

A Reminder : Apart from the very obvious reason that God is healer, as demonstrated earlier, there are particular aspects of His nature that incites or motivates Him to heal.

These are ...

- (a) God's Peace
- (b) God's Compassion and Mercy
- (c) The Fatherhood of God
- (d) The Redemptive Dimension of the Lord Jesus Christ

In our previous session we discussed (a) God's Peace and Its Healing characteristic.

In this session, we focus on (b) God's Compassion and Mercy and its Inclination to Heal.

Understanding Compassion and Mercy

Compassion is synonymous with mercy. The two words are largely used interchangeably in scripture. The word 'lovingkindness' is equated to 'mercy' in the Bible.

Compassion = splanchnizomai = Feel **sympathy**, to **pity**.

To **feel deeply** or **viscerally**, to **yearn**

To be **moved** in the **inward parts**

Mercy = éleos = Compassion

Active pity

Kindness or goodwill towards the **miserable and the afflicted**, joined with a **desire to help them**

Compassion and mercy cannot be separated. They work together as a seamless whole.

- **The foundation of mercy is compassion.**
- **Where compassion is, mercy flows.**
- **Compassion feels; Mercy acts.**
- **Compassion is emotive; Mercy is enactive.**
- **Mercy is compassion in action.**

The Greek and Hebrew words translated 'MERCY' all have reference to a feeling of sincere and deep compassion for someone. To have mercy is to feel pity. But it does not stop there. The merciful person then acts to bring relief to the person, for whom they feel compassion. Compassion feels the sense of misery, despair and hopelessness in the person and then, in mercy, acts to remove the suffering.

The truly merciful person does not only FEEL for the other's misery, but in mercy seeks to remove the misery. Mercy is active pity. You are not only merciful when you 'feel' for the misfortunes of someone else. You are merciful when you act to relieve them of the attendant distress they feel.

Mercy is also focused on the sheer inability of the person help themselves. Mercy pitches into the human depravity of the soul, and its incapacity to help itself. The act of mercy also hopes for a transformation in the person. Through the offer of forgiveness, mercy not only removes the sin from the person, but also removes the guilt and shame of the act.

It is well-known that God's compassion and mercy toward man is great.

Ps. 119:156 Great are Your **TENDER MERCIES**, O LORD; Revive me according to Your judgments.

Note the word TENDER. God's compassion and mercy is 'tender', denoting His gentle, loving, kind, affectionate nature. A Hebrew word for mercy, '**racham**', actually means '**the womb - as cherishing the foetus**' (Strong's). As a mother feels for her developing baby in her womb, so does the Lord feel deeply, lovingly and caringly towards us in a very gentle manner. Mercy and compassion is never harsh, hard and cold. The very definition of compassion involves the ability to FEEL pity towards someone - and to feel deeply within. Jesus, our High Priest is **TOUCHED** with FEELINGS of our INFIRMITY.

Heb. 4:15a For we have not an high priest which cannot be **TOUCHED** with the **FEELINGS** of our **INFIRMITY** ... (**KJV**)

Heb. 4:15a For we do not have a high priest who cannot **SYMPATHIZE** with our **WEAKNESS**, ... (**NASB**)

God is not disconnected from the misery, pain or suffering associated with your sickness.

The next verse quoted below, Heb. 4:16, is an invitation to boldly come to God's throne of grace, to find mercy in times of need.

Heb. 4:16 Therefore let us **draw near with confidence** to the **throne of grace**, so that we may **receive mercy** and find **grace to help in time of need**.

I encourage you to come to God in your sickness, diseases or suffering of any kind. You may be in a serious and severe time of need. Draw near to God's throne of GRACE, to **FIND GRACE** in your **TIME OF NEED** and your will **RECEIVE MERCY**.

God's compassion FEELS your pain and suffering in sickness. His mercy moves Him to HEAL. He is not disconnected from, nor insensitive to your suffering in illness. In fact, one of the primary motivations for God to heal is because HE is full of COMPASSION and MERCY. He feels what you feel and desires to act in mercy to relieve you of your pain and sufferings.

Grace mercy and peace Grace is the first application of the the grace of God, and peace is the result in us. Hence Paul imparts "Grace, mercy and peace"

Examples of HEALINGS BORNE OUT FROM GOD'S COMPASSION AND MERCY

1. DAVID EQUATES HIS HEALING WITH GOD'S MERCY

In Psalm 6:2, David connected his cry for **HEALING** directly with his cry for **MERCY**. His perception of God's healing of him is that it would be nothing more than an expression of God's mercy. God's mercy is full of compassion that incites Him to heal the sick and the associated pain, sorrow and grief.

Psalm 6:2 Have **MERCY** on me, O Lord, for I am weak; O Lord, **HEAL** me, for my bones are troubled. (NKJV)

Mercy always act to relieve suffering. Mercy acts to heal sickness.

2. A LEPER IS HEALED BECAUSE JESUS WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION

Mark 1:40-42

- 40 And a **leper** came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are **willing**, You can make me clean."
- 41 **MOVED with COMPASSION**, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "**I am willing; be cleansed.**"
- 42 **Immediately** the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

Compassion in Jesus motivated Him to heal the leper. Note that Jesus was **MOVED** with compassion.

Moved = speirō = To sow, scatter seed.

The seed of compassion gives rise to a harvest of healing. May your sick body be the ground that receives the sowing of the seed of compassion from Christ that will produce a harvest of healing in your body.

Seed is akin to the Word of God (Matt 13). God sends His Word to heal (Psalm 107:22). The seed of this word will produce a harvest of healing. (More on this in the next session)

3. TWO BLIND MEN HEALED BECAUSE JESUS WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION

The two blind men were healed because Jesus was moved with compassion.

Matthew 20:34 **Moved with compassion**, Jesus **touched their eyes**; and immediately they **regained their sight** and **followed Him**.

TOUCHED = háptomai = To apply oneself to, to touch.
Refers to such handling of an object as to exert a modifying influence upon it or upon oneself.

We receive a modifying influence on our sickness, when Jesus touches us to heal us.

4. THE DEMONIAK OF THE GARASENE / GADAREN DELIVERED BY THE MERCY OF JESUS

This man who had a legion of demons, lived among the tombs and constantly gashed himself with stones, crying day and night in anguish. He ran to Jesus, who delivered him of all his demons. These demons requested to go into about 2000 pigs, that drowned themselves in the sea. This man was delivered and returned to his right mind. The people requested Jesus to leave their city - as He was causing economic loss to the herdsman of the pigs. The man requested to follow Jesus, who discouraged him from doing so. Instead, Jesus requested of him to go to his people and tell them how He had MERCY/COMPASSION on him.

Mark 5:18-20

- 18 As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him.
- 19 And **He did not let him**, but He said to him, “**Go home to your PEOPLE and REPORT to them what GREAT THINGS the Lord has done for you, and how He had MERCY (KJV - COMPASSION) on you.**”
- 20 And he went away and began to **proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.**

Note, Jesus did not let this man follow him, but the man was to go home to his people and tell the people of the compassion and mercy of Jesus. The healing was to demonstrate a greater reality, viz **God is compassionate and merciful**. This man was literally ‘sent’ by Jesus to broadcast this truth. He did this in the Roman region called Decapolis, consisting of ten cities covering a wide area as seen in the map attached (the cities in black constituted the Decapolis).



From living in an environment of DEATH among tombs, this man migrated to being used by God to minister to an enlarged sphere of TEN cities, testifying of GOD’S MERCY and COMPASSION. Your present state of sickness and threatening ‘death’ restricts and limits your functionality and potential use by God. In His mercy, God can use you and elevate you out from a confined context, away from the smell of death, and use you mightily as a witness of His compassion and mercy to a broader context. This

might be prophetic for those who are reading this. Through this man's testimony (and yours), many people will come to believe in Jesus Christ and accept Him as their Lord and Saviour.

When God heals you, may the healing highlight more aspects of the nature of God, than you, the one healed. Stay humble and do not attract unnecessary attention to yourself, in your bid to witness of the mercy and compassion of God. Some become filled with pride over the fact that God healed them. May your healing be used as a tool in God's hand to exhibit and put on display His mercy and compassion. We often lose sight of the higher purposes of God attached to His acts of healing.

Cf.

John 9:1-3

- 1 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.
- 2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"
- 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; **but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.**

At times, God permits illness, just to demonstrate His mighty works and compassionate nature in and through you, as a witness and testimony to others, so they may come into a new realm of faith. The healing of your sickness could activate someone else to greater faith in God.

5. HEZEKIAH'S HEALING AND EXTENSION OF LIFE BY 15 YEARS

Hezekiah became mortally ill, and is warned to set his house in order before he dies. He cries unto God to remember him. His prayer is intense and fervent, denoted by the turning of his face to the wall as he prayed. He simply asks God to remember him based upon the integrity and the accuracy of his walk. He weeps bitterly. God hears him. God heals him.

2 Kings 20:1-11

- 1 In those days Hezekiah **became mortally ill**. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, '**Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.**'"
- 2 Then he turned **his face to the wall and prayed** to the LORD, saying,
- 3 "Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, **how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight.**" And Hezekiah **wept bitterly.**

- 4 **Before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court**, the word of the LORD came to him, saying,
- 5 **"Return** and say to Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, **"I have HEARD YOUR PRAYER, I have SEEN your TEARS**; behold, I **WILL HEAL YOU**. On the third day you shall **go up to the house of the LORD**.
- 6 "I will add **fifteen years to your life**, and I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'"
- 7 Then Isaiah said, **"Take a cake of figs."** **And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.**
- 8 Now Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What will be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the third day?"
- 9 Isaiah said, "This shall be the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that He has spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten steps or go back ten steps?"
- 10 So Hezekiah answered, "It is easy for the shadow to decline ten steps; no, but let the shadow turn backward ten steps."
- 11 Isaiah the prophet cried to the LORD, and He brought the shadow on the stairway back ten steps by which it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz.

Before Isaiah left the courtyard, after giving Hezekiah the message of his imminent death, the scriptures indicate that God stopped him and instructed him to go back to Hezekiah to inform him that God was going to add 15 more years to his life.

15 = 3 X 5. **Five** is the number of **grace**, and the number **three** denotes **completeness**. So the extension of Hezekiah's life is an expression of the **completed nature of the grace of God** in his life. This too, is an expression of mercy and of compassion. I perceive that some who are sick, will not die, as God's work of grace in them is not yet fully matured or complete. **15 represents amplified or multiplied grace.**

The account of Hezekiah's healing is also recorded in Isaiah 38. There, Hezekiah's prayer - after he is healed - is recorded in Isaiah 38:10-20. Note the following:

Is. 38:16 "O Lord, by these things men live, And in all these is the **life of my spirit**; O **RESTORE me to HEALTH and LET ME LIVE!**

If you are sick, may this be your prayer too : **“Lord RESTORE to me HEALTH and LET ME LIVE!”**

Consider ...

Psalms 102:24 I say, “O my God, **do not take me away in the midst of my days,**
Your years are throughout all generations.

If you are sick, may this also be your prayer” **“Lord, do not take me away in the midst of my days”.**

THE HEALED DECLARE THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD :

Is. 38:19 “It is the **living who give thanks** to You, as I do today; **A father tells his sons about Your faithfulness.**

After his healing, Hezekiah indicates that he will declare God’s faithfulness to his sons. His healing was an expression of God’s Grace, Mercy and Faithfulness. God’s healing of him extended his life, so that he could **live to declare the praise of God and put on display the faithfulness of God as a witness to his sons, THE NEXT GENERATION.** Every generation must experience the miraculous power of God to heal, so that it can declare God’s faithfulness, compassion and mercy to the next generation.

A prayer recorded in the book of Habakkuk releases a cry for a present generation to see God’s powerful works, as they have heard from their predecessors. This cry concludes with the understanding that this would be so for one reason: God is Merciful – **“In wrath remember MERCY.”** (Hab. 3:2c). May God be merciful to us during the Covid-19 pandemic. Let Healing Flow!

Hab. 3:2 Lord, I have heard the **report about You and I fear.** O Lord, **revive Your work in the midst of the years,** In the midst of the years **make it known;** In wrath remember mercy. **(NASB)**

The words “I fear”, in the original Hebrew manuscripts, reads as : **“I stand in awe of your work, O Lord”.**

Hab. 3:2 "I have **HEARD** all about you, Lord. I am **FILLED WITH AWE** by your **AMAZING WORKS**. In this **TIME** of our **DEEP NEED**, **HELP** us again as you did in **YEARS GONE BY**. And in your anger, **REMEMBER your MERCY**." (NLT)

Hab. 3: 2 Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. **REPEAT THEM IN OUR DAY, IN OUR TIME MAKE THEM KNOWN** ; in wrath remember **MERCY**. (NIV)

6. EPAPHRODITUS CAME CLOSE TO DEATH BUT WAS GIVEN AN EXTENSION OF LIFE BECAUSE GOD HAD MERCY ON HIM

Phil. 2:25-30

- 25 But I thought it necessary to send to you **Epaphroditus**, my **brother** and **fellow worker** and **fellow soldier**, who is also **your messenger** and **minister to my need**;
- 26 because he was longing for you all and was **distressed** because **you had heard that he was sick**.
- 27 For indeed he was sick to the **POINT OF DEATH**, but **God had MERCY on him**, and not on him only but also on me, so **that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow**.
- 28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you.
- 29 **Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard**;
- 30 because **he came CLOSE TO DEATH** for the **WORK** of Christ, **risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me**.

It is possible to come 'CLOSE TO DEATH' and for God to HEAL you as an act of His MERCY , not just for you who are sick, but on everyone else not sick , who love you.

Epaphroditus was sent on behalf of the Philippian church to take financial and material support to the Apostle Paul. Paul calls him 'minister to my need'. He risked his life for this expedition, becoming severely sick, close to death - for his zeal for fulfilling the will of God. God heals him as an act of mercy (see verse 27). This act of mercy was also for Paul's sake, who loved Epaphroditus. In our appeal to God to heal the sick, we ask for mercy on the sick individual and all those who love them, for their death causes sorrow for all. There are many saints, who in their bid to provide strong support to their Apostolic oversight, risk their life and health in the process. May God keep and preserve you in good health. May your life be extended, because attached to your life is a zeal providing momentum to apostolic work.

Also, here are many servants of God - spiritual leaders, who in times of global crisis, risk their lives just to provide adequate care for those under their oversight and beyond. I encourage you to pray for them that God would preserve and keep them.

At the time of this writing, I was deeply saddened and affected by the passing away of many Ministers/Pastors. I found myself weeping even for some I did not even know personally. Spiritual leaders are treasure chests of Divine grace to the earth. God processes and develops them over many years, through varied experiences, to make them what He intends.

We must cherish the Divine grace that our spiritual leaders represent. Please PRAY for and HONOUR all spiritual leaders. Often your success in life is attributable to the grace delivered to you through the teaching and preaching of God's word by these servants of God. If they are taken out of the earth, the earth is in trouble.

"You will never experience the depth of a gifted person that you don't honour. People are gifts. When you dishonour them or don't recognise their value because of familiarity. You cut off the very thing that was designed to bless you. When they are gone ... they are gone. Then you will understand." (Dion Campbell).

This truth applies to all people - love and respect everyone, and your leaders in particular.

1 Thess. 5 :12 Dear brothers and sisters, **honor those who are your leaders** in the Lord's work. They **work hard among you** and **give you spiritual guidance**. Show them **great respect** and **wholehearted love** because of their work. And live peacefully with each other. (NLT)

7. JOB'S RESTORATION IS DESCRIBED AS AN ACT OF COMPASSION AND MERCY

James 5:10-11

- 10 As an example, brethren, of **suffering and patience**, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.
- 11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the **endurance of Job** and have seen the **outcome of the Lord's dealings**, that the **LORD IS FULL OF COMPASSION AND IS MERCIFUL**.

The restoration of Job in every respect, including his health, is described as '**THE OUTCOME OF THE LORD'S DEALINGS**'. This outcome is simply stated as

The LORD IS FULL OF COMPASSION AND IS MERCIFUL

Appeal to God's mercy and compassion - He is faithful to heal. May your healing point back to God and communicate the FULLNESS of his COMPASSION and MERCY.

Conclusion:

God's mercy and compassion is inexhaustible. His compassions never fail and His mercies are NEW or FRESH each and every new morning. There is sufficient compassion and mercy to heal you right now!

Lam 3:19-25

- 19 Remember my affliction and roaming, The wormwood and the gall.
- 20 My soul still remembers And sinks within me.
- 21 This I recall to my mind, Therefore **I have hope**.
- 22 *Through* the LORD's **mercies we are not consumed**, Because **His compassions fail not**.
- 23 *They are* **new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness**.
- 24 "The LORD *is* **my portion**," says my soul, "Therefore **I hope in Him!**"
- 25 The LORD *is* **good to those who wait for Him**, To the soul *who seeks Him*

ADDENDUM : COMPASSION AND MERCY MUST MOVE US TO PRAY FOR THE SICK

Jesus was moved with compassion in His ministry of healing the sick. His mercy sought to relieve many of their pain and suffering. We too, must be moved by sincere compassion and mercy for the sick. When we pray for the sick, we must not 'move' to pray for them, unless we are first **"DEEPLY MOVED INTERNALLY"** with compassion - pity or empathy. **We pray from the platform of compassion in the heart, not reason in the mind.**

Moving from sympathy to empathy.

Empathy means experiencing someone else's feelings. It comes from the German *Einfühlung*, or **'feeling into.'** It requires an emotional component of really feeling what the other person is feeling. **Sympathy**, on the other hand, means understanding someone else's suffering. Empathy is heart-breaking - you experience the other person's pain and joy. Sympathy is easier because you just feel sorry for someone.

The focus is on the one who is sick, not on you, the one praying for the healing. You must feel deeply compassionate for the person and earnestly desire their well-being. The resultant healing must not celebrate you, the one God used, but must celebrate the wellness of the one healed, and more importantly, bring to light the **MERCY** and **COMPASSION** of God. Allow God to put His compassion on display through how He heals.

LOVE must govern the administration of healing.

Eph. 2:5 But God, being **RICH in MERCY**, because of His **GREAT LOVE** with which He loved us,

Compassion flows from love. You can have all major spiritual gifts operative in your life, but if you have not love, you are nothing. When love is the primary motivation for being functional in the gifts of the Spirit (which includes gifts of healing and miracles), then the power of God will support what the love of God seeks to produce. **God is not obligated to send his power to support an activity not prompted by His love.** The Scriptures also indicate that love does not seek its own. So when we love and pray for the sick, the power of God will be attendant, because the one who prays is not self-seeking or self-promoting, but desires the well-being of the one for whom he is praying.

1 Cor 13:2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but **DO NOT HAVE LOVE** I am **NOTHING**.

1 Cor. 13:5b **LOVE** does not seek **ITS OWN**

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