

## The Reward Of Compassion

Have you ever thought – what causes God to move? Why does He suddenly interrupt your life and bless you? We know that love must be at the heart of everything God does. But what makes this divine love turn into a decisive action? Many times, in the Gospels, we see Jesus **moved by compassion**. I believe that this potent form of *compassion* was in fact a divine attribute – a gift from God. For if it was a natural human characteristic, everyone would have it, and the world would be a much better place.

Besides, it would be presumptuous for anyone to think that they could be *moved with compassion* to the same degree that Jesus was. He is God, and His love for mankind is absolute and untainted. But notice, in **John 17:26** Jesus prays that this **divine love** be imparted into every believer (*the great love that the Father has for His Son Jesus*). Therefore, whenever this *divine love* (in you) is stirred, you too are moved with “holy” compassion and are compelled to respond accordingly.

So what is **compassion**? Its origin is in ecclesiastical Latin from the word *compati* ‘to suffer with.’ The Oxford English Dictionary says *compassion is a feeling of pity inclining one to be helpful or show kindness*. However, ‘pity’ is usually immersed in human emotion and it does not necessarily reflect unconditional love. For this reason, the ecclesiastical Latin “to suffer with” is more accurate - if not completely reliable. So maybe we need to look beyond the English language to find an acceptable Biblical definition of compassion.

There are two Greek words often used in the New Testament and translated compassion.

[1] *Splanchnizomai*, “**To be moved from within** – “to be moved with compassion, to yearn with compassion,” is frequently recorded of Christ towards the multitude and towards individual sufferers, **Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 18:27; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 6:34; 8:2; 9:22** (*of the appeal of a father for a demon-possessed son*); **Luke 7:13; 10:33**; *of the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son*, **Luke 15:20**. But what stands out with the usage of this ancient Greek word is the fact that compassion is a unique quality that comes from “**within**” - *an intense yearning or groaning from inside, or a strong inward feeling*. Best described as *an intense, high-wrought emotion that compels one to action*. It has similar characteristics to “passion” but always results in the positive, and never the negative.

[2] *Sympatheo*, “**To suffer with another** (sun, ‘with,’ pascho, ‘to suffer’), **to be affected similarly**” (Eng., “sympathy”), to have “compassion” upon (**Hebrew 10:34**). It’s a sympathetic feeling for anyone suffering, distressed or unhappy. This meaning is in line with the ecclesiastical Latin word *compati* - “to suffer with.” It is the ability to identify fully with the suffering of others, and through this emotion, to respond and do something helpful. You can liken it to **mercy**, which is a clear demonstration of true kindness.

Notice, *compassion* (when used to God’s glory) is very powerful. It brings about positive action! And signs and wonders often follow compassion. We see this clearly in the ministry of Jesus. When He was moved with compassion miracles were performed and God was glorified. I believe that one of the answers to you and me becoming more effective for God’s kingdom is the correct application of the divine *gift* of compassion. If every believer stirred up this gift, the social, political and spiritual climate would change – almost immediately! The power to refashion the world system is held by the church!

To stir up this holy gift, we can be inspired by the New Testament accounts of when Jesus Himself was moved with compassion. So let's look at a few...

**Matt. 9:35-38, *And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they were weary and scattered like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to his disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."*** Compassion let's you see the need for the salvation of all those around you. And it causes you to reach out to them with a supernatural zeal and with total commitment to the cause of Jesus Christ.

**Matt. 14:14, *"And Jesus went out and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick."***

When you are moved with compassion for the sick, God's miracle healing power will manifest and work through you. The sick will be healed and all infirmities will disappear (to God's glory).

**Matt. 15:32, *Then Jesus called his disciples to Him and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."*** Compassion will cause you to see the essential needs of those around you and you will be moved (inspired) to show kindness. God's interested in even the most basic necessities of mankind.

**Matt. 20:29-34; ... *Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him; "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him."*** There are people out there crying out for Jesus, and the only way they are going to encounter Him is through you.

**Luke 7:11-15; *Now when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said to her, "Weep not." And He came and touched the boy: and they that carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, Arise." And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And Jesus delivered him to his mother."***

Inside Jesus was a highly intense emotion that compelled Him to action, even the action of raising the dead. Nothing is impossible to him who believes - the only barrier is this, "Can you be moved into action with the same intensity that Jesus was moved?" With divine compassion you definitely can!

Jesus had a unique quality that came from "within" - an intense yearning or groaning from the inside (**John 11:33-44**). The Lord desperately wanted His friend Lazarus to live, so He never allowed Himself to get into an emotional state. Rather, He responded by sympathising with the family's loss, and then doing what only He could do. After saying, "**Take away the stone,**" He commanded, "**Lazarus, come forth.**" **And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."**

There are so many people out there who need to be loosed from their dreadful situations; their addictive behaviour and their chronic sufferings. But where is the man or woman of God who is prepared to say (by

faith), *“Take away the stone?”* The only thing that’s preventing others from receiving their miracle is the dividing wall between them and Jesus. But Jesus, through the Holy Spirit that is in you, yearns and groans constantly to set them free. He desires to perform the miracle they need through you. Yes, you are the chosen vessel of honour. All He requires now is for you to move into action! And what will move you better than anything else? The very same attribute that moved Jesus. **Compassion!**