



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This week as I was wondering about what to talk about, I came across a list of slogans that were seen around the world. Here are some of them:

On the airline ticket office in Copenhagen, there is this promise, "We take your bags and send them in all directions."

A Swiss restaurant announces to its customers that "Our wines leave you with nothing to hope for."

An Acapulco hotel posts a sign assuring its customers that "The manager has personally passed all the water served here."

And finally, in Paris, at the finest hotel a sign invites visitors to "Please leave your values at the front desk."

Truly, there is something lost in translation to English, but what I think is lost is some of our human value. Values are the core of our being and yet they seem so small unless we need to show them off to build ourselves up for some reason. From TV to real life, we all have witnessed scenes of someone on their death bed where all they can say is "I Love You!". I have personally watched a few families saying goodbye to their dying loved one where the dying person can only say one thing, "I love you" while trying to take their last breath. That folks, represents the core value of their life, love.

So, what is your core value? What do you think that the core value of this church, this congregation is? What values have followed us for the last few decades of our lives? Today, our text gives us clues as to what core values are important to Jesus and should be important as well to us. Verse 36 says, "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." You see, for the last few chapters in Matthew, Jesus has been seen healing and doing miracles among the people. One example after another shows that He is truly the Jewish Messiah. Jesus' core values are listed right here, they are exactly what He has been doing for a few years

now, healing, teaching, and preaching about God's love. Those three things define His ministry to a "T".

So, what do you think that we are known for here at Christ the Servant? Do we do those things and do them well. We are after all the laborers in the field, the few laborers where the harvest is plentiful. When I was growing up, I always thought it would be a wonderful adventure to be a missionary over in Africa. But since I enjoy the creature comforts too much, that was not meant to be. However, what I did come to realize is that there is a harvest right here in our own country, in fact, right in Park Falls. And it is plentiful. Every Sunday morning, I comment to myself or Rodney if he is along that there are more cars in the Shanty and Family restaurant parking lots than in our lot. Very judgmental, I suppose but I don't want anyone to be helpless, I want everyone to come to know Jesus.

Here at CTS, we do those very things that Jesus is suggesting should be our core values. We come to hear preaching on Sunday morning, and we certainly teach not only our youth but our men and our women. And healing, probably less thought about but it happens here too.

Years ago, we had a member by the name of Dick. He was sick with cancer and right in the middle of a worship service we gathered near the altar and laid hands on him and prayed over him. He was so thankful and had a few more good months to live. Our prayers for healing do not go unnoticed by the recipients, I can surely testify to that when you all prayed for me during my cancer diagnosis and treatment. What a comfort it was to know that you were lifting me up to the Lord during that stressful and scary time. There are others here too that would probably say the same; Liz, Fred, Bob, Chuck, and the list goes on. Prayers are comforting knowing that Jesus will walk with us through our bad days, moving us forward with His compassion and love.

Folks, our church is to be a place where the sinful, the sick, the questioning come. It is not a sanctuary for saints. We are here to have compassion for each other and all people, to teach, preach and heal as we share the love of Our Lord.

Here at Christ the Servant we do have a choice, a choice of values. We can be a church of exclusiveness where we only care about each other or we can be open and inclusive to all people, people who need to know about Jesus and His love. Pretty clear to me that we are to show compassion for all the sheep, so everyone can come to know our Good Shepherd. Teaching, preaching, and healing so the sheep are gathered and do not need to wander aimlessly. We are all tasked with this mission, to show compassion for the lost, the least and the lowly. This sort of harvest is ongoing, unlike our Octoberfest celebrations of a grain harvest that happens only once a year.

The harvest is a joyous time, where we can see our good work produce good yield. These good things include all the healing, miracles, and promises of Jesus and His Kingdom. Jesus said that the workers are few. We need to add to our numbers so all can find the joy in the kingdom of God. Like the first disciples we are all called to the same mission, to have the same compassion as Jesus, to share the Good News.

Dennis Folds tells the story of a damaged Jesus statue in London. The city had been devastated by the bombings during World War II. The bombs that dropped on the city

struck and destroyed building of every kind, office buildings, factories, apartments, homes, museums, government building and even churches.

Soon after the war was over a group of German students, through kindness and love and a deep desire to return Christian love to those who had lost so much, volunteered to go to London to help rebuild an English cathedral that had been severely damaged by German bombs.

As work progressed, they became greatly concerned about a large statue of Jesus, whose arms were outstretched and beneath which was the written inscription from Matthew 11:28: "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest."

The student volunteer workers had great difficulty trying to restore the hands, which had been completely destroyed. They worked and worked and tried and tried, but nothing seemed to successfully replace Jesus' outstretched hands.

Finally, after much work and much discussion, they decided to let the hands of Jesus remain missing and they changed the written inscription to read this way: "Christ has no hands but ours".

These young people had a servant heart, certainly another wonderful core value. But they could not fix the problem, yet when it was all said and done, they found a better way to make good of a bad situation.

As people of faith sometimes we do need to wait for extraordinary things to happen. God's gift of love can come at any time. Yet, it is our responsibility to show compassion and love to the unbelieving world so all can come to know that ours is a God who loves sinners, sinners just like you and me. This is the message of compassion that we have been sent to tell. Thanks be to God. **AMEN**