

LIFE CHURCH SERMON SCRIPTURES FOR JANUARY 20, 2013

Today's teachers: Valerie and Al Copeland

"Harvesting: A Family Affair"

Matthew 9:35-38

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

IDEA: There are crowds of suffering people needing the care of a compassionate shepherd. The Father has prepared them to be harvested (or brought into the Kingdom) but there are not enough workers.

PURPOSE: To help listeners to see themselves as laborers in the Father's harvest field by identifying the "crowds" in their lives and understanding that compassion is at the heart of ministry.

Compassion literally means "to suffer together." Among emotion researchers, it is defined as the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering.

Romans 3:22-25

There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.

Life Church Mission Statement

To teach people

- to enjoy knowing Jesus without fear, inadequacy, guilt, or shame¹,
- to follow him together as his family²,
- to function together as his body³,
- and to work together to expand his kingdom⁴.

Group Activity:

Consider people you have relationships with that do not know the love of Jesus.

Have you ever wanted to share the Good News of the Good Shepherd with them but just didn't know how?

Share with your group who they are and what about them draws your attention.

Spend time in your group asking the Father help you know how to approach them.

Understanding The Bible

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Here, for your convenience, are the Bible passages that we will be using in today's sermon at Life Church. We use the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible so that you can read it in modern English. You may have been accustomed to reading or hearing the King James Version of the Bible, which uses older English (with words like "thee", "thou", "thine", "believeth", etc.). If so, don't be alarmed – the passages below are really from the Bible even though they are in modern English.

The Bible was originally written in three ancient languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. None of the people in the Bible, and none of the people who God used to write it spoke English. In fact, English did not even exist as a language when the Bible was written. The King James Version, first published in 1611, was a translation of the Bible from it's original languages into the every day English that people used back then – almost 400 years ago! They didn't just speak that way in church – they spoke that way with everyone. The King James Version was "modernized" in 1769, but, even so, English has certainly changed a lot since then! Since you probably don't speak Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek, you're going to have to read the Bible in translated form. **At Life Church we believe that since you're going to read an English translation of the Bible you might as well use an up to date one – written in the English you speak every day. God wants you to understand his Word so that you can put it into practice!**

Life Church Web Site: <http://www.lifechurchboston.org/>