

Hebrews 5.1-4

Finding Compassion...

There is a constant thread that is woven throughout the Scripture. It is something that seems to me to vindicate the truth of Christianity when it is compared to every false and man-made religion. It is the idea of a compassionate God who knows that we are utterly ruined by our sin and are helpless against its power. This idea is antithetical to every concept of human "self-esteem", to every idea of "self-reliance", to every precept of "self-righteousness" for it demands that WE confess our powerlessness. It demands that we cease to compromise with this broken nature, that we stop making excuses about our failure, that we confess that everything we seek to do is utterly worthless and cry for mercy as our ONLY hope. As distasteful as this notion is, it DOES perfectly align with reality. Instead of trying to alter the definition of what is good, (the devil's oldest and only play, and man's constant refrain of delight) this position recognizes that there is a standard of truth and righteousness, a standard of **right**-ness that surpasses our ability to attain, a standard made by a holy God, which we violate at

every turning. What the scripture commands is that we cease from all sin. We cannot, therefore we have a problem which surpasses us. For this problem we need outside rescue. This rescue comes in the form of our compassionate High Priest who stands between us and God and pours out the mercy which we could never deserve.

I. JESUS AND THE HIGH PRIEST

- a. OT priest was fallen, his struggle against sin was futile
- b. Jesus was victorious against sin
- c. This fact does not make Him despise us, rather it fills Him with compassion for He understands what it is that we face.
- d. Thus He is available to any who will cast themselves upon Him,
- e. Thus we find in Him our supply and entrance into the presence of God.

II. COMPASSIONATE FRIEND OF SINNERS

a. His compassion creates conflict with man's ideas of religion

- i. Even during His ministry upon the earth, Jesus was a friend to sinners, offering them the hope of forgiveness. It was not well received by the religious crowd.

Luke 5.27-32

Luke 15.1-2

- ii. He warned them that the things they were seeking and the things that God delights in are two separate things

Luke 16.14-17

- iii. His compassion is offered to all, but found by few

1. Those who know the wretched nature of their own lives and persons will find mercy.

Matthew 11:28-30

2. The proud and self-satisfied rarely find place in Christ

James 4.1-10

III. COMPASSION FOR?

- a. The unthankful and the evil

Luke 6.35

- b. The ignorant and those going astray

Hebrews 5.2

- c. Those who are ignorant,

- i. The universal, determined ignorance of fallen man

Romans 1:18-32

1. Turn from grace to wickedness
 2. Refuse to see God in creation
 3. Refuse to submit to His law
 4. Handed over to sinful passions to carry them to the ultimate ruinous end.
- ii. Ignorance of new, immature or false Christians
1. Recent converts
 2. Those who only want to be safe from Hell (and will often find that they are NOT, for they never own Christ as Lord.)
- iii. Circumstantial ignorance - Those who have had little teaching, but have longed for more
1. These often find themselves the subjects of great grace and understanding, which even the learned cannot hope to rival
 2. This is the manifest mercy of God
 3. This is the compassion of our great High Priest

iv. There is also a sinful ignorance of believers who return to the mire... These who are "going astray"

1. Willful acts of disobedience
2. Those who cannot be bothered to grow
3. Those caught in the snare of the Devil

IV. GOING ASTRAY

a. The natural state from which we were delivered. But the old man remains within and is constantly seeking to regain ascendancy

Romans 6.5-14

b. Personal delusions and rebellion

Ephesians 4.17-19

c. Seduction by others

i. False teachers –

2 Timothy 2.16-18

ii. Ruinous friends

1Corinthians 5.9-13

1Corinthians 15.33

iii. Bad relationships

2Corinthians 6.14-18

d. Backslidden –

i. time in the desert. Left to wander until mercy finds you

ii. Recovering backsliders - Conscious of your own sin, and unable to gain victory over it. –

1. Commanded to put off and put on

Ephesians 4.20-24

2. The all-important "IF" - verse 22.

We all too often see the command and then run ahead thinking, "OK, I got this..." that is the religion of man. You can do NOTHING without His power constantly within you.

3. Mind-Set of helpless dependence, of absolute need, for what we are commanded to do is impossible for us to do alone...

Colossians 3.1-11

Romans 12.1-2

V. THE HIGH PRIEST

- a. He can bear with ignorance, forgetfulness and provocation
- b. He can feel our grief
- c. He will do all that is needful to help those who come to Him for aid

- d. He loves those who come to Him and has never cast out a single sinner who has cried mercy.

VI. AVENUES OF GRACE

Our weaknesses become pathways, avenues of grace to all who walk with us... this is one reason that God was unashamed to tell of the failures of His people.

- a. The weakness of the priest was an avenue of grace to those who looked to him
 - i. The OT priest was a man like us and it was this that was the common thread and by which the people found passage to God, for he knows what it is to be us
 - ii. Any sin hardens, since He was without sin, He was not hardened in his love towards us.
- b. The mercy we have received should make us more fit and able to send that same mercy to others

- c. The temptation we face should help us know how best to help others
- d. Our sicknesses serve the same purpose
- e. Trials may be sanctified as well
- f. Despair and depression are best navigated toward the light by those who have struggled themselves.