

Becoming a Community of Shalom Series
Study Guide by Rev. Dale Peterson
Third of Four Presentations ~ Spring 2023

Compassion for Self and Others

Compassion motivates people to go out of their way to relieve the physical, mental, or emotional pains of others and themselves. Compassion is often regarded as being sensitive to the emotional aspects of the suffering of others. In the New Testament, the Biblical Greek Definition of Compassion (splangkh-nid'-zom-ahee) is to be moved as to one's bowels (guts), hence, to be moved deep inside, as Jesus often was. "With self-compassion, we give ourselves the same kindness and care we'd give to a good friend." (Kristen Neff, PHD)

In this session we will explore embracing compassion for ourselves and for others. Compassion involves deep feelings. This session will include an exercise for processing feelings called *RAIN. The acronym stands for:

R. Recognize (feelings) A. Allow (feelings) I. Investigate (feelings) N. Nurture (self)

We will meditate on compassion for ourselves and others using *Lectio Divina* or Divine Readings.

Biblical Texts:

[Colossians 3:12-17](#)

¹²As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

[Matthew 20:29-34](#)

²⁹As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰There were two blind men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" ³¹The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet; but they shouted even more loudly, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!" ³²Jesus stood still and called them, saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³³They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." ³⁴Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

Reflection Questions:

- 1) Describe a time when you experienced compassion from another person.
- 2) When are you moved in your guts (feel compassion) for another person or situation?
- 3) How do you show compassion for yourself?

Guided Meditation on Compassion:

- 1) A time of restful attentiveness.
- 2) Meditation on [Matthew 20:29-34](#) using *Lectio Divina*:

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- 3) Prayerful listening for God’s message to me today.

*An exercise I learned from a class led by Tara Brach and Jack Kornfield.

