

# Unsanctified Compassion

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21st Jun, 2026

Sermon Audio file

WHEN LOVE GETS IN THE WAY

Ungodly Compassion vs. God-Shaped Compassion

Sermon Outline & Discussion Guide | Matthew 16:13-23 | Father's Day

Sermon Outline

Big idea: When our compassion is not shaped by Christ, it will eventually stand in the way of Christ. Love that feels kind can still block the very growth, healing, and obedience God is working toward.

## Introduction: The Satnav Illustration

Picture a satnav set to an “avoidance” mode — no left, no right, no motorways, no people — until it can no longer find any road at all.

Love that avoids every cost, risk, or discomfort can do the same thing to a person’s life: it blocks the very path God is offering.

Definition: ungodly compassion — love that protects people from the very thing that would make them stronger. Not because love is bad, but because it can be misdirected.

## Scripture: Matthew 16:13-23

Jesus asks the disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” and then, “But who do you say I am?”

Peter answers, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” — and Jesus blesses him and names him the rock on which the church will be built.

Jesus then tells the disciples he must go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed, and on the third day be raised.

Peter rebukes him: “Far be it from you, Lord. This shall never happen to you.”

Jesus turns and says, “Get behind me, Satan. You are a hindrance to me. For you are not set on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

## Lesson 1 — The Question That Reveals the Heart

If we don’t see Jesus clearly, we won’t love people wisely.

Everything begins with “Who do you say I am?” — a question about identity, not just religion.

How we see Jesus shapes how we see and love everyone else:

Only a gentle teacher → we avoid hard truths

Only a judge → we avoid compassion

Only a comforter → we avoid sacrifice

Only a rescuer → we avoid responsibility

Ungodly compassion hides truth to spare feelings; God-shaped compassion speaks truth to heal futures.

Jesus corrects Peter's vision before he corrects Peter's behavior — compassion always flows from who we believe Jesus is.

## **Lesson 2 — Revelation Builds True Compassion**

Emotion may feel like love, but only truth knows how to love.

Peter is practical and well-meaning — the same instinct that drew his sword in the garden also made him resist the cross.

Peter was looking at the present; Jesus was looking at eternity.

Emotion reacts; revelation responds. Emotion protects people from discomfort; revelation prepares people for growth.

Illustration: a parent who ties a child's shoe forever isn't helping — they're preventing strength.

Ungodly compassion gives comfort; only God-shaped compassion gives healing.

## **Lesson 3 — The Cross Tests Compassion**

Real compassion must embrace the cross, not avoid it. If compassion avoids the cross, it becomes opposition.

Jesus reveals the road: following God involves real cost — loss, sacrifice, obedience that hurts.

Peter means well, but "meaning well is not doing well."

"Get behind me, Satan" — Jesus isn't calling Peter evil; he's naming the role Peter has stepped into: an accuser pulling Jesus off God's path.

## **Where Misdirected Love Shows Up Today**

### **In personal relationships**

Protecting people from consequences

Avoiding hard conversations

Rescuing people God is trying to grow

Prioritizing peace over truth

### **In the church**

Avoiding hard truths and accountability

Avoiding calling sin what it actually is

Prioritizing attendance over transformation and discipleship

Weak compassion produces weak people; God-shaped compassion produces a whole person.

## **The "Get Behind Me" Moment**

Peter tried to protect Jesus from the cross; Jesus embraced the cross to save Peter.

Jesus didn't just die for us — he died instead of us.

Parenting illustration: stopping a toddler from touching an electrical socket, or letting go of the bike seat so a child learns to ride — love sometimes means allowing discomfort, not preventing it.

Reflection questions raised in the sermon: Where am I protecting someone from the growth God wants for them? Where am I resisting God's path because it's uncomfortable? Where has my compassion become a hindrance?

## **Closing Charge**

Love people towards the cross, not away from it.

Love people into obedience, not out of it.

A child needs love and correction; an adult needs courageous truth — God gives both.

He loves us too much to protect us from the cross; he sent his Son to carry it and calls us to follow