



**UNLEASHED**  
Unleashing Compassion  
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August 27, 2017

Discussion Notes  
The Crossing Church  
Las Vegas, Nevada

## OPENING

This week we are continuing a series called “Unleashed.” So often, the biggest thing keeping us from the life God has for us is actually us. What would it look like if we, as a church and as individuals, fully unleashed God’s purpose in our lives? What if we pursued God fully and prayed completely over that pursuit? We are embarking on a journey to discover what living an unleashed life looks like as God uses prayer to release His power in us. Our goal is to spiritually re-engage our hearts and souls and realign with God after the distractions of the summer.

## SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**Matthew 22:36-38** “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

**Isaiah 58:1-11 (NLT)** Shout with the voice of a trumpet blast. Shout aloud! Don’t be timid. Tell my people Israel of their sins! Yet they act so pious! They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to learn all about me. They act like a righteous nation that would never abandon the laws of its God. They ask me to take action on their behalf, pretending they want to be near me. “We have fasted before you!” they say. “Why aren’t you impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don’t even notice it!” “I will tell you why! It’s because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast you keep oppressing your workers. What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me ... Do you really think this will please the Lord? No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned, lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free and remove the chains that bind people. Share your food with the hungry and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them and do not hide from relatives who need your help. Then your salvation will come like the dawn and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind. Then when you call, the Lord will answer, ‘Yes, I am here,’ he will quickly reply. Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon. The Lord will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry, and restoring our strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring.”

**Hebrews 13:13-16 (Msg)** So let’s go outside, where Jesus is, where the action is – not trying to be privileged insiders .... This “insider world” is not our home .... Let’s take our place outside with Jesus .... Share what you have with others. God takes particular pleasure in acts of worship – a different kind of sacrifice – that takes place in kitchens, and workplaces and on the streets.

## OBSERVATION

The Jewish people had 630 commandments to ensure that everything was okay between them and God. They showed up for worship every day, they studied the Law, they were going through all of the motions, but they were not bearing any fruit. They looked good on the outside like white-washed tombs but were full of dry bones on the inside. They wanted to impress God by their spiritual activities, but they were not motivated by hearts of love. The early Christian church was different. They were committed to unleashing compassion into the world. We find that God’s heart of compassion has always been there and He wants to see it demonstrated through us.

**Question:** When were you just going through the motions of faith? What did you do to change that behavior?

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

## APPLICATION

God tells us in Isaiah 58 that He wants us to free those who are wrongly imprisoned or oppressed, to lighten the load of those around us, to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, and clothe the naked. When we feel spiritually numb or stuck in our walk with Jesus, we may not be giving ourselves away to others.

**Question:** If you are feeling stagnant in your spiritual walk, why do you think that is? What specific plans do you have to revitalize your journey with Jesus?

We need to continually learn about God, attend church services, and join in small group fellowships. We can invite others to church services, pray for others on a consistent basis, witness about Jesus. When we do this God says, "When you call on Me, I will answer."

**Question:** In what ways are you currently unleashing your compassion? Who has recently shown compassion to you? How did it feel?

The benefits of releasing our compassion are numerous and life-changing: God says, "Our lights will shine out in the darkness. He will guide us continually, give us living water, and restore our strength. We will be like well-watered gardens and ever-flowing springs." How wonderfully refreshing and empowering that would be and it happens when we unleash our compassion for others.

**Question:** Tell us about a time when you were especially refreshed and empowered by the Holy Spirit? What were the circumstances?

Unleashing compassion is not something we **DO**, it's something we **ARE**. It is in our makeup, our very being, to want to help others through their trials or circumstances. It is because Jesus resides within us, but sometimes we need a little help in unleashing it outside of ourselves or our families. Three ways we may do this are:

1) Simply opening our eyes to the people who live next door. What are their needs? What trials are they enduring?

**Question:** What was the last time you made an effort to find out what your neighbor may need? What did you do? Did they need a baby sitter for an evening? Did their grass need mowing? A shoulder?

2) Opening our eyes to our community. The Crossing offers numerous opportunities to serve organizations in our Las Vegas community. There are always projects for which they need help, or clients who are hungry, or children who need fostering or mentoring, or prisoners who need to hear our witness.

**Question:** What community projects are you volunteering for on a regular basis? What is keeping you from regularly volunteering for a cause near to your heart? What commitment are you willing to make?

3) Opening our eyes and hearts to the needs of people across the world. We live in a blessed nation with opportunities to improve our living standards through our own effort. But this is not true in many countries. We are a very generous nation and our church shares in extending love, helping hands and financial support overseas. There are opportunities to extend our own hands and hearts to people who need a decent shelter, a regular meal, a kind touch, a new school, and a church where they can worship. And we can make those things possible simply by unleashing our compassion and concern for them.

**Question:** What countries would you be interested in visiting for the glory of God? What is preventing you from making that commitment?

We often think of sacrifice as if we are martyrs of old who suffered for their faith, but Jesus is asking us instead to leave our privileged lives for a time and take a place outside of ourselves with Him. It is an act of worship to help others and enter into their homes, workplaces, sadness, and the prison of their minds to bring light.

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we are so involved in our own lives and concerns, that we forget Your priorities are the needs of people around us – those next door, in our community, and throughout the world. Our own peace comes not from worldly endeavors for our own sakes, but from unleashing our compassion for others. Help us to find ways and the motivation to do that. In Jesus' name. Amen.