

Compassion in Action ...

... Faith in Provision

A sermon given on the Ninth Sunday after Trinity, 2nd August 2026, by John Franklin, visiting Beverley Minster from the Christian Service Unit in Southern India, a charity long- supported by the Minster

Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:13-21

Our Heavenly Father - loving and living Heavenly Father, thank you for the fellowship you have given to us today. Be with us, guide us, lead us. As I speak, be with me and also engulf me with your Holy Spirit - we ask in Jesus' name. Amen

Please be seated.

My name is Franklin. I come from India, southern part of India. I am representing a charity called Christian Service Unit. We have been a long association with Beverley Minster - and I'm the third one in my family to represent the charity.

And today's reading - before going to the message, I would like to say my experience in our worships. Our opening prayers got lost for 15 minutes, so I have to be very careful in my message to [keep it concise amongst] other things. Kindly bear with me if it is more than 14 minutes. Thank you.

And today, the two passages which were read out, I would like to give [them] a caption - GOD'S COMPASSION AND PROVISION. The first passage we read is Paul writing a letter to the Romans around 56 AD while he was in his third missionary trip - he never visited the Roman church, but he longs to strengthen them in the gospel. Romans is his most structured theological letter, preparing the church for unity and mission. Chapters 9 to 11 addresses the burning question: If Israel is God's chosen people, why have so many rejected the Messiah? This section is deeply personal for Paul because he himself is a Jew trained under Gamaliel, zeal for the law, and once a persecutor of Christians. The crisis Paul is addressing is now—the early church was wrestling with a painful reality. Many Gentiles were embracing Christ, whereas many Jews who had received covenants, promises, and scripture were not. So his theological concerns are: has God failed Israel? Are God's promises unreliable? What does Israel's unbelief mean for the church? So he was thinking and he was struggling a lot.

So his emotional tone we can see in the beginning of 9th chapter. It is not with the doctrine but with purely emotion. Paul says he speaks the truth in Christ with his consciousness, confirming it through the Holy Spirit. He wants the church to know his grief is real, deep, and Spirit-validated. His anguish is so intense that he says he could wish himself cut off from Christ if it meant Israel's salvation. This is not a theology - totally, this is heartbreak of Paul. It shows the depth of his pastoral love for his people.

And Israelis are having several privileges. Some of them are adoption as a God's covenant people, divine glory, covenants of Abrahamic, Davidic, Mosaic, Davidic, temple worship, the promises, the patriarchs. And the greatest privilege they have is that from Israel came the Messiah, Jesus Christ, God over all, forever and praised. Paul is reminding the church Israel's story is central to God's salvation. Romans 9:1-5 is not a theology, it is a window into God's heart. God is faithful to his promises. God grieves over unbelief. God's compassion extends to both Israel and the nations. Christ is the fulfilment of God's promises.

And the second scripture, according to the Gospel of Matthew, the miracle happens right after the death of John the Baptist. John was Jesus' forerunner, a cousin and a faithful prophet. His violent death deeply affected Jesus. Jesus withdraws to a solitary place near the Sea of Galilee to grieve and pray. The crowds follow Jesus even though Jesus seeks solitude. The crowds run on foot from surrounding towns

to meet him. This shows their spiritual hunger, their desperation for healing, their recognition of Jesus' authority. When Jesus sees them, he is moved with compassion, a deep gut feeling response. So, in our area, in our ministry, when we see some need we would like to respond with compassion.

Jesus saw them as sheep without a shepherd, so he moved with compassion. So he started healing them. So compassion always compels us to act towards the need. Compassion is not passive. So Jesus moved with compassion and he started with healing them. Then this happened in a remote rural area on the northern shore of Galilee. That is late in the day and the crowd is large, and according to the scripture it is 5,000 apart from children and women - so maybe 10,000 people, we can say. So that was a late night, so we can see like we are in the disciples' shoes and we can see it is a hard task to provide food for them. So if we put ourselves in their shoes - no food, no shops nearby, no time to prepare, and they have no plan to serve food. And so as a human being they go to the Master and say, "Send them away, send them away." Yes, we always look with a human eye, "Send them away." And what did the Master say? 'Give them something to eat.' That's what Jesus says.

So here we can see the disciples' limitation. The disciples have 5 loaves and 2 fish - it's a child's lunch. Their perspective is scarcity; Jesus' perspective is sufficiency. Jesus says, 'You give them something to eat.' This is a test of faith and participation. So then miracle happened. Jesus takes the bread, looks up to the heaven, blesses it, breaks it, gives it to the disciples. This is like a sequence like Jewish table prayer, the Last Supper, the patterns of Christian communion. The multiplication happened in Jesus' hand, but the distribution happened by the disciples. So everyone eats and is satisfied, and again 12 baskets of food remain.

It always reminds us, symbolising [the] abundance [of] God's provision, the pattern of Christian communion, the future mission of the 12 tribes of Israel. And also this miracle reveals Jesus' compassion for human need, Jesus' divine power over creation, Jesus as the true bread of life, the partnership between Christ and the disciples, God's ability to multiply small offerings. It also echoes Old Testament themes God feeding Israel with manna, Elisha multiplying bread, God providing for his people in wilderness. Jesus is greater Moses, the greater Elisha, and the fulfiller of God's promises: Jesus' compassion in grief; the disciples' limited vision; God's miraculous provision; the call to bring our little to Jesus; the abundance of God's kingdom.

So, in today's scriptures: Paul says, God's longing for his people; while Jesus shows God's provision for his people.

So like that, our mission, our charity starts: Our leaders, they started preaching the gospel to other faiths. Then they go to various rural areas, they start showing Christ's love to them. First, they don't preach the gospel, they do it in action by bringing those who are sick to the mission hospital which is in our area. They are admitted to the mission hospital; they help them in logistics; they help them in prayers; every day morning they go to the patient's bed, pray; and in the night they pray; they look after their needs. Then the question comes [from] the one who got healed, "Why are these people helping us?" - 'Because Jesus loves us, so we love you, that's why we help you to get healed, to get up to here.' So thus the relationship [is] established. Then our team goes into the rural communities to teach them how Jesus does the miracles and how he heals them.

Like in the olden days, they have two types of illness: one is diseases; the second one is demon possession. So Jesus always prays for them, and he many times says, "God has forgiven your sins." They think because of their sins they [are] born like that [and] they get the diseases because of their parents' sins. But it happened because of the glory of Jesus and God. So as Jesus sees the need of the people, we also looked at the needs of the community, one [need] after the other:- like children need education, we bring them and we started opening the homes; and the elderly - in our area, elderly people are often neglected by their own families. They feel the elderly are deadwood. So no proper meals, no proper medical assistance. So we invite them to be with us in our homes. Jesus showed compassion, and that compassion is always not passive, it needs to be some type of fact.

We may not fulfil all their needs, but we take care of their comfort first, at least the minimum things they receive from us. And also we show the way where to get the help also. So like that, our ministry started. The ministry is going on well, and I'm the third one [in my family] to represent the charity, and thank you for inviting me to the congregation and the clergy. And Alan and Helen, they are hosting me - thank you for that. And you [the Minister] have been supporting [us] for the last many years. You are also part of the ministry by supporting, by praying, by inviting me here. Thanks for all your love actions.

So here it is, I'm concluding my words.

Do we carry such a burden for our families, communities, and nation? True discipleship means sharing God's heart for the lost. And compassion in action—serve the needy with love, not indifference. Faith in provision: trust God to multiply your resources—time, talents, finances—for his kingdom.

I would like to conclude with a word of prayer.

Lord, give us Paul's burden for the lost and Christ's compassion for the needy. Teach us to trust you with our little, knowing you can make it more than enough.

Gracious and loving Father, we thank you for bringing us together in fellowship today. We are grateful for the opportunity to share, to listen, and to grow in your word. Bless this congregation of the Beverley Minister, Lord, that they may continue to be a light in this community, shining with faith, hope, and love. Strengthen each heart here with courage to witness, compassion to serve, and joy to worship you in spirit and truth. May your presence guide their families, their ministries, and their daily lives. We ask you to pour out your presence upon this congregation, uniting them in harmony and purpose, so that together they may glorify your holy name. In Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

Reading Texts

Romans 9:1-5

¹ I am speaking the truth in Christ-I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit- ² I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. ⁴ They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; ⁵ to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Matthew 14:13-21

¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' ¹⁷ They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' ¹⁸ And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.