

# Bowels of Compassion

“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.”  
Hebrews 13:3

## Introduction:

1. This morning we considered the Lord’s priorities for our lives in the simple words, “I Am Third.”
2. Perfection as saints, families, and a church require that we learn, study, and apply the grace of compassion.
3. We are to show compassions (plural) toward others, as the Lord does toward us (Lam 3:22; Zech 7:8-10).
4. As usual, those who have most of it will hear and change the most, and those who have little will not hear.
5. We want to emphasize the personal compassion of one to another in our church and outside our church.

## I. What Is It?

- A. **Empathy.** The power of projecting one’s personality (and so fully comprehending) the object of contemplation.
- B. **Sympathy.** The quality or state of being affected by the condition of another with a feeling similar or corresponding to that of the other; the fact or capacity of entering into or sharing the feelings of another or others; fellow-feeling. Also, a feeling or frame of mind evoked by and responsive to some external influence.
- C. **Compassion.** Suffering together with another, participation in suffering; fellow-feeling, sympathy. The feeling or emotion, when a person is moved by the suffering or distress of another, and by the desire to relieve it; pity that inclines one to spare or to succour.
- D. **Tenderhearted.** Having a tender heart; easily moved by fear, pity, sorrow, or love; timid; pitiful, compassionate; loving; impressionable.
- E. **Pitiful.** Full of or characterized by pity; compassionate, merciful, tender.
- F. It is the sympathy a woman naturally feels at the sight of a crying baby (Ex 2:6; Is 49:15).
- G. It is the opposite of killing old and stooped men, or young men and maidens (II Chr 36:17).
- H. It is the bowels of compassion to feel the needs of others and alleviate them (I John 3:17).
- I. It is the sympathetic understanding of the same fears, pain, and doubts of others (Heb 5:2).
- J. Paul defines it as the thoughts, feelings, and commiseration of one person being closely connected with another person in their adversities (Heb 13:3).
- K. Peter helps our definition by exhorting to compassion, love, pity, and courtesy (I Peter 3:8).
- L. It is restoring others in humility and fear, not in sanctimonious condescension (Gal 6:1-3).
- M. It is rejoicing with the honored and weeping with those suffering (Rom 12:15; I Cor 12:26).
- N. It is being tenderhearted to one another, contrary to all the works of the flesh (Eph 4:31-32).
- O. Sympathy and compassion shown toward the brethren will be remembered (Matt 25:31-46).

## II. Who Had It?

- A. God had and has it toward His people (Ps 78:38; 86:15; 145:8). See specially Ps 103:13-14.
- B. Our Lord Jesus is always the greatest example for any aspect of godliness or righteousness.
  1. The crowds with problems evoked compassion (Matt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:29-34).
  2. Jesus does more than save legally; He also saves practically (Is 53:4 cp Matt 8:14-17).
  3. He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities – empathetic sympathy (Heb 4:15).
  4. He saw friends crying over Lazarus, so the Spirit tells us, “Jesus wept” (John 11:35).
  5. When He saw the widow of Nain burying her son, He had compassion (Luk 7:11-15).
  6. A leper found Jesus very compassionate to his horrible, diseased case (Mark 1:40-45).
  7. Jesus had great compassion on a father and his devil-possessed son (Mark 9:17-27).
  8. Jesus had compassion on a poor widow woman in her giving to God (Luke 21:1-4).

- C. Joseph asked for some from the chief butler, but he did not show him any (Gen 40:14-15).
- D. Solomon requested and received an understanding heart to judge the people (I Kgs 3:9,12).
- E. Ebedmelech, an Ethiopian eunuch, had compassion on Jeremiah in a dungeon (Jer 38:6-13).
- F. A king had compassion on his servant, but the servant did not to another (Matt 18:21-35).
- G. A certain Samaritan had compassion on a wounded Jew left for dead (Luke 10:25-37).
- H. We must be as compassionate to repentant sinners as the prodigal's father (Luke 15:11-32).
- I. Onesiphorus is not very well known, but he was compassionate to Paul (II Tim 1:16-18).
- J. Consider how the Hebrew saints showed compassion to their brother Paul (Heb 10:34).

### III. How Do We Get It?

- A. First, we must remember and think about others and our dutiful opportunity to serve them.
  - 1. We go through our day believing "I am third." We face all choices with "I am third."
  - 2. Paul asks the Hebrews to remember those in bonds. We must remember (Heb 13:3).
  - 3. Paul reminds the Hebrews that assemblies are for considering others (Heb 10:23-24).
  - 4. We must have the mind that God created us to be the servants of others (Phil 2:3-5).
  - 5. We must think about our nothingness and their importance in Christ (Rom 12:10,16).
  - 6. You should be able to list honors and afflictions for each one (Ro 12:15; I Cor 12:26).
  - 7. This requires the grace of self-denial, because our flesh selfishly only thinks of self.
  - 8. We never think about what others should be thinking or doing toward us. Never!
  - 9. Talking to family or friends on Sundays, when other opportunities exist, is sad indeed.
- B. Second, we must sympathetically analyze their situations to determine their honor or needs.
  - 1. Paul also told the Hebrews how to think about those in other situations (Heb 13:3).
  - 2. You must put yourself in their shoes, as the saying goes, and commiserate with them.
  - 3. Here is where we must loose our bowels of compassion – our sympathetic empathy.
  - 4. If you are showing compassion in conversation, you must be a listener, not a talker.
  - 5. You must listen more than talk, comfort more then correct, probe more than suggest.
  - 6. There is human adversity you do not blow off with quick advice. Grieve with them.
  - 7. Singing songs to those that are of heavy hearts is a heartless act of cruelty (Pr 25:20).
- C. Third, you must determine what you can actually do to serve the other person profitably.
  - 1. Many times, the service needed is merely sympathetic understanding of their trouble.
  - 2. A few kind words that express your sympathy are beautiful things (Pr 15:23; 25:11).
  - 3. Are you willing to spend for others? Be spent? If they love you less (II Cor 12:15)?
  - 4. Cards, calls, food, hospitality, jobs, dates, cars, counsel, or any other service counts.
  - 5. Since you cannot directly solve their adversity, you can solve in indirectly by prayer.

#### Conclusion:

- 1. This morning we considered the Lord's priorities for our lives in the simple words, "I Am Third."
- 2. Let us consciously allow the Holy Spirit to show God's love through our compassion toward each other.
- 3. If we are the sons of God, then we will cultivate the fruit of love by the Spirit to the glory of Jesus Christ.