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Photography by Suzanne Williams

The Father's Compassion

Compassion flows from the heart of God our Father. Second Corinthians 1:3 states, *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.* Our God is the Father of compassion or the Father of pity. In other words, mercy was God's idea. In John 3:16 we read, *For God so loved the world.* This scripture does not say, *He loved the world.* It says *He so loved the world.* The word *so* gives the extent of God's love. Ephesians 2:4 says *He has great love.* Compassion is love in action.

In the familiar story about the good Samaritan the subject under discussion is love. The question was asked, *Who is my neighbor?* In this parable a man was beaten and left by the roadside *half dead.* A priest and a Levite saw the need, but passed by. They had no compassion. They took no action and showed no love. When a Samaritan came by, he did take action. He bound the wounds, *pouring in oil and wine.* He carried the man on his donkey to an inn, paying the first portion of the bill. He even stated, "I'll be back to pay the rest if there's any further need." (Luke 10:30-37) Jesus then asked the question, "Who is your neighbor?" In verse 37 we find the answer. It states, *He that shewed mercy on him.* It was the one that had compassion. The

action on the part of the Samaritan was an action of love, a deed of compassion. Love and compassion are here tied together.

We see this same principle in 1 John 3:17. In 1 John 3 the subject under discussion is also love, but in talking about love the Apostle John highlights mercy or compassion. He links mercy with the indwelling love of God. It states, *but whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

We know from the scripture that we are spirit, soul, and body. (1 Thessalonians 4:23) As a sinner we were spiritually dead. We had in our spirit man the nature of satan. Jesus said to the Pharisees, *Ye are of your father the devil.* (John 8:44) A child shares his father's genetic structure. We shared the spiritual genetics of the devil - the thief who steals, kills, and destroys. (John 10:10) But when we came to God we were transported out of the kingdom of darkness and placed into the kingdom of life, the kingdom of Almighty God. (Colossians 1:13) Our whole nature changed. We call that eternal life.

We think of eternal life as length of life, but eternal life is that change of nature, that change of fatherhood, that change of kingdoms.

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*For God
so loved
the world,
that He gave*

*His only
begotten*

Son,

that

whosoever

believeth

in Him

should not

perish,

but have

everlasting

life.

John 3:16



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The scripture in 1 John 3:14 says, *we know that we have passed from death unto life*. This is in reference to this change of nature that comes when we are born again. We passed from spiritual death, from satan's kingdom, from satan's fatherhood. We are now born of God. We are born into His kingdom. We are new creatures. (2 Corinthians 5:17) The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. (Romans 5:5)

First John 4:8 says, *God is love*. The heart of God, the motivation of God, in reaching people is His *great love*, or His *so love*. Because of His love, He then extends His power. If we were asked to put those two words, love and power, into proper order what would be the dominant word? I believe it is the love of God! Why? God's love causes Him to bring to bear in our lives His power. Sometimes by magnifying the power of God, which we firmly and fully believe in and are committed to, we eclipse the mercy or the compassion of God's love. When you eclipse something, it is not seen. In magnifying His power we have masked the love and mercy of God. We have failed to see the heart of God, the motivation of God.

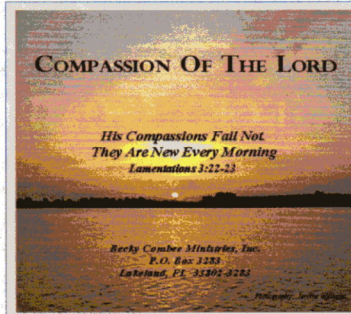
Again the verse in 1 John 3:14 says, *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we have loved the brethren*. When we came into the kingdom, we were changed and the love of God was place in our heart. Love has to grow. It is a fruit, and fruit always grows. If we visit an orange grove, we notice the fruit begins as a blossom. It grows into a small green fruit and then takes the mature color of that fruit. It grows until it is at the point of harvest. Love is a fruit of our spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23) It must grow.

When we obtained salvation His love was placed in our spirit. As God's love grows in us, we will begin to sense a change inside. Sometimes because our flesh has not been crucified, we struggle to effect this change in our lives. But as we continue to grow, as we head out in the right direction, we will be able to walk in greater perfection in our love walk. That is the essence of this verse. We have God's love in our spirit man. We are not in the dark. We are in God's kingdom. We have His life. We have been changed.

There is then a distinct tie between this love and compassion. When Jesus talked about loving your neighbor, He said, "Have compassion." The person that has compassion is the one that is loving. Compassion is as much an element of love as apples are an element of apple pie. Compassion is a part of the package that we call godly love.

If we read further in 1 John 3:16 it declares, *hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us*. We again see love and compassion as action. God took action. God 'did'. He *so loved...that He gave His only begotten Son*. He offered the life of His Son. Jesus came. Jesus stated, "No man takes my life from Me. I lay it down." (John 10:18) That kind of love can be perceived or seen.

We begin to understand. The Word was demonstrated. Because we have been changed we too will demonstrate God's love. His great compassion will pour through us into the lives of others. By His love, we will touch our world. What a wonderful summary is this verse from the New Century Version. It states, *My children, we should love people not only with words and talk, but by our actions and true caring.* (New Century Version)



This is an excerpt from the series, *Compassion of the Lord*. If you wish to have your own copy of this message. Send \$15.00 to the address below. Please specify CD or Cassette. We will send it to you postage paid.

A WORD FROM WAYNE

I love fall. The cool mornings have pushed back the hot, humid days of summer. The varying colors we see in trees and flowers bring a welcome change. This change prompts me to consider what God desires to do in our lives to conform us into His image. As we yield to Him, He molds us and makes us into what He wants us to be.

In Exodus 14:13, Moses spoke to the children of Israel saying, *fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord*. This great salvation often comes to us as we stand in God's presence. The apostle Paul declared that we *are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*. (2 Corinthians 3:18) Let us stand in faith, not wavering, looking for the the unfolding of change in our lives.