

COMPASSION OF GOD SERIES

THE EXPERIENCE OF COMPASSION

Compassion is the *rhema* of God's love. Just as *rhema* and *logos* are related, *rhema* the specific Word and *logos* is the living or written Word, so is compassion and *agape* are related. Compassion is the specific love and *agape* is the living love of God, both one and the same substance.

Matthew 14:13-14 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. And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude, and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

Compassion is an experience of the spirit. It is a spirit consciousness. Just as the body has feelings, the soul has thoughts and emotions; our spirit has compassion with a consciousness of God. Whenever we sense God, we sense love, for the two are one. We are talking of a specific compassion of God that comes before God does a mighty work. Before a healing or miracle, you will sense flowing through you the compassion of Jesus Christ

What happens in the experience of compassion? Compassion is a spiritual experience. It may affect your feelings and thought life, but primarily it is a spiritual experience. We want to describe and qualify what is compassion, what is feeling, what is our soul desires so that we can sense from God whether it is compassion, sympathy or pity. We can divide it and qualify it and experience it

more and more.

Mark 6: 34 *And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.*

You immediately begin to sense that compassion is linked to a shepherd's heart. Having a shepherd's heart does not mean that you are called to be a pastor. You may be an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist and teacher and still have a shepherd's heart. You could be a businessman and still have a shepherd's heart. Without being called to the pastoral office, a person can have and possess a shepherd's heart. The gist of a shepherd's heart is compassion.

So Jesus was moved with compassion, and Mark described what Jesus saw. He saw that the people were like sheep without a shepherd. Only a shepherd can see people like sheep. So the shepherd's heart in Jesus was coming out. He saw the people scattered like sheep without a shepherd. Would they need Him? Would they have other under shepherds to take care of them? We need to develop a shepherd's heart. A shepherd's heart is directly related to *splankna*, to compassion of Jesus Christ. A few people in the Bible seem to move with this compassion. You see immediately the depth of the shepherd's heart. It is just not a general feeling of knowing what the people need, how they are suffering, but you see the details of how compassion is described.

Verse 35 *When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.*

The disciples only saw the people as people. But when Jesus saw the people, He saw them I like little sheep, little lamb. The disciples saw the inconvenience. They saw the multitudes and saw how much it would cost to minister to them.

They thought that it is better to disperse them, otherwise they would be stuck with them. That is the only thing they saw, but Jesus only saw sheep. That is compassion. *"You give them something to eat,"* that's the shepherd talking.

They said, shall we go and buy two hundred denarii of bread and give them something to eat? (verse 37). They are always looking at the inconveniences, what it would cost them. Secondly, they said that even if we have the money, where are the shops to buy from? Look how inconvenient. Logical thinking. It is argumentative and logical in the natural world. The problem is that they did not have compassion

Matthew 15:32 *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.*

This miracle followed the one recorded in Matthew 14:14-16 *And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. The disciples said, send the multitudes away. Jesus said, You give them something to eat.* Apparently after the first miracle in Matthew 14, the disciples still did not learn compassion by the time the second miracle came round. In Mt 15, they are doing the exact same thing as if they have forgotten the miracle. In Mt 15:32 *Jesus said I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way. The disciples replied, where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude.* Now I would understand that if they had not seen the possibility of the miracle, they could ask that question. But the fact is that they have just seen a miracle in Mt. 14. They are only seeing their own inconveniences. There is a difference between having compassion and doing their work.

Once in my neighborhood, my neighbor and I saw a woman with bleeding hands and decided to transport her to the hospital. Immediately, my neighbor asked me, "Whose car shall we take?" He was obviously thinking that the blood drops would stain his car. Do you think of compassion or do you of your own conveniences? The disciples were thinking of their own conveniences.

When you experience compassion, you forget your own needs and get occupied with the needs of another. See it is a consciousness that comes into our lives that drove Jesus Christ to disregard His own needs and minister to our own needs. There were suffering in meeting our needs. Our needs came before His own needs.

Mt 15 In order to first experience compassion, Jesus Christ knew their past and what they have been through. Verse 32 *they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat*, and this was a desert. Didn't the disciples thought of all this? Yes, they did, but they thought of their own stomach more. There were 4000 people and the disciples suggested send them away. Jesus knew their past, and Jesus knew that to send them away, some of them may faint and be in danger of dying. So He knew their present and He discerned their future.

Compassion is moving into a person's consciousness when you know a person's past through fellowship and an experience of God, accept a person as he is and know the danger in their lives and still have compassion for them. Take for example the life of David. In the Old Testament, the word for *mercy* and the word for *compassion* are different, and are sometimes mistranslated and used interchangeably. The Hebrew word for compassion is *racham*, translated as *tender mercies* to make it different from the normal mercy.

In 2 Samuel 24:14 just to show how David understood tender mercies or *racham*. After he felled into sin by numbering the Israelites, David said to God. I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hands of God, for His mercies are great. The word here is *racham* - for His compassion is great. David knew that the compassion of the Lord would deliver him. What is the difference between mercy and compassion? Mercy is given to you when you are guilty and you are pardoned. The judgment that is supposed to come upon your life is averted or removed. That's mercy! But compassion is to understand and to feel like a shepherd feeling for the sheep. Mercy only ministers to your guilt but compassion ministers to your needs.

Do you know that you could have needs without guilt although some people because of their guilt they have needs? In other words because of sin some people enter the permissive will of God and got into situations where God cannot bless them and they are in need. But there are other situations where it is not because of all those neglect, of sin or of breaking God's commandment. Every human being born into this earth has different needs - spiritual needs, mental needs, physical needs. Even without falling out of God's will, you have needs continually in your life that need to be met for you to do whatever God wants you to do.

So compassion ministers to the needs while mercy only minister to the penalties of your guilt. Mercy pardons them but that doesn't meet your need. In mercy you have only one area of your needs met, that is, your judgment, your need of pardon and mercy is removed. But compassion is a shepherd's heart reaching out to say, "This is my sheep, I know them by name and they know my voice."

And what David was tapping on, as he came in prayer to God, was saying, "God, I am not just seeking Your mercy and Your forgiveness for my guilt. But God, I will fall into Your Hands, You are my Shepherd. You will not only remove my guilt but because of Your Shepherd's heart, I know that I can trust You. And he says, 'I would rather fall into the hands of God in His *rahamim* (compassion) than in the hands of men.' So here is a man who understood compassion and David even though he was a king and a prophet, he understands a shepherd's heart. And he cares for people like a shepherd. For he himself, once upon a time, was a shepherd. He was a shepherd boy and he knew what taking care of sheep is like. There were things that David did that other kings never did. The difference was he had a shepherd's heart. For other kings take care of the king's business, he went further than that. He thought of what was going to happen after he died and Solomon takes over his place, and he start taking care of those needs, especially in providing materials for the building of the Temple. Why, he was a shepherd! And he thought about all these other men who followed him. You will know very carefully that King David unlike other kings, he shared whatever he had. When there were these people at Ziglaga when he came back, half of the troop didn't want to share with the other, King David made a rule, 'You must share!' King David in Adullam's Cave, in the Book of I Samuel, his own parents came to be taken care by him. That's a

shepherd's heart all the time in him wanting to take care. He cared for his soldiers, he cared for his people, that's a shepherd's heart.

Now, how did he move into that shepherd's heart? What is involved? I want you to understand and observe that a shepherd's heart enters into what I called the consciousness of a multitude or a person. In other words you sense their past, you sense their present, you sense their future, a consciousness of their needs come upon you. It's just like when you began to talk with people, sometimes a shepherd's heart comes out: I want to find out how do you come here, do you have transport going back? We may not be able to offer to transport but at least I know I can look into that. Things like that do show you care and have a shepherd's heart. Like for example the Sunday schoolteachers had a meeting and I asked my wife, "How was it?" She said, "Poor attendance." So I asked whether was the transportation looked into and she said, "Nobody asked." I said, "Nobody will ask regarding transportation because some may be too shy." That's a difference between an organizer and a shepherd. If you are a shepherd, if the sheep don't come to you, you go to the sheep. Find out their needs, find out why they didn't come and find out what are the problems that prevent them from coming. And if they need transport, arrange the transportation, get somebody to go right to the door and pick them up and remind them of the time of the meeting. There's a difference between an organizer and a shepherd. The difference is compassion. You look more personally into a person's need and you want to be concerned in all those areas – that's a shepherd.

David had a shepherd's heart but this is the price that he paid for a shepherd's heart. You see a shepherd enter into the consciousness of somebody else's life. In other words, they begin to make it so much to the other person's life, that all they see is a ministry to that person. I Samuel 31: 6, '*So Saul, his three sons, his armor bearer, and all his men died together that same day.*' That was a final battle. Saul by that time was David's enemy. He was pursuing David, hoping to kill David and twice David had a chance to kill him and David didn't. You would have thought that in I Sam. 31, when Saul died, David would rejoice, 'Bless God, now I can be king!' In actual fact that is what is true. If Saul dies, David will be king. But David was not interested in the kingdom alone, he had a shepherd's heart. A lot of people in David's position would rejoice, 'Oh, hallelujah, now he is out of the way!'

But in 2 Sam. 1: 17, first of all, David revenged Saul. There's somebody who came and said, 'Hey, you know I have just killed Saul and verse 6 he said,' *I happened by chance to be on Mount Gilboa, there was Saul, leaning on his spear; and indeed the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. And when he looked behind him (in V 7), he saw me and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am. And he said to me, 'Who are you?' So I answered him, "I am an Amalekite. " He said to me again, 'Please stand over me and kill me, for anguish has come upon me, but my life still remains in me.'* So I stood over him and killed him.....

You would have thought that the man, the Amalekite who killed Saul thought this way that if he brings the news to David with proof that King Saul has died, David would reward him. For everybody knows that David was to be the next king. The prophecy is quite well known except people don't want to fulfill it, that's all. Even the Israelites who continue after King David rule in the southern kingdom, even the ten tribes knew after Abner died they came and they said, 'Did not the Lord said David will be the king.' They saw it all the time except that they did not want it. They knew that David was to be king. Everybody know even the Amalekite and he thought if I could bring King Saul's things to David to show him that I killed him, I will be rewarded. He was in for a surprise because David had a shepherd's heart. He was not just having a kingly heart; he had a shepherd's heart.

And how is it that this story in 2 Samuel chapter I and I Samuel chapter 31 doesn't seem to coincide. Because in I Sam. 31, King Saul told his armorbearer to kill him but the armorbearer was afraid and King Saul sort of committed suicide and fell on his own sword. So how do the two stories coincide? So what happen is if you look carefully, the keyword is 2 Sam. 1:9 *but my life still remains in me.'* So the word 'life still' is an illustration that he had been wounded in some way where he was dying but not dead yet. So that tells you that in I Sam. 31, that even though he committed 'harakiri' fell on his own sword and he still had some life in him. And that was when the Amalekite came and finished him off at Saul's request.

But David said, 'No.' First of all, you see that David did not reward anyone for killing Saul which normally is done. Besides that in 2 Sam. 1: 17, David cried for

Saul and Jonathan. How many people will cry over their enemies? David cried for Saul. And in his crying, he never mentioned anything that Saul had done to him. In the natural, David could have been a very bitter man. You know why? Think about all the good things David did to Saul. When David was just a young boy in I Sam. 16, King Saul had a need. King Saul was troubled by evil spirit, goes crazy. Then of all the musicians, he was chosen. And he used to sit down and see this crazy Saul been tormented by demons - screaming! And David would sit down with compassion, with love and he would soothe all the trouble of the King of Israel. And he would play his psalm. And he did that regularly! The Bible tells us that he constantly comes all the way to the king's palace, minister to the king and then he was still responsible as a shepherd boy, he had to go back again. I Sam. 17:15, look at the relationship that he had established, *"But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem."* So that tells you he got two jobs now because of King Saul. He is used to that.

He would possibly enjoyed being alone in the mountain with his sheep just singing away his own songs. But now he had to minister to the king himself and he used to come to the palace, sing for the king until the king was soothed and enjoyed himself 'Ah..h..h, that's nice, David!' Then when the king was recovered David went back. And sometime later, they received word, ' David, David, Saul is mad again!' David has to come all the way and played his harp again. When King Saul was okay, he went back again. Occasionally, he kept going back, to and fro, all for the sake of that man called Saul.

And then there he was in the next incident we see that he was in a battle and he saw Goliath. And he volunteered himself. Did you know that Saul and his whole army was virtually defeated even before the fight? And because of David who risked his own life for something that the king himself should have done. He risked his entire life because he believed in God and the covenant that God has made with Israel. And by virtue of his victory over Goliath, Saul appointed him into the army but there was something here. I want you to know that while David was serving King Saul, Saul never knew him at all. Saul only heard his music playing and he slept. How do I know? Saul never had a shepherd's heart. I Sam. 17:55, ' *When Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, 'Abner, whose son is this youth?* Did you know that David was helping him all the time and he did not even know David's name and David's father's name. That tells you that

Saul was not a shepherd. He did not have a shepherd's heart.

Now, in a ministry, I meet thousands of people and I cannot remember everybody's names but people who are close to me, who have fellowship with me, who have walked with me and worked with me, I know them by name. David was very close to Saul. He was the one who played, personally, music to him and he never knew his name, his father's name. In fact he had to ask, 'Ah, whose boy is this?' And then he asked David again in verse 58, '*Whose son are you, young man?*' And David said, '*I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.*' It's interesting to see how Saul never knew him. But David knew Saul and ministered to Saul. By virtue of his success in Chapter 18, David was promoted and now he is serving Saul.

Think about all these things that David did for Saul and when the day came, when Saul started pursuing him, don't you think that in a natural, he would be a very bitter man. For the greatest hurt you feel, of when you have loved and you have given and is not appreciated and rejected. In the natural, David would have been a bitter man. The strange thing is that throughout his entire life he never had one word of bitterness against Saul. Twice he had the chance to kill Saul and he could not, his heart would not let him. Why his heart would not let him? He had a shepherd's heart. He had cared for Saul. He had loved Saul and he couldn't do that to him. How could you kill the one you loved? But a lot of people out there can. They are like Ammon, one moment he loved, the next moment after he has abused his half sister, his love changed to hate. Absalom's sister had to say, 'You know, the second thing you did is even worse than the first.' But yet a lot of people's love can change to hate very quickly. Because it's not the love based on *agape* and compassion.

Think about the many marriages that are breaking down. How many marriages you have talked to who are broken down and you hear the things that the husband and wife said to one another. And just to think that once upon a time they walked down the aisle together, pledging their love for one another. How did their love change to hate? Because they may have love in the natural soul realm but they never have compassion. Compassion will never turned or changed into hate. That's the difference.

And once David had this compassion for Saul. This is what compassion does. Compassion, the experience of compassion for a person is such that whatever nonsense or whatever the person does, you never speak evil, you never think evil but you still loved that person. And hear me very carefully, it's easy to speak of a person's fault or evil or guilt but never do that, if you desire long life and want to see good day. It's better to keep quiet, even in private sharing. I know a lot of people who is very nice. Normally nice people, once you get them alone, and they pour their hearts out to you, all the evil comes out not that they are evil but all the wrong things, the part of their hurt, their bitterness, their pain, is still not good enough. You say, Bro. if I don't pour out my hurt than who do I pour it to? Him. Him. For if you desire to see long life and have many good days, keep your mouth from guile. So where is the place for correction then. Correction is direct and not indirect. If you want to correct a person, sit with them face to face and talked.

Look at King Saul, he did some of the most horrible things, he sought after David's life, he killed the priests, he went wild with rage and King David in 2 Sam. 1, never felt any bitterness and that's a shepherd's heart of compassion. Never felt any bitterness. Instead in 2 Sam. I: 19 tell us, look at what song David composed for Saul and Jonathan, *"The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places!"* What beauty? See compassion sees the beauty in a person. Compassion sees the past, understand the person's weaknesses and strengths. How the mighty have fallen!

Verse 21, *"O mountains of Gilboa, Let there be no dew nor rain upon you Nor fields of offerings. For the shield of the mighty is cast away there! The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil."*

V23, *'Saul and Jonathan were beloved and pleasant in their lives.* In the natural you cannot say he was pleasant. Saul was a rough, tough man who was very rash but David with compassion said he was pleasant. So is that a lie? No, that's a shepherd's talk. The sheep could be rough, tough and behave like a goat, the shepherd would still reach out and touched the sheep and love the sheep, that's compassion. And says, *'..in their death they were not divided; they were swifter than*

eagles, they were stronger than lions.'

V24, *'O, daughters of Israel, weep over Saul. Noticed he remembered the good things Saul did while people would forget what he did. Who clothed you in scarlet, with luxury; Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.'*

David could still remember all those good things. We all know that when a man of God falls which many have fallen in the past three years, everybody remember the bad things and forgotten the good things they did. You could have a huge big history of whiteness of the good things done. One black dot and everybody sees it. But a shepherd's heart is not like that. You could have served for 34 years but you make a mistake in your 35th year and the world blot you out. However, a shepherd's heart would not do that. The shepherd remembers your 34 years and still has compassion for you and still ministers to your needs.

In the Book of Psalms 23, it sort of expresses the shepherd's heart, and which is an expression of compassion. Now David was on the receiving end because the Lord was his Shepherd but the basic teaching is there, that whatever the shepherd does to the sheep, that's what compassion does to people. Says in verse 1, *'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.'* Now we have said that compassion ministers to needs. Now notice here, compassion reaches beyond needs to minister to wants. You go the second mile, it's just like a man of God comes to town and stays in our church office, we could just put them up in the office, give them their food allowances, arrange luncheon for them, pick them up and drop them for the meeting. In doing that you would have 'taken care of his necessities and his needs' but that is not the second mile yet. Praise God ! My wife has the heart to do that! When she heard Jacob Kurien was coming, she went to the room, double check, make sure it is clean. She said she wants to buy flowers for the room but we do not have the budget for it. But I said, 'Good, no problem! I am with you all the way. Husbands, sometimes you got to support your wife! So 'no problem', went there, check everything up. And check this and that. See compassion does not minister to the needs; it ministers to the wants. Think about it, here you are from US and you are thousands of miles away from home, you left your home, you left your children behind, you are traveling about 9 months a year and you have been staying in hotels, after hotels, room after room, you have been taken care by

people. What a difference when you go to a place and somebody remembers at least to put some flowers in the vase, writes a little welcome note, spray some fragrance and so on. That is compassion meeting not only your needs but your wants as well.