

The Crowds

Scripture Reading — Matthew 9:35-38

*[Jesus] had compassion on them, because they were ... like sheep without a shepherd.
Matthew 9:36 —*

Jesus brought the good news of salvation into the synagogues and to the crowds in “all the towns and villages.” We must aim to follow this example, or we may find one day that we have lost our audience. If our pastors, missionaries, and church members express the good news only in church, how will the people in our communities hear about God’s love for them?

To the religious leaders in Jesus’ day, the crowds were what aristocrats used to call “the great unwashed.” Many of the people had stopped going to the synagogue on the Sabbath, the traditional worship day. The religious leaders drew back their holy robes rather than be contaminated by associating with lepers, corrupt tax collectors, prostitutes, and Samaritans. But Jesus was not afraid of such people. He had compassion “because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” He gladly sat down and ate with them.

Today the urgency not to be hidden away in our churches, knowing only a circle of believers, remains the same. Rebecca Pippert, an evangelist among college students, wrote a book called *Pizza Parlor Evangelism* that captures Jesus’ evangelistic attitude for our day. Let’s be friends with non-Christians too; let’s eat with them, get to know them, and share the good news of Christ as opportunities arise today.

Prayer

Lord, guide us from losing sight of our compassion for lost people amid the busyness of church commitments and a zeal for taking care of details that may be less urgent. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#), [Witness](#)

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