

FULL OF COMPASSION!

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We've talked for a couple of weeks about prayer ... especially for others.

One of the challenges of prayer is that we don't get to see God or Jesus. We don't hear them either.

So we may struggle to really get to know God. Yet since God and the Lord Jesus are the greatest and most interesting personalities in the universe ... it's worthwhile getting to know them well!

How?

Even someone as righteous as Job didn't come to know God for a long time.

He lost his possessions ... family ... friends ... his health suffered. He blamed God consistently!

Eventually God intervened and showed Job how little he really knew!

Job 42:1-6

1 Then Job answered the Lord and said:

2 **"I know that You can do everything,**

And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.

3 **You asked, Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?'**

Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,

Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

4 Listen, please, and let me speak;

You said, I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'

5 **"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,**

But now my eye sees You.

6 Therefore I abhor myself,

And repent in dust and ashes."

Job was probably somewhere in the region of 70 years old and was a very wise man. However ... Job's theology ... his opinions of God — were wrong.

Dake's Bible lists 74 false accusations of God by Job!

We have to be careful of some of our views!

I mentioned previously about a friend that we had at Church called Debbie — how shocked she was when I suggested that God must like running!? She thought that e just sat on His throne throughout eternity.

The main way we come to know God is through the scriptures. And the main way we come to know the Father better is by looking at Jesus ... in action.

John 14:5-10

5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

6 Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

7 “**If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also;** and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”

8 Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”

9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? **He who has seen Me has seen the Father;** so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

10 **Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.**

If we see Jesus ... we know the Father.

Hebrews 1:1-4

1 **God,** who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,

2 **has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,** whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

3 **who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person,** and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Jesus is the express image of His Father.

Hebrews 1:3 New (NCV)

3 The Son reflects the glory of God and shows exactly what God is like.

That's where the 4 Gospels are a gold mine!

They give us day-to-day insight in Jesus' teaching ... His acts ... His miracles ... how He dealt with people ... what made Him angry ... what pleased Him.

And what we see in Jesus' life shows us exactly how the Father is. "Two peas in a pod".

There are lots of areas we could look at. I want to focus today on one characteristic that should be very encouraging to us — THE COMPASSION OF GOD.

Some people think of God as remote ... harsh ...distant ... unfeeling ... cruel. Hard to reach. Vindictive ... happy to let us struggle in life — "It's good for us!" But ... that's not true.

Is that what the scripture reveals?

Matthew 9:35-38

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

36 But when He saw the multitudes, **He was moved with compassion for them,** because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then He said to His disciples, "**The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few.**

38 **Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest."**

Jesus was moved with compassion. It's emotional ... a feeling ... with a determination to take action.

Compassion is different to pity or sympathy. A feeling ... but we may not be able to help? Compassion normally drives someone to action.

Jesus didn't just look coldly and logically at the problem ... He didn't just decide to act because it was the rational thing to do.

He was moved emotionally. Com (with) + passion.

And that's what the Father is like. His heart yearns toward us! He's passionate about us!

Matthew 14:13-14

13 **When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself.** But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. (*Jesus wanted peace*)

14 **And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.**

Jesus wanted some peace. Did He react angrily? Was He in a temper?

No. His heart went out. And led to action — healing (plus feeding 5,000).

Jesus met all of their needs. Including physical. Just like His Father.

Matthew 15:29-38

29 Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there.

30 **Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them.**

31 So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

32 **Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."**

33 Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?"

34 Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?"

And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish."

35 **So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.**

36 **And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude.**

37 **So they all ate and were filled**, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left.

38 Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus had compassion — He was moved to action. He met needs — even though He was not asked to. Jesus is the express image of the Father.

Matthew 20:29-34

29 **Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him.**

30 And behold, **two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!”**

31 Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, **“Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!”**

32 So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

33 They said to Him, “Lord, that our eyes may be opened.”

34 **So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight**, and they followed Him.

Jesus had compassion. He was not remote ... unfeeling ... just “another miracle”. He was not under obligation.

Jesus’ heart went out to the people ... just as the Father’s does.

Mark 1:40-45

40 **Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.”**

41 **Then Jesus, moved with compassion**, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.”

42 As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.

43 And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once,

44 and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

45 However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.

Again ... Jesus was moved with compassion. This is Jesus' nature ... just as He is. He is not under any obligation to do these things.

Jesus didn't just sigh with frustration ... or "okay ... it's my duty". He was moved ... with emotion.

Compassion is part of God's nature.

Mark 9:14-27

14 **And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them.**

15 Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to Him, greeted Him.

16 And He asked the scribes, "What are you discussing with them?"

17 **Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit.**

18 And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not."

19 He answered him and said, "**O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you?**" How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me."

20 Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

21 So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood.

22 And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. **But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.**"

23 Jesus said to him, "**If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.**"

24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!"

26 Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead."

27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

Jesus had frustration here. But not at the sick person. He was frustrated at the LACK OF FAITH!

Of course ... He had compassion on the father and his son.

Example after example. Jesus' nature — not something He switched on and off.

Luke 7:11-16

11 Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd.

12 **And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow.**

And a large crowd from the city was with her.

13 When the Lord saw her, **He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."**

14 Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. **And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise."**

15 So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

16 Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, **"A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people."**

The widow's only son. No one asked Jesus to raise her son from the dead. Jesus simply had compassion on this tragic situation.

And Jesus is JUST LIKE THE FATHER.

Some see the God of the Old Testament as harsh and vindictive. But:

- It was "Jesus" — the God of the Old Testament in nearly every instance
- Full of compassion — always

Psalms 86:11-17

11 Teach me Your way, O Lord;

I will walk in Your truth;

Unite my heart to fear Your name. (**"Fear" — hear and obey**)

12 I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,

And I will glorify Your name forevermore.

13 For great is Your mercy toward me,

And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

14 O God, the proud have risen against me,
And a mob of violent men have sought my life,
And have not set You before them.

15 But You, **O Lord, are a God full of compassion**, and gracious,
Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.

16 Oh, turn to me, and have mercy on me!
Give Your strength to Your servant,
And save the son of Your maidservant.

17 Show me a sign for good,
That those who hate me may see it and be ashamed,
Because You, Lord, have helped me and comforted me.

A psalm of David. He says God is “a God full of compassion”.

Psalms 145:8-9

8 **The Lord is gracious and full of compassion,**

Slow to anger and great in mercy.

9 The Lord is good to all,
And His tender mercies are over all His works.

Jesus is “gracious and full of compassion”. Not just “somewhat
compassionate” — GOD IS FULL OF COMPASSION. MORE THAN ENOUGH!
God’s disposition is to show favour. Yes. That’s the God of the Old Testament.

Psalms 103:11-18

11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,
So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;
12 As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

13 **As a father pities his children,**
So the Lord pities those who fear Him.

14 For He knows our frame;
He remembers that we are dust.

15 As for man, his days are like grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.

16 For the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
And its place remembers it no more.

17 **But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting**
On those who fear Him, (hear and obey Him)

And His righteousness to children's children,
18 To such as keep His covenant,
And to those who remember His commandments to do them.

God understands us. Knows our weaknesses and frailties. There are no surprises.

Jesus came and experienced life first-hand ... including being executed!

We can always depend on God's compassion — Jesus' compassion — when we approach.

We're not looking for a reward because we've been so righteous and "deserving".

Appealing to God's compassion — He is the same — yesterday ... today ... and for always.

Hebrews 4:14-16

14 **Seeing then that we have a great High Priest** who has passed through the heavens, **Jesus the Son of God**, let us hold fast our confession.

15 **For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses**, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

16 **Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:15(KCV)

15 ... **who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities**;

When we follow Jesus through the Gospels ... we can see how approachable He was — how ready to stop and help those with needs ... how quickly He was moved with compassion.

JUST LIKE HIS FATHER.

Hence we can come boldly to the Throne of Grace — to receive help whenever we're struggling!

The Father is like Jesus and both are moved with compassion towards us.