

Pass on Compassion

John 13:34

Introduction:

Compassion is a term that describes both a feeling and the action triggered by that feeling.

Sharing the feelings of others, especially feelings of sorrow or anguish, also feeling that someone needs leniency or forgiveness is explained through multiple words like sympathetic, merciful, or kind.

These feelings trigger acts of gentle clemency, pity, and mercy.

The result when the feelings are accompanied by the appropriate action is compassion; being gracious, having pity or mercy, showing kindness, and giving forgiveness.

There are three details about compassion that we need to understand.

Detail number one: We receive information, are moved by the information, and pass on compassion in response.

Detail number two: Compassion is one facet of the love Jesus commanded.

Detail number three: "In scriptural usage, compassion is always both a feeling and the appropriate action based on that feeling."¹

I. God is Compassionate.

Asaph reviewed the history of God's people, in Psalm 78, instructing the hearers to listen to the lessons, learn to obey God, and lend their understanding of God's truth and wisdom to their children.

The Israelites rebelled against God by disregarding his miracles, refusing to obey God, complaining against God when they doubted him, lying to God by their insincere commitment to Him, being faithless, and worshipping other gods.

God became angry with them; He caused them to suffer failure and terror; He killed many, allowed many of them to be killed, left from dwelling among them, allowed the Ark to be captured, and rejected the northern tribe of Ephraim.

God felt for his people, so he continued to help them.

God miraculously delivered his people from Egypt, divided the Red Sea, guided them by a cloud and pillar of fire, provided water from a rock, fed them with manna and quail, forgave their sins, settled them in the Promised land, rescued them from their enemies, chose Jerusalem as the place for his Temple, and chose David to rule over them.

Listen to Asaph's words about God in Psalm 78:38, "But He, **being compassionate**, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them; And often He restrained His anger And did not arouse all His wrath. Thus He remembered that they were but flesh, A wind that passes and does not return."

When God sees humanity, his creation of flesh, though he can be angered by our sins, he is moved to restrain his anger and wrath.

He then passes on compassion and forgiveness.

David, in Psalm 103, wrote in verse 13, "Just as a father has compassion on his children, **So the Lord has compassion** on those who fear/revere Him."

God is described as a compassionate father to those who respect him.

¹ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "[Compassion](#)," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 504.

When he sees their respect for him, he is moved by the information and responds with compassion.

The prophet Hosea explained God's case against Israel, describing their sin as deceit, ungodly alliances, dishonesty, boasting, pride, and idolatry (Hosea chapters 11-13).

Their sins brought on poverty, physical death, and exile.

God saw their suffering and gave the invitation for them to realize their helplessness, confess and forsake their sin, and return to God.

God asked, "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah (ad-ma(h))? How can I treat you like Zeboiim (Z-bo-eem)? **My heart is turned over within Me, All My compassions are kindled.** I will not execute My fierce anger; I will not destroy Ephraim again. For I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, And I will not come in wrath" (Hosea 11:8 and 9).

God is compassionate. He feels compassion for humanity. He gives compassion to people.

II. Jesus Christ Exemplified God's Compassion.

Jesus illustrated God's compassion in his preaching and healing.

Fresh on our minds from Jeff's lesson this morning, Matthew 9:35-38, illustrates what Jesus saw, what Jesus felt, and what Jesus called for by way of his compassion.

"Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. **Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.** Then (He called for more workers) He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.'"

Jesus personified God's compassion in his concern for lost humanity.

Look at Luke 19:41-44; See the compassion of Jesus, verse 41, "When He approached Jerusalem, **He saw the city** and wept over it, saying, 'If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, *because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.*'"

Unbelief makes Jesus weep, to cry freely and profusely from sadness or distress.

Jesus demonstrated God's compassion in his sacrifice on the cross.

Romans 5:8, a familiar passage to many, "God demonstrates *His own love toward us*, in that **while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**"

God demonstrated His love. Jesus demonstrated God's compassion.

These demonstrations were done when we were still sinners—disobedient to God.

God and His Son saw us as sinners; they were moved to demonstrate love for us; thus, God sent His and Christ died for us.

Jesus Christ exemplified God's compassion.

III. The Church is to Demonstrate Compassion.

Recall the three details we need to understand about compassion.

Detail number one: We receive information, are moved by the information, and pass on compassion in response.

Detail number two: Compassion is one facet of the love Jesus commanded.

Detail number three: “In scriptural usage compassion is always both a feeling and the appropriate action based on that feeling.”²

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be **comforted**. Blessed are the **gentle**, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the **merciful**, for they shall receive **mercy**” (Matthew 5:4-7).

Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, **that you love one another**, even as I have loved you, that **you also love one another**” (John 13:34).

Jesus loved us with compassion.

He commanded that His followers love one another as he loved each of them.

James exhorted, “Obey the royal law commanded in the Scriptures,” then he quoted, the command, “**You shall love your neighbor as yourself**” (James 2:8).

In the passage, James shows that to break this law is to break all laws, and to show no mercy is to receive no mercy.

Then, James contrasts having only head faith (speaking compassionate words without actions) with having head, heart, and hand faith (like Abraham and Rahab).

Abraham considered what God was able to do for his son, he believed God, and “he offered up Isaac his son on the altar.”

Rahab considered the messengers, “received the messengers and sent them out by another way.”

John instructs “children of God” who are his own “beloved...little children, let us not **love** with word or with tongue, but **in deed and truth**” (1 John 3:18).

When we see a brother in need, we must not close our hearts against him.

We must even be ready to lay down our lives for the brethren.

“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (Colossians 3:12).

If you are a Christian, you...

-have been chosen by God.

-are holy-set apart by Him for Him

-are beloved-dearly loved by God.

God wants you to put on compassion, one facet of love, and share it freely.

The church is to demonstrate compassion.

Application:

Look at God’s compassion; see how he looked at people, loved people, and acted in favor of people.

Look at Jesus’ exemplification of God’s compassion in his preaching and healing, his concern for the lost, and in his sacrifice of himself for the sins of men.

Look at how the men taught directly by Jesus instructed the church to demonstrate compassion.

² Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “[Compassion](#),” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 504.

Feel for the people who are sinners, you have been there, you know what you needed; beyond this, you received an invitation to come out of sin, so extend that invitation to them.

Feel for the people who do not know God, those who are lost because of unbelief, and those who struggle to accept God's love.

Comfort the mourning, be gentle with the weak and fragile, physically feed the hungry and spiritually feed "those who hunger and thirst for righteousness," show mercy, and show love for one another by the deeds and truth.

Conclusion:

If you are a Christian, you have received God's compassion and received Jesus' sacrifice for your sins.

Be motivated by God's compassion to pass on compassion.

Demonstrate God's compassion through good deeds and teaching truth.

If you are not yet a Christian, receive this information: God is compassionate. He loved you so much that he sent his Son to be a living example of his compassion. He demonstrated his love for you by sending his Son to die for your sins and your forgiveness.

Be moved by God's compassion to seek his will and obey him. Hear his message (Ephesians 1:13), believe the message (Acts 4:4), repent and return to God (Acts 3:19), confess Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9), and be "baptized...for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38).

Pass on compassion by feeling for others and actually doing something to help them.

Everyone needs compassion, a love that's never failing. Let mercy fall on [us]. Everyone needs forgiveness, the kindness of a Savior. The Hope of nations.

Come, receive compassion as we sing.