again, carefully observing what it says.² Look for repetition, emphasis on certain concepts, and context. As you study this brief passage, join the momentum of the crowd as the current of their enthusiasm sweeps you along to Jesus.

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Arrival and Recognition—Mark 6:53–54

Note what's written before and after this passage. Remember the storm on the Sea of Galilee that you weathered with the disciples in Mark 6:45–52? As the light of dawn peeked over the hilltops and stretched over a much calmer Sea of Galilee, the disciples landed at Gennesaret, where they weren't expected. What does 6:54 say about their arrival?

Reaction and Expectation—Mark 6:55

As soon as the people saw Jesus, what did they do, according to Mark 6:55?

Is that amazing or what? He doesn't even say, "Bring them to Me." He doesn't say, "Remember, I am the One who will help those who are hurting." He simply is drawing this boat to shore with the disciples alongside. And the people seeing Him race around the country to find that sick friend to bring that person to Jesus. What a remarkable sense of expectation. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Numerous Needs and Trusting Touches—Mark 6:56

What do you observe in Mark 6:56? How would you depict the scene in your own words? Of what previous incident does the people's desire to "touch his robe" remind you ([Mark 5:24–34](#))?

Picture the scene: roads in cities and countryside lined with the sick. As He walks along there's no fanfare, no announcement, no public crusade kind of meeting. They're just touching His garment as He walks along. Following Him are those now standing on their feet, instantly healed. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Interpretation: Jesus' Compassion at Work

Wherever Jesus went—"villages, cities, or the countryside"—people brought the sick to Him (Mark 6:56). What is the significance of the word *wherever*? What does that say about Jesus?

"All who touched him were healed" (6:56). Look up the Greek term *sozo*, translated "healed," in the Greek dictionary at billmounce.com. Then, explore the article "[Compassion, Pity](#)" in the *Encyclopedia of the Bible* at biblegateway.com. What does this verse say about Jesus' great compassion? What attributes of Jesus does it teach? Write a principle to sum up what you learn about Jesus.

Think about how simple that was. They didn't have to make a promise. They weren't required to clean up their lives before He would heal them. See that word, cured or however your Bible may render it. It conveys the idea of rescuing someone from affliction, restoring someone to wholeness. He didn't really have to take time for them, just as you and I don't have to take time for someone. The secret of it all is, of course, His compassion. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Emulating God's Compassion

Throughout Scripture, God asks His people to emulate His compassion as a key to unlock people's hearts. What do these Old Testament passages say about God's compassion: *Exodus 34:5–7; Psalm 103:8–13; and Lamentations 3:22–23*?

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How did Jesus embody divine compassion in these gospel passages: [Matthew 14:14; 15:32–37; 20:30–34](#); [Mark 1:40–41](#); and [6:34](#)?

Compare our passage with [Luke 6:17–19, 27–36](#). What themes emerge from both passages? How would you summarize Jesus' instruction to us believers in our interaction with people?

In the epistles, how did Paul urge believers to express compassion in the church: [Ephesians 4:32](#) and [Colossians 3:12–14](#)?

People are the reason we exist. People are invaluable; each one represents an eternal soul. That cannot be said of the buildings we build, the bridges we drive over, the roads we drive on, or any other living stuff around this earth. People. It isn't limited to the people just within the walls of this church. These people are those who will never be inside the church. People are our ministry.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Become Caring and Compassionate!

Each person who comes into our lives can touch the Savior in some way through us. Pastor Chuck suggests how we might express Christ's compassion . . . with our hearts, eyes, lips, and hands.

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With your heart, can you feel another's unbearable pain? Who near you is experiencing emotional or physical pain? What is this person going through?

With your eyes, you can see this person's hidden needs. With your lips, you can offer unexpected encouragement. With your hands, you can give unusual generosity. In what ways might the Lord be prompting you to show His compassion?

The greatest of all rescue operations occurred when Jesus descended into the deep cavern of our sin and pulled us to freedom. When our world caved in, Jesus rescued us. Perhaps that's the reason we love rescue stories. We're part of one! Celebrate your rescue and share your story with someone today.



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, You've been so good to me over these many years, better than I deserve. You have loved me so much. You have shown me so much compassion and grace. Help my heart to feel the unbearable pain of others and to see their unspoken needs. May my lips utter unexpected words of encouragement to those around me. May my hands give with unusual generosity. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Mark*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary, vol. 2 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 176.
2. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page "*How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?*" at [insight.org](https://www.insight.org).

For the 2026–2027 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2010, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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