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## CHRIST'S BOUNDLESS COMPASSION

*And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick.—Matthew 14:14.*

IT IS OFTEN RECORDED in Scripture that Jesus was moved by compassion. We are told in this verse that after the disciples of John had come to Him and told Him that their master had been beheaded, that he had been put to a cruel death, He went out into a desert place, and the multitude followed Him, and that when He saw the multitude He had "compassion" on them, and healed their sick.

If He were here to-night in person, standing in my place, His heart would be moved as He looked down into your faces, because He could also look into your hearts and could read the burdens and troubles and sorrows you have to bear. They are hidden from my eye, but He knows all about them. When the multitude gathered round about Him, He knew how many weary, broken and aching hearts there were there. And He is here to-night, although we cannot see Him with the

bodily eye; and there is not a sorrow, or trouble, or affliction which any of you are enduring but He knows all about it; and He is the same to-night as He was when here upon earth—the same Jesus, the same Man of compassion.

When He saw that multitude He had compassion on them, and healed their sick. I hope He will heal a great many sin-sick souls here, and will bind up a great many broken hearts. There is no heart so bruised and broken but the Son of God will have compassion upon you, if you will let Him. "He will not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." He came into the world to bring mercy, and joy, and compassion and love.

If I were an artist I should like to draw some pictures to-night and put before you that great multitude on which He had compassion. I would draw another painting of that man coming to Him full of leprosy, full of it from head to foot. There he was, banished from his home, banished from his friends, and he came to Jesus with his sad and miserable story. And now, my friends, let us

MAKE THE BIBLE STORIES REAL,

for that is what they are.

Think of that man. Think how much he had suffered. I don't know how many years he had been away from his wife and children and home; but there he was. He had put on a strange and particular garb, so that any-

body coming near him might know that he was unclean. When he saw anyone approaching him, he had to raise the warning cry, "Unclean! unclean! unclean!" Aye, and if the wife of his bosom were to come out to tell him that a beloved child was sick and dying, he durst not come near her; he was obliged to fly. He might hear her voice at a distance, but he could not be there to see his child in its last dying moments. He was, as it were, in a living sepulchre; it was worse than death! There he was, dying by inches, an outcast from everybody and everything, and not a hand put out to relieve him. Oh, what a terrible life!

Then think of his coming to Christ, and when Christ saw him, the Bible says He was moved with compassion. He had a heart that beat in sympathy with the poor leper; He had compassion on him. The man came to Him, and said,

"Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean!"

He knew there was no one to do it but the Son of God Himself.

The great heart of Christ was moved with compassion toward him. Hear the gracious words that fell from His lips—

"I will; be thou clean!"

The leprosy fled, and the man was made whole immediately.

Look at him now on his way back home to his wife and children and friends! No longer an outcast, no long-

er a loathsome thing, no longer cursed with that terrible leprous disease, but going back to his friends rejoicing.

Now, my friends, you may say you pity a man who was that bad off, but did it ever strike you that you are a thousand times worse off? The leprosy of the soul is far worse than the leprosy of the body. I would rather a thousand times have my body full of leprosy than go down to hell with my soul full of sin. A good deal better that this right hand of mine were lopped off, that this right foot should decay, and that I should go halt and lame and blind all the days of my life, than be banished from God by the leprosy of sin. Hear the wailing and the agony and the woe caused by sin going up from this earth! If there is one poor sin-sick soul filled with leprosy here to-night, if you come to Christ He will have compassion on you, and say, as He did to that man,

“I will; be thou clean.”

#### THE DEAD RAISED

Well, now we come to the next picture that represents Him as moved with compassion.

Look into that little home at Nain. There is a poor widow sitting there. Perhaps a few months before she had buried her husband, but she has an only son left. How she dotes upon him! She looks to him to be her stay and her support and friend in her old age. She loves him far better than her own life-blood. But see, at last sickness enters the dwelling, and death comes with it and lays his ice-cold hand upon the young man. You

can see that widowed mother watching over him day and night; but at last those eyes are closed, and that loved voice is hushed, she thinks, forever. She will never see or hear him more after he is buried out of her sight.

And so the hour comes for his burial. Many of you have been in the house of mourning and have been with your friends when they have gone to the grave and looked at the loved one for the last time. There is not one here, I dare say, who has not lost some beloved one. I never went to a funeral and saw a mother take the last look at her child but it has pierced my heart, and I could not keep back the tears at such a sight.

Well, the mother kisses her only son on that poor, icy forehead. It is her last kiss, her last look; and the body is covered up, and they put him on the bier and start for the place of burial. She had a great many friends. The little town Nain was moved at the sight of the widow's only son being borne away.

I see that great crowd as they come pushing out of the gates. Over yonder are thirteen men, weary, and dusty, and tired, and they have to stand by the wayside to let this great crowd pass by. The Son of God is in this group, and the others with Him are His disciples.

He looked upon that scene, and saw the mother with her broken heart; He saw it bleeding, crushed, and wounded, and it touched His heart. Yes, the great heart of the Son of God was moved with compassion, and He came up and touched the bier, and said,

“YOUNG MAN, ARISE!”

and the young man sat up.

I can see the multitude startled and astonished. I can see the widowed mother going back home rejoicing, with the morning rays of the resurrection shining in her heart. Yes, He had compassion on her indeed! And there is not a widow in this hall but Christ's voice will respond to your troubles and give you peace. Oh, dear friends, let me say to you whose hearts are aching, you need a friend like Jesus! He is just the Friend the widow needs. He is just the Friend every poor bleeding heart needs. He will have compassion on you, and will bind up your wounded, bleeding heart if you will only come to Him just as you are. He will receive you, without upbraiding or chastising, to His loving bosom, and say, “Peace, be still,” and you can walk in the unclouded sunlight of His love from this night. Christ will be worth more to you than all the world besides. He is just the Friend that all of you need; and I pray God you may every one of you know Him from this hour as your Saviour and Friend.

#### THE MAN WHO WAS ROBBED

The next picture which I shall show you to illustrate Christ's compassion is of the man that was going down to Jericho and fell among thieves.

They had taken away his coat. They took his money, and stripped him, and left him half dead. Imagine him wounded, bleeding, dying! And then a priest came along and he looked upon the scene. His heart might have

been touched, but he was not moved with compassion enough to help the poor man. He might have said, "Poor fellow!" but he passed by on the other side.

After him came down a Levite, and perhaps he said, "Poor man!" but he was not moved with compassion to help him.

Ah, there are a good many like that priest and Levite! Perhaps some of you coming down to this hall meet a drunkard reeling in the street, and just say, "Poor fellow!" or it may be you laugh because he stammers out some foolish thing. We are very much unlike the Son of God.

At last a Samaritan came down that way, and he looked on the man and had compassion on him! He got off his beast, took oil and poured it into the man's wounds, bound them up, took him out of the ditch, helpless as he was, placed him on his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him!

That good Samaritan represents your Christ and mine. He came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost.

Young man, have you come to the city, and fallen in with bad companions? Have they taken you to theaters and places of vice, and left you bleeding and wounded? Oh, come to-night to the Son of God, and He will have compassion on you, and take you off from the dunghill, and transform you, and lift you up into His kingdom, into the heights of His glory, if you will only let Him!



I do not care who you are. I do not care what your past life may have been. He said to the poor woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." He had compassion on her, and He will have compassion on you. That man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho represents thousands in our large cities, and that good Samaritan represents the Son of God. Young man, Jesus Christ has set His heart on saving you! Will you receive His love and compassion? Do not have such hard thoughts about the Son of God. Do not think He has come to condemn you. He has come to save you.

#### AN UNGRATEFUL WRETCH

But I should like to draw you another picture—that young man going away from his home that we read of in the 15th chapter of Luke; an ungrateful man, as ungrateful a wretch as ever one saw. He cannot wait for his inheritance till his father is dead, he wants his share at once, and so he says to his father,

"Give me the goods that belong to me."

His good old father gives him the goods, and away he goes.

I can see him as he starts on his journey, full of pride, boastful and arrogant, going out to see life, off in grand style to some foreign country—say, going down to London. How many have gone to London, that being the far country to them, squandering all their money!

Yes, he is a popular young man as long as he has money. His friends last as long as his money lasts. A

very popular young man, "hail-fellow-well-met" greets him everywhere. He always pays the liquor bill and for the cigars. Yes, he has plenty of friends! What grand folly!

But when his money was gone, where were his friends? Oh, you that serve the devil, you have a hard master! When the prodigal's money was all gone, of course they laughed at him and called him a fool; and so he was.

What a blind, misguided young man he was! Just see what he lost. He lost his father's home, his table and food, and testimony, and every comfort. He lost his work, except what he got down there while feeding swine. He was in an unlawful business. And that's just what the backslider is doing; he is

#### IN THE DEVIL'S PAY

You are losing your time and testimony. No one has any confidence in a backslider, for even the world despises such a character.

This young man lost his testimony. Look at him among the swine! Someone in that far country comes along, and, beholding him, says,

"Look at that miserable, wretched, dirty, barefooted fellow taking care of swine!"

"Ah," says the prodigal, "don't talk to me like that. Why, my father's a rich man, and has servants better dressed than you are."

"Don't tell me that!" says the other; "if you had such a father as that, I know very well he wouldn't own you."

No one would believe him. No one believes a backslider. Let him talk about his enjoyment with God, nobody believes it. Oh, poor backslider, I pity you! You had better

COME HOME AGAIN

Well, at last the poor prodigal comes to himself, and says, "I will arise and go to my father," and now he starts for home. Look at him as he goes along, pale and hungry, with his head down! His strength is exhausted; perhaps he is diseased in his frame, and so shattered that no one would know him but his father. But love is keen to detect its object. The old man has often been longing for his return.

I can see him many a night up on the house-top looking out to catch a glimpse of him. Many a long night he has wrestled in prayer with God that his prodigal son might come back. Everything he had heard from that far country told him his boy was going to ruin as fast as he could go. The old man spent much time in prayer for him. At last faith begins to arise, and he says,

"I believe God will send back my boy."

One day the old man sees afar off the long-lost boy. He does not know him by his dress, but he detects his gait, and he says to himself,

"Yes, that's my boy!"

I see him pass down the stairs—he rushes along the highway—he is running! Ah! that is just like God. Many a time in the Bible God is represented as running; He

is in great haste to meet the backslider. Yes, the old man is running; he sees his son afar off, and he has compassion on him.

The boy wanted to tell him his story, what he had done, and where he had been; but the old man could not wait to hear him; his heart was filled with compassion, and he took him to his loving bosom. The boy wanted to go down into the kitchen with the servants, but the old man would not let him. No, but he bade the servants put shoes on his feet, and a ring on his finger, and kill the fatted calf, and make merry. The prodigal had come home, the wanderer had returned, and the old man rejoiced over his return.

Oh, backslider, come home, and there will be joy in your heart and in the heart of God. May God bring the backsliders back to-night—this very hour! Say as the poor prodigal did, "I will arise and go to my father," and on the authority of God I tell you God will receive you. He will blot out your sins, and restore you to His love; and you shall walk again in the light of His reconciled countenance.

#### CHRIST WEeping OVER JERUSALEM

But look again. Jesus comes to Mount Olivet. He is under the shadow of the cross. The city bursts upon him. Yonder is the temple. He sees it in all its grandeur and glory. The people are shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" They are breaking off palm branches, and taking off their garments, and spreading them before

Him, still shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" and bowing down before Him. But He forgets it all. Yes, even Calvary with all its sorrow He forgets. Gethsemane lay there at the foot of the hill; He forgets it too. As He looks upon the city which He loves, the great heart of the Son of God is moved with compassion, and He cries aloud,

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

My friends, look at Him there weeping over Jerusalem! What a wonderful city it might have been! How exalted to heaven it was! Oh, if they had only known the day of their visitation, and had received instead of rejected their King, what a blessing He would have been to them! Oh, poor backslider, behold the Lamb of God weeping over you, and crying to you to come to Him and receive shelter and refuge from the storm which has yet to sweep over this earth!

#### PETER'S DENIAL

Now look at poor Peter. He denied the Lord, and swore he never knew Him. If ever Jesus needed sympathy, if ever He needed His disciples round Him, it was that night when they were bringing false witnesses against Him, that He might be condemned to death; and there was Peter, one of His foremost disciples, swearing

he never knew Him. He might have turned on Peter and said,

“Peter, is it true you don't know Me? Is it true you have forgotten how I cured and healed your wife's mother when she lay at the point of death? Is it true you have forgotten how I caught you up when you were sinking in the sea? Is it true, Peter, you have forgotten how you were with Me on the mount of transfiguration, when heaven and earth came together, and you heard God's voice speaking from the clouds? Is it true you have forgotten that mountain scene when you wanted to build the three tabernacles? Is it true, Peter, you have forgotten Me?”

Yes, thus He might have taunted poor Peter; but instead of that He just gave him one look of compassion that broke his heart, and Peter went out and wept bitterly.

#### THE PERSECUTING SAUL

Again, look at that bold blasphemer and persecutor who is going to stamp out the Early Church, and is breathing out threatenings and slaughter, when Christ meets him on his way to Damascus. It is the same Jesus still. Listen, and hear what He says—

“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?”

He could have smitten him to the earth with a look or a breath; but instead of that, the heart of the Son of God is moved with compassion, and He cries out,

“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?”

If there is a persecutor here to-night, I would ask you, "Why persecute Jesus?" He loves you, sinner; He loves you, persecutor! You never received anything but goodness and kindness and love from Him.

Saul cried out, "Who art thou?"

And He answered, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. It is hard to fight against such a loving friend, to contend against one who loves you as I do."

Down went the proud, persecuting Saul upon his face, and he cried out,

"Lord, what wouldest Thou have me to do?"

And the Lord told him, and he went and did it.

May the Lord have compassion upon the infidel, and skeptic, and persecutor here! Let me ask you, my friend, Is there any reason why you should hate Christ, or why your heart should be turned against Him?

"WHY DON'T YOU LOVE JESUS?"

I remember a story about a teacher telling her scholars all to follow Jesus, and how they might all be missionaries, and go out to work for others. One day one of the smallest came to her, and said,

"I asked such and such a one to come with me, and she said she would like to come, but her father was an infidel."

The young child wanted to know what an infidel was, and the teacher went on to explain it to her.

One day, when she was on her way to school, this

infidel was coming out of the post office with his letters in his hand, when the child ran up to him and said,

“Why don't you love Jesus?”

He thought at first to push her aside, but the child pressed it home again—

“Why don't you love Jesus?”

If it had been a man, the infidel would have resented it; but he did not know what to do with the child. With tears in her eyes she asked him again,

“Oh! please, tell me, why don't you love Jesus?”

He went on to his office but he felt as if every letter he opened read, “Why don't you love Jesus?” He attempted to write, with the same result; every letter seemed to ask him, “Why don't you love Jesus?” He threw down his pen in despair, and went out of his office, but he could not get rid of the question; it was asked by a still small voice within. As he walked along it seemed as if the very ground and the very heavens whispered to him, “Why don't you love Jesus?”

At last he went home, and there it seemed as if his own children asked him the question, so he said to his wife, “I will go to bed early to-night,” thinking to sleep it away; but when he laid his head on the pillow it seemed as if the pillow whispered it to him. So he got up about midnight, and said,

“I can find out where Christ contradicts Himself, and I'll search it out and prove Him a liar.”

Well, he got up, and turned to the Gospel of John,



and read on from the beginning until he came to the words,

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

“What love!” he thought; and at last the old infidel’s heart was stirred. He could find no reason for not loving Jesus, and down he went on his knees and prayed, and before the sun rose he was in the kingdom of God.

I will challenge anyone on the face of the earth to find any reason for not loving Christ. It is only here on earth men think they have a reason for not doing so. In heaven they know Him, and they sing, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!” Oh, sinner, if you knew Him you would have no wish to find a reason for not loving Him! He is “the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.”

#### A QUESTION

I can imagine someone saying, “I should like very much to become a Christian, and I should like to know how I can come to Him, and be saved.”

Come to Him as a personal friend. For years I have made this a rule. Christ is just as habitually near, as personally present to me as any other person living; and when I have any troubles, trials and afflictions, I go to Him with them. When I want counsel I go to Him, just as if I could talk face to face with Him. Twenty years ago God met me and took me to His bosom; and I

would sooner give up my life to-night than give up Christ; or that I should leave Him, or that He should leave me, and that I should have no one to bear my burdens or tell my sorrows to. He is worth more than all the world beside. And to-night He will have compassion upon you as He had upon me. I tried for weeks to find a way to Him, and I just went and laid my burden upon Him, and then He revealed Himself to me, and I have ever since found Him a true and sympathizing Friend, just the Friend you need. Go right straight to Him! You need not go to this man or that man, to this church or that church. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," said Jesus.

There is no name so dear to Americans as that of Abraham Lincoln. Do you want to know the reason why? I will tell you. He was a man of compassion. He was very gentle, and was noted for his heart of sympathy for the down-trodden and the poor. No one went to him with a tale of sympathy but that he had compassion on them, no matter how far down they were in the scale of society. He always took an interest in the poor.

There was a time in our history when we thought he had too much compassion. Many of our soldiers did not understand army discipline, and a great many were not true to the army regulations. They intended to be, but they did not understand them. Many men consequently went wrong, and they were court-martialed and condemned to be shot; but Abraham Lincoln would always

pardon them. At length the nation rose up against him, and said that he was too merciful, and ultimately they got him to give out that if a man was court-martialed he must be shot, that there would be no more reprieves.

A few weeks after this, news came that a young soldier had been sleeping at his post. He was court-martialed, and condemned to be shot. The boy wrote to his mother,

“I do not want you to think I do not love my country, but it came about in this way: My comrade was sick, and I went out on picket for him. The next night he ought to have come, but being still sick I went out for him again, and without intending it I fell asleep. I did not intend to be disloyal.”

It was a very touching letter. The mother and father said there was no chance for him; there were to be no more reprieves. But there was a little girl in that home, and she knew that Abraham Lincoln had a little boy, and how he loved that boy; and she thought if Abraham Lincoln knew how her father and mother loved her brother he would never allow him to be shot. So she took the train to go and plead for her brother.

When she got to the president's mansion, the difficulty arose as to how she was to get past the sentinel. She told him her story, and the tears ran down his cheeks, and he let her pass. But the next trouble was how to get past the secretary and the other officials. However, she succeeded in getting, unobstructed, into Lincoln's private room, and

there were the senators and ministers busy with state affairs.

The president saw the child, and called her to him and said,

“My child, what can I do for you?”

She told him her story. The big tears rolled down his cheeks. He was a father, and his heart was full; he could not stand it. He treated the girl with kindness, relieved the boy, gave him thirty days furlough, and sent him home to see his mother. His heart was full of compassion.

Let me tell you, Christ's heart is more full of compassion than any man's. You are condemned to die for your sins; but if you go to Him He will say, “Loose him, and let him go.” He will rebuke Satan. Go to Him as that little girl went to the president, and tell Him all. Keep nothing from Him, and He will say, “Go in peace.”

#### THE TOUCH OF COMPASSION

Did you ever feel the touch of the hand of Jesus? If so, you will know it again, for there is love in it.

There is a story told in connection with our war, of a mother who received a dispatch that her boy was mortally wounded. She went down to the front, as she knew that those soldiers told to watch the sick and wounded could not watch her boy as she would. So she went to the doctor, and said,

“Would you like me to take care of my boy?”

The doctor said, “We have just let him go to sleep, and if you go to him the surprise will be so great it might

be dangerous to him. He is in a very critical state. I will break the news to him gradually."

"But," said the mother, "he may never wake up. I should so dearly like to see him."

Finally the doctor said, "You can see him, but if you wake him up and he dies, it will be your fault."

"Well," she said, "I will not wake him up if I may only go to his dying cot and see him."

She went to the side of the cot. Her eyes had longed to see him. As she gazed upon him she could not keep her hand off that pallid forehead, and she laid it gently there. There was love and sympathy in that hand, and the moment the slumbering boy felt it, he said,

"Oh, mother, have you come?"

He knew there was sympathy and affection in the touch of that hand. And if you, O sinner, will let Jesus reach out His hand and touch your heart, you too will find there is sympathy and love in it. That every lost soul here may be saved and come to the arms of our blessed Saviour is the prayer of my heart!