

# Christ the King of Compassion

## 1) Dialogue text

**Matthew 25: 31 – 46**      *It's so Disturbing!* Adapted from a dialogue written by Paul Glass

**Voice 1:**      **I've stopped reading the papers.**

Voice 2:      He has you know. Really he has.

**Voice 1:**      **Stopped watching the news on telly too.**

Voice 2:      Watches nothing but old films and football now.

**Voice 1:**      **Well it was all getting too much for me.**

Voice 2:      All far too much.

**Voice 1:**      **All that pain and suffering.**

Voice 2:      All that poverty and hunger.

**Voice 1:**      **Those poor little children having to drink dirty water.**

Voice 2:      And all the news about the virus.

**Voice 1:**      **All those people ill or locked down and lonely.**

Voice 2:      They were disturbing his ham, eggs and chips.

**Voice 1:**      **Don't get me wrong.**

Voice 2:      No we wouldn't want you to get him wrong.

**Voice 1:**      **I'd like to do more.**

Voice 2:      More than nothing – which is what he does at the moment.

**Voice 1:**      **I just don't know where to start.**

Voice 2:      Making a start can be tough.

**Voice 1:**      **It all seems so huge.**

Voice 2:      So out of control.

**Voice 1:**      **What could one person possibly do to help?**

Voice 2:      What change could be made?

**Voice 1:**      **It's all just a drop in the ocean.**

Voice 2:      A vast, endless ocean of need.

**Voice 1:**      **So I go to church.**

Voice 2:      Oh he likes going to church.

**Voice 1:**      **And I think about life.**

Voice 2:      And he says a prayer.

**Voice 1:**      **And I ask Jesus to show himself to me.**

Voice 2: 'Give me a sign' he asks.

**Voice 1: But nothing happens.**

Voice 2: Nothing at all.

**Voice 1: So I go back home and there is all the sad news and sad eyes on the telly.**

Voice 2: Searing through you. Pleading for help.

**Voice 1: So where is Jesus in all of that?**

Voice 2: After all – surely if there is a God he wouldn't allow all this suffering to happen.

**Voice 1: I mean he can't need my help. Can he?**

Voice 2: Perhaps he does.

**Voice 1: But it's all so disturbing.**

Voice 2: You might have to get involved.

**Voice 1: And that would never do.**

Voice 2: No, that would never do.

**Voice 1: So I sit and wait because it's all so disturbing – and I do nothing.**

Voice 2: And God weeps.

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## 2) Sermon text

**Christ the King of Compassion** The dictionary says compassion is *sorrow for the suffering of another* – we read in the gospels about Jesus being moved by seeing need and having compassion – but he didn't stop there with the feeling – Jesus was moved to heal, feed and rescue those in physical, mental and spiritual need. I'm not sure we use the word compassion so much these days – perhaps we could say Jesus the King of kindness – again the word kindness implies an action of doing good to another. Dave's character in the dialogue we shared earlier in the service saw need and was very disturbed by it but not moved to kindness or compassion – instead thinking about himself and how it made him feel. Compassion and kindness are about thinking of the other person and taking some action. Kindness is one of the gifts or fruits of the Holy Spirit so Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians.

Today used to be called: **Stir up Sunday**. It is 6 weeks before Christmas and many cooks used to be preparing and stirring up homemade Christmas puddings about now! But it actually comes from the Collect, or special prayer for this last Sunday before Advent

*Stir up O Lord, the wills of your faithful people,  
That they, bringing forth the fruit of good works,  
May by you be richly rewarded, through JC our Lord.*

Are you stirred up by the story of the sheep and the goats to bring forth the fruits of good works? Certainly a challenging story.

Commentators tell us that this story actually refers to those who do not follow Jesus and how they will be judged in terms of how they have treated those who are followers of Jesus. But we who are Christians can also be challenged and learn from this scene of judgement. It teaches us that it matters how we live and treat others especially those who are lowly or marginalized in our society. Through it God says to you and to me: notice and care for the poor and insignificant. It would seem for the King in this story that what people do is more important than what they say or think or believe.

Christ the King of compassion says we shall be judged by our actions towards the needy and if we do not notice them or turn our backs then we deny ourselves the chance of encountering him in them. Who are those who need compassion our society, our world? the lonely, the hungry, asylum seekers and refugees, those in financial difficulties, the homeless, the sick, prisoners, those who mourn, those who suffer discrimination and injustice. We cannot solve all the woes of the world but if we are stirred up or disturbed then I pray we may respond with an act of kindness, which may be giving money to a charity, contributing to a food bank, signing a petition or picking up the phone or writing a card or praying about a situation or person.

Worship is important for refreshment and renewal – we come with our thanksgivings and praise, hear God's word and we are conscious of Jesus' presence among us. But then we are sent out from worship to live, witness and work to God's praise and glory. Which means living according to his way – the way of love of instinctive compassion and kindness which is not looking for any reward.

Do you remember sermons you have heard? In a Planned Local Arrangement at Hounslow a few years ago someone spoke about Dot to dot pictures – a sheet paper with numbers, which as they are joined up in order, gradually produce an image. And so as each of us in big or small ways follow the way of Jesus through kindness, serving, caring, helping, encouraging others – a picture will be built up which reveals Jesus to others.

So may we all continue to be stirred up to bring forth the fruit of good works and in doing so we shall reveal the love of Jesus in our lives and surprisingly encounter him in those we help and receive a blessing.

**A prayer:**

Dear Lord, we are both sheep and goat  
loving and selfish, caring and complacent.  
Take the best of us,  
and shape it into that which can serve you  
and our community with more passion,  
more commitment and more humility,  
knowing our frailties, but rejoicing in your strength.  
Amen.