

## **“Compassion for Sinners”**

by  
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**What** A series of mini rants demonstrating anger and frustration over sinful situations followed by biblical reminders that though we may rightfully be repulsed and even angered by sin, believers in Christ are to have authentic compassion for the lost just like Jesus did.

Themes: Compassion, Forgiveness, Judgment, Sin, Anger, Hope, Redemption

**Who** Reader A  
Reader B  
Actors 1-7  
\* Different ages and genders

**When** Present

**Costumes and Props** Appropriate streetwear (Readers could dress all in black or could be sitting on a stool off to the side if you want them to stand out from the actors. Readers could also be mic'd but off stage if it's helpful for space or effect.)

**Why** Psalm 103; Matthew 5:43-44; 6:14-15; 9:36; 11:28-30; 18:11-13; Mark 6:34; Luke 5:27-32; 7:13; 23:34a; John 3:16-17; 4:4-42; 8:1-11; Romans 5:6-8; 2 Peter 3:9; Jude 1:17-25

**How** Actors should definitely memorize all their lines. Readers can either memorize or read the responsive Scripture passages. Regardless, all lines in the wrap-up section should be memorized. Feel free to redistribute the wrap-up lines as needed.

It's important that your audience know that the scripture passages are God's Word and not man's. Readers can read the actual Scripture reference before or after the passage, though this may affect the flow of the script. You may prefer to project the reference on the screen as the readers share the passage. Be sure to rehearse with your projection tech if you choose this option!

If it's not required for actors to exit the stage after each part, they should lower their hands and freeze before and after delivering their lines. Use a spotlight if you have access to one.

At the conclusion of all the rants, actors should move into a closer straight line while lifting their heads and softening their demeanors. They should completely break character, cease "acting," and seek to engage the audience as they speak directly to them. If you are using this script in context of a worship service, you may choose to start a gentle keyboard pad underneath the wrap-up section or underneath the last Scripture verse in order to transition to the rest of your service. This script would transition well into an invitation/response time or into a worship segment on God's grace and mercy. It could also be used as a sermon opener or conclusion.

**Time**

Approximately 6-8 minutes

Lights up.

**Actor 1:** Have you been on Facebook lately? My newsfeed is blowing up with the story of this mom in Darlington (or a town near you). She left her kids in the car while she went to the salon. Just walked away from them. Two hours! She left three small kids by themselves for two hours! How could a mom do that? Children are a blessing from the Lord. And get this...her kids go to school with mine, and somebody found her actual home address and posted it. She lives right down the street. I wish somebody would give her exactly what she deserves.

**Reader A:** But... "When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" [Matthew 9:36 NET]

**Reader B:** "The LORD is compassionate and merciful; he is patient and demonstrates great loyal love. He does not always accuse and does not stay angry. He does not deal with us as our sins deserve; he does not repay us as our misdeeds deserve." [Psalm 103:8-10 NET]

**Actor 2:** I am never talking to her again. I thought we were friends, but she totally went behind my back. I told her that story in confidence. The only reason I told her was to help HER! I was trying to be a good Christian. She knew it was hard for me to talk about. And she knew it was a private conversation. So, what does she do? She tells the entire basketball team [or entire gym] like it's no big deal. I will never trust her again. And after I tell people what she's done, I bet no one else ever will either. We'll see how she likes that. From now on, I'm only hanging out with my church friends.

**Reader A:** But... "When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" [Matthew 9:36 NET]

**Reader B:** Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing... But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. [1 Peter 3:9, 14-17 NET]

**Actor 3:** One...more...time! If my next-door neighbor lets his dog in my yard one more time... I am sick and tired of it. He knows better. I love animals as much as the next guy [person], but that mutt has destroyed my

garden, my daughter's bike, and even the entire corner of our house! And the owner is refusing to pay for any of the damage. And what kind of dog eats siding, anyway?! I don't know how many times I can ask nicely. He better hope it doesn't happen again or else, I'll take matters into my own hands and... (*shakes fist without finishing his sentence*)

**Reader A:** But... "When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" [Matthew 9:36 NET]

**Reader B:** "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor' and 'hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. [Matthew 5:43-48 NET]

**Actor 4:** Did you hear about that lady? The one always working at the salon? She's been doing my hair for over 11 years. I thought I knew her. And now? (*disgusted*) Well... she just parties all weekend. I'm just repulsed and offended. She just lost a loyal customer. I'll find me a good Christian woman to do my hair. She'll never see me again.

**Reader A:** But... "When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" [Matthew 9:36 NET]

**Reader B:** Then Levi gave a great banquet in his house for Jesus, and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table with them. But the Pharisees and their experts in the law complained to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered them, "Those who are well don't need a physician, but those who are sick do. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." [Luke 5:29-32 NET]

**Actor 5:** I cannot believe what I just saw. I pulled into my parking space at work and right in front of me was this car with the filthiest bumper sticker on it. I know this guy works in my office somewhere. I'm on a mission to find out who he is. I am not working alongside "that" every day. Quite frankly, none of us should have to. And when I find him, he'll get a piece of my mind. I may even get a few other Christians to go with me. I would not be disappointed if he moved departments or quit altogether.

**Reader A:** But... "When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" [Matthew 9:36 NET]

**Reader B:** For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him. [John 3:16-17 NET]

**Actor 6:** I was just hanging out with friends from my running club. And what did I find out? One of our best runners is leaving his wife. He cheated on her and now he wants to just walk out on his whole family. So selfish. Personally, I think we should kick him out of our group, but it's not really up to me. Regardless, I don't have to talk to him. I don't want to hear anything he has to say. I'll show him what rejection feels like.

**Reader A:** But... "When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" [Matthew 9:36 NET]

**Reader B:** They made her stand in front of them and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of adultery. In the law Moses commanded us to stone to death such women. What then do you say?" When they persisted in asking him, he stood up straight and replied, "Whoever among you is guiltless may be the first to throw a stone at her." And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you either. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore." [John 8:3b-4,7, 11b NET]

**Actor 7:** Did you see the news? Just one protest after another. Everyone's either offended about something or standing up against something. So much passion! But so much confusion. I feel lost to know what is right and what to do.

**Reader A:** "When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" [Matthew 9:36 NET]

**Reader B:** So when they came to the place that is called "The Skull," they crucified him there, along with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. But Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." [Luke 23:33-34a NET]

*Lights down.*

*Optional Ending:*

*As you move into the wrap-up section.... shift positions, change your posture, break character, and change the lighting.*

**Reader A:** Did some of those statements make you feel uncomfortable?

**Actor 1:** Perhaps, you've made the worst mistake of your life and don't know how to come back from it. You're riddled with guilt and self-loathing.

**Actor 7:** Maybe, you've been the one who has had to struggle through the intense emotional pain and fear of an unwanted or unplanned pregnancy. Maybe, you're haunted by a decision you made long ago.

**Actor 4:** Are you the one who has spent night after night crying into your pillow and fighting with yourself over your desires? And desperately trying to figure out what to do with your strong feelings and whether or not they're sin?

**Reader B:** Know that you are not beyond the grasp of Jesus. 2 Peter 3:9 [NET] says that "The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some regard slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not wish for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." His grace and mercy are so much greater than your wrongs and your guilt and your questions. There is only one way out, and it's Jesus. Jesus is the Way and the Life and the Truth.

**Actor 6:** Stop right now, right here and cry out for his help! And I encourage you to grab someone here today and tell them your story. They want to listen. Everyone here has failed and fallen short of God's glory, but many of us have experienced God pulling us out of our pits, and we want that for you.

**Actor 3:** Maybe, others of you squirmed in your seats because you have felt the exact way that some of these characters did. I encourage you to remember God's compassion for sinners. Remember that you, too, once walked in darkness. And meditate on the fact that only through the gift of God – and not of your own righteousness—are you walking in freedom today.

**Actor 5:** There is not a single one of your temporary rights or personal preferences that is of greater importance than the eternal destiny of a person created by God in his image. *(with sympathy not with accusation)*

**Actor 7:** Compassion is not tolerating the wrong. Compassion is looking beyond the sin and truly seeing the sinner.

**Actor 1:** And if you honestly don't "feel" compassion? God has compassion for your sin, too. Unlike what the world screams, please, don't follow your heart. Instead, pray that God will break your heart for the lost and that you will remember the powerful transformation that happens through the gospel.

**Actor 4:** Memorize and meditate on Scriptures that recount God's grace and mercy and mission. Ask Him to help you see others through the Savior's eyes.

**Reader A:** Sadly, not all who hear God's message of patient forgiveness will accept it. Some will want to think of Him as gracious but will reject His authority and holiness. Not all will choose to turn from their sin and walk with God. Jesus—friend of sinners—did not have a light response when He gave His life for our rebellion, nor will He have a dismissive response in the end.

**Actor 3:** We deeply mourn sin and the consequences that accompany it. Apart from Christ, we would share the same fate. So today, let us come together as a church and use the resources, opportunities, and relationships we have to show Christ's compassion rather than contempt for the people He created.

**Reader A:** "When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" [Matthew 9:36 NET]

*Lights down.*