

Compassion as Our Compass

September 27, 2026

Rev Roger Mock

So Brigid planned the topic for the talk today – *Compassion as Our Compass* – but hadn't gotten too far with it by the time her daughter-in-law Lauren had gone into labor. She did send me an excellent piece by Mark Nepo, though, from his book of daily meditations called ***The Book of Wonder***.

It's the entry for **November 25:**

“Compassion:

“I have just three things to teach: simplicity, patience, compassion. These are your greatest treasures. compassionate toward yourself, you reconcile all beings in the world. [attributed to the philosopher known as Lao Tzu]

“At first, we might ask, how can being compassionate to yourself reconcile all beings in the world?

“To understand the gift of this, we need to recall the analogy of the spoked wheel, in which each life is a separate and unique spoke, and yet all lives, like those folks, meet in a common Hub or center. That's why when we tend our deepest center, we care for all souls.

“Another powerful way to realize our interconnectedness is to imagine the Human family as a stand of Aspens growing by a river. Though each tree appears to be growing independently, not attached to the others, beneath the soil, out of view, the roots of all the trees exist as one enormous root. And so, like these trees, our soul's growth, while appearing to be independent, is intimately connected to the health of those around us. For our Spirits are entwined at center, out of view.

“Once realizing this, it becomes clear that we have no choice but to embrace the health of our neighbors as part of our own health.... I know these things to

be true: in cutting off strangers, we cut off ourselves; and choking roots, we choke our own growth; in loving strangers, we love ourselves.

“Having come this far, I believe that Lao Tzu's third instruction tells us that if we are aware of our own suffering with the wish to relieve it, we will overcome distrust and reestablish a close relationship with all other living things. In deep and lasting ways, when we heal ourselves, we heal the world. For as the body is only as healthy as its individual cells, the world is only as healthy as its individual souls.”

[above excerpt from *The Book of Wonder* by Mark Nepo]

In Buddhism, they have a metaphor called **Indra's Net** or Web. In the realm of the god Indra is a vast net that stretches infinitely in all directions. In each "eye" of the net is a single brilliant, perfect jewel. Each jewel also reflects every other jewel, infinite in number, and each of the reflected images of the jewels bears the image of all the other jewels — infinity to infinity. Whatever affects one jewel effects them all.

Compassion is a wonderful word. It's a little different than the word love, right? Feel the energy of each of those words and how they differ.

What comes up for you?

Love: a broad emotion or state of being involving strong attachment, care, and fondness. It is often directed at specific people, such as family, partners, or friends.

Compassion is often described as the ability to recognize suffering—and respond with care. You might say that compassion is love in action. It is a moving out from the heart center and an enveloping, or a drawing into our sphere of the one in need. In compassion we no longer see the separation between us but know the other's need as our own.

Jon Mundy, who will be with us in a few weeks, has been studying and teaching from A Course in Miracles since before it was even published, having been close to Helen Shucman, the woman who received this work – she believed, directly from Jesus. He

gave a talk here once about a different GPS – he said it stood for God’s Plan for Salvation.

Salvation – kind of a loaded word, huh? In most traditional Christian teaching, we’re told salvation was achieved for us when God sent his only son to die for our sins, paying the apparent price for the original sin that would otherwise have meant eternal separation from God.

A Course in Miracles corrects this idea. The problem of apparent separation from God is still central, but we can underline the word *apparent*. It is not possible to be separate from God which is in fact All That Is. It is, however, possible to believe you are separate and thus have an experience of a world that has lost its bearings, like a ship in a turbulent sea like the Atlantic Ocean right now, without a captain, or perhaps with a lot of little would-be captains running around deck all with a different idea of how to steer this thing.

So, what is God’s Plan for Salvation that will return us to Eden, to remembering who we are, to saving the ship? The *Course* says,

“Salvation must reverse the mad belief in separate thoughts and separate bodies, which lead separate lives and go separate ways.”

From **Lesson 100 : *My part is essential to God’s plan for salvation***

“You are indeed essential to God’s plan. Without your joy, God’s joy is incomplete. Without your smile, the world cannot be saved. While you are sad, the light that God Himself appointed as the means to save the world is dim and lusterless, and no one laughs because all laughter can but echo yours.

“You are indeed essential to God’s plan. Just as your light increases every light that shines in Heaven, so your joy on earth calls to all minds to let their sorrows go, and take their place beside you in God’s plan.”

([ACIM, W-100.3:1–4:2](#))

We go back to the center of the wheel, the hub where all souls are one, and most importantly where our minds are one with Divine Mind. We release our own faulty ideas of a separate mind, and we appeal to that *capital M* Mind. Both the *Course* and traditional Christianity call that the Holy Spirit. In Judaism it's Sophia. In Buddhism perhaps it's Indra. And the *Course* adds, it's "*nothing more than your own Right Mind.*"

What's implied is that we are currently out of our minds. So here's what we do – We stop. Stop trying to steer the boat. Stop in our tracks, pull out our compass and set it down on a log and wait for it to point the direction. We say *Thy will, not mine be done*. We tune into that Divine Presence within and ask it what do we do now? I've run out of ideas. My friend is suffering. My world is imploding, coming apart at the seams. The very act of turning within to Source is, first, our own call for self-healing. And remember what Mark Nepo said – "when we tend our deepest center, we care for all souls." It's why the Metta Prayer begins first with ourselves.

The answer we receive, I believe, will always be some form of Love and Compassion, because that is what God, what Source is. Compassion from one soul seeds the collective. It affects the whole web; it's reflected by every other jewel in Indra's Net; it nourishes the whole root system. And from that center God/Source/Divine Mind/the Holy Spirit will lead us unfailingly to love and to right action, to compassion.
