

OUR COMPASSIONATE GOD

Exodus 34:6

October 18, 2020

"Compassion is sometimes the fatal capacity for feeling what it is like to live inside somebody else's skin. It is the knowledge that there can never really be any peace and joy for me until there is peace and joy finally for you too." --- Frederick Buechner

Introduction:

Compassion: → a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to _____ the suffering.

→ “suffering with”

God's Explicit Revelation of His Compassion:

Israel has heard oral tradition and observed through their senses the nature of God. But there are important questions after the exodus from Egypt.

- ✓ What kind of a people are we? What kind of a God is Yahweh?
How is Israel to organize and live as a nation? What will life be like in the Promised Land?
- ✓ God called Moses up to meet him on Mt. Sinai to further reveal Himself. **Exodus 19:5-8**
 - ⁸ *All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken _____."*
- ✓ Moses descends from Mt. Sinai to find Israel worshipping a golden calf.
 - Since God is a personal God, he _____ this rejection just like an abandoned spouse would.
- ✓ God responds to Moses privately and by extension, to the nation, and centers his representation of himself in his compassion.
 - **Ex. 33:18-19** – ¹⁸ *Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!"* ¹⁹ *And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show **compassion** on whom I will show **compassion**."*
 - **Ex. 34:6** – ⁶ *Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, **compassionate** and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;*

“rachuwu” → full of compassion; merciful; only used of God. Related to “rechem” which means _____.

The Emotion of Compassion:

- ✓ This Hebrew word for compassion is twice translated as “deeply moved or stirred.”
 - **Genesis 43:30** – Joseph and his brothers **I Kings 3:26** – Solomon and the two mothers
- ✓ God as a compassionate parent before a child
 - **Isaiah 49:15-16** – God as a nursing mother **Psalms 103:13-14** – God as a loving father
 - He is in the better position but he compassionately acts to _____ us according to his perfect will.

Compassion Requires Action:

Two actions often coupled with God's compassion in the Scriptures are God's FORGIVENESS and his DELIVERANCE.

Forgiveness for King David in Psalm 51:

- ✓ **Psalm 51:1** – *Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.*
- ✓ David is learning to apply the golden calf story as an expression of his own sinful _____.

Forgiveness for the wicked in Isaiah 55:7

- ✓ **Isaiah 55:7** – *Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will **abundantly pardon**.*
- ✓ When the wicked person forsakes his own evil thoughts and cries out to God, this captures the heart of God in a way that he feels deep compassion. He feels it deep in the _____ of his being...his womb.
 - Personal application: **Isaiah 56:3, 7**

Deliverance in Deuteronomy 30:2-3 and Hosea 1:6

God's Compassion Alongside His Immutability:

- ✓ **James 1:17** – *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*
- ✓ Consider the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son.
 - Never acted _____ with his character but was still deeply moved when his son returned.

Compassion Incarnate:

God's compassion is most clearly seen in the _____ of Jesus Christ. God saw our suffering in our sin, he recognized it, and was deeply moved by it to act to rescue us.

- ✓ Two Greek words for compassion in the NT:
 - **Spagchnon** – Like "womb" in the OT, this pictures "bowels." **Matt. 9:36, 14:14, 15:32; Luke 7:12-13**
 - **Oiktirmos** – Also pictures "bowels." **II Cor. 1:3; Rom. 12:1; Phi. 2:1-2**

Conclusion:

1. What is your first thought of how God thinks of you? Is it deeply moved, driven to compassion? Or is it disapproval?
2. Do you avail yourself of God's compassion by crying out to Him? Your cries stir his heart of compassion towards you.
3. Does the compassion of God directed toward you motivate you to demonstrate compassion to your Christian brothers and sisters? What about to unbelievers?

Ephesians 4:32 – *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*