Compassion is a story that everyone enjoys hearing about. In the circle around Jesus we sit at the table with one another and learn to embrace each other’s stories, even when those stories raise eyebrows. Jesus does not allow us to embrace stories of only those who are similar – we are to love all those who sit at Jesus’ table.

Throughout the ministry of Jesus he gathered an unusual collection of people. Some had done wicked things – like prostitution and theft – and they needed forgiveness and restoration. Some had fallen victim to tragic fate – like disability and poverty – and need healing and help.

What Jesus did was to offer hospitality to persons on the edges of society. Whether on the edges or not, Jesus acted toward people with compassion. He offered people a place at his table. To love God and to love people means to offer mercy to all, and especially those with deep needs.

Some women, whose stories are tucked in Luke 7-8, are part of the community of Jesus. They illustrate for us the story of Jesus’ compassionate love for others. The Gospels show a genre: a story of compassion. It has three strophes.

1. My Grief is Observed by Jesus
   Luke 7.11-17

2. I See Jesus’ Empathy and I Know That He Cares
   Luke 7.36-50

3. I Am Restored by Jesus’ Action
   Luke 8.1-4
The Cycle of Compassion

Not only do these women have stories to tell, they have a challenge for us: if we are going to love God and love people, we, like Jesus will have to love by observing grief, empathizing, and acting compassionately. Compassion is not only a story to tell but also a cycle to repeat.

Matthew 25.31-46

“"The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.” Exodus 34.6-7

• **We Need to Love Our Family:**

  *In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.*
  Ephesians 5.28

• **We Need to Love the Church:**

*Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.* Galatians 6.10

• **We Need to Love the Needy:**

15 *Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.* 16 *If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?* 17 *In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.* James 2.15-17; 1.27

• **We Need to Love Wrongdoers:**

35 *But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.* 36 *Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.* Luke 6.35-36

  *Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”* Luke 23.34