SBC Chapel Val Gonzales

7 August 2014 Counselor

**Becoming Empathetic Disciples of Jesus Christ**

***Romans 12:15***

**Topic:** Empathy

**Subject:** How can we have genuine empathy for others?

**Complement:** Be with people during the happy and sad times of life.

**Purpose:** The listeners will become empathetic to meet the needs of others.

# Introduction

### Interest: [Empathy is feeling for others.]

#### The yard sign read, “Puppies for sale.” Among the inquirers was a young boy. “How much are the puppies?” he asked the man. “They’re $25 each.” “I have only $2.25 but can I see them anyway?” the boy asked. “Of course.” The lad eyes danced as he saw the five bundles of fur. “I heard one of them has a bad leg,” he noted. “Yes, I am afraid that this one is crippled for life,” the man responded. “That’s the one I want!” the boy exclaimed. “But he’s not going to ever walk right,” the owner noted. At that point the boy lifted his pant leg to reveal his own crippled leg. The owner responded, “Please take him for free.”

#### The boy exemplified empathy—the ability to feel for others.

### Need: Do you care for those around you?

### Subject: How can we have genuine empathy for others?

### Text: “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn” (Rom. 12:15 NIV).

# I. Empathy suggests that presence is indispensable.

## We can too often get caught up in conferences, seminars, reading, and a host of other things to do.

## But isn’t it more important simply to care for others—listen to their stories, spend time with them, and care—we can’t empathize with people if we aren’t around.

## This is what traditionally we have called pastoral visitation.

## Romans 12

# II. Empathy suggests keen sensitivity to another’s emotion.

## Rejoice when someone rejoices; mourn when they mourn.

## Listen attentively and ask creatively.

## Empathy is seen when a man and a woman genuinely like to shop with each other.

### A man goes shopping, finds the prize, pays the price, and goes home.

### A woman goes shopping, finds the prize, wonders if a better quality is available elsewhere or at least the same object at a cheaper price, so she talks about it with her friend with her since shopping is primarily a social adventure. She might not even bring home the object, but that doesn’t matter. She has been able to relate to others in it, so it is deemed a success.

### The highly unusual occurrence is when a man and a woman genuinely enjoy the experience together, despite their differences.

## Competition hinders the development of empathy.

# III. Empathy suggests the willingness to express love.

## Joy shared is increased; sorrow shared is diminished: “Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep” (NLT).

## Jesus exemplified empathy.

### “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36 NLT).

### Immediately afterwards Jesus declared, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields” (9:37-38).

### Jesus cared how people felt and thought.

## There exists a huge difference between ministry as a profession and ministry as a ministry!

## John Bradford was imprisoned for his Protestant faith during the monarchy of Elisabeth of Tudor. As he saw another prisoner being led to execution, he declared, “There, but for the grace of Christ, go I.” If we don’t recognize God’s grace in our lives, we won’t empathize with others.

# Conclusion

### Demonstrate empathy with grace, mercy, and forgiveness (MI).

### We need at least three qualities to show empathy:

#### We cannot show empathy without presence.

#### We cannot show empathy without sensitivity.

#### We cannot show empathy without love.

### Remember that your life is not something you can take pride in, but you are a recipient of God’s grace.

### Jeremiah 9:23-24

This is what the LORD says:

 “Don’t let the wise boast in their wisdom,

 or the powerful boast in their power,

 or the rich boast in their riches.

24 But those who wish to boast

 should boast in this alone:

 that they truly know me and understand that I am the LORD

 who demonstrates unfailing love

 and who brings justice and righteousness to the earth,

 and that I delight in these things.

 I, the LORD, have spoken!