

# Compassion

**Exodus 32:32-33**

**But now, please forgive their sin—and if not, then blot me out of the record you are keeping."**

**[33] The Lord replied to Moses, "I will blot out whoever has sinned against me."**

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## Forward

Christian compassion involves an impulse to act whenever we encounter another's pain. This is a human strength that promotes health spiritual and natural health.

Compassion involves the ability to sense and empathize with another person's pain, yet still trigger positive feelings within you.

### **Luke 10:25-37**

One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life?"

Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?"

The man answered, "'you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "

"Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!" The man wishing to justify his actions, asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus replied with an illustration: "A Jewish man was traveling on a trip from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes and money, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. "By chance a Jewish priest came along; but when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by.

A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

"Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt deep pity. Kneeling beside him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with medicine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.

The next day he handed the innkeeper two pieces of silver and told him to take care of the man. 'If his bill runs higher than that,' he said, 'I'll pay the difference the next time I am here.'

"Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked. The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."

Jesus told a parable to show how wide God's love and mercy is towards all. Jesus' story of a brutal highway robbery was all too familiar to his audience.

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho went through a narrow and steep valley surrounded by cliffs.

Many wealthy Jews had winter homes in Jericho. This narrow highway was dangerous and notorious for its robbers who could easily ambush their victim and escape into the hills. It was unsafe to travel it alone.

Through the study of these Scriptures, may you find an increased fulfillment through the practice of compassion.

## Chapter 1

### Moses intercedes for Israel

#### Exodus 32:32-33

But now, please forgive their sin—and if not, then blot me out of the record you are keeping." The Lord replied to Moses, "I will blot out whoever has sinned against me.

Moses felt a deep compassion for the people God had sent him to lead out of Egyptian bondage, that he was willing to sacrifice his own heavenly reward to save the people.

**Rejoice because your name is written in heaven.**

#### Luke 10:20

However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

The disciples had seen tremendous results as they ministered in Jesus' name and with his authority. They were elated by the victories they had witnessed, and Jesus shared their enthusiasm. He helped them get their priorities right, however, by reminding them of their most important victory—that their names were written in heaven. This honor was more important than any of their accomplishments. As we see God's wonders at work in and through us, we should not lose sight of the greatest wonder of all—our heavenly citizenship.

## **Great love for his people**

### **Romans 9:3**

For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race,

Paul expressed concern for his Jewish “brothers” by saying that he would willingly take their punishment if that could save them. While the only one who can save us is Christ, Paul showed a rare depth of love.

Jesus, he was willing to sacrifice for others. How concerned are you for those who don’t know Christ? Are you willing to sacrifice your time, money, energy, comfort, and safety to see them come to faith in Jesus?

### **Help those who have stood by my side.**

### **Philippians 4:3**

Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Paul did not warn the Philippian church of doctrinal errors, but he did address some relational problems. These two women had been workers for Christ in the church. Their broken relationship was no small matter, because many had become believers through their efforts. It is possible to believe in Christ, work hard for his kingdom, and yet have broken relationships with others who are committed to the same cause.

But there is no excuse for remaining unreconciled. Do you need to be reconciled to someone today?

The identity of this “loyal yokefellow” remains a mystery. It could be Epaphroditus, the bearer of this letter, or a comrade of

Paul was in prison. It could also be someone named Syzygus, another way to understand the word for yokefellow.

Those “whose names are in the book of life” are all who are marked for salvation through their faith in Christ (see also Luke 10:17-20; Rev. 20:11-15).

**Jesus will acknowledge his name before the father.**

### **Revelation 3:5**

The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels.

To be “dressed in white” means to be set apart for God and made pure. Christ promises future honor and eternal life to those who stand firm in their faith. The names of all believers are registered in the book of life. This book symbolizes God’s hosts of heaven as belonging to Christ (see Luke 12:8-9).knowledge of who belongs to him. All such people are guaranteed a listing in the book of life and are introduced to the

## Chapter 2

**Only those whose names are written in heaven will enter.**

### **Revelation 21:27**

nothing impure will not ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Not everyone will be allowed into the New Jerusalem, but “only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” (The book of life is explained in the notes on ■Rev. 3:5 and ■Rev. 20:12-15.) Don’t think that you will get in because of your background, personality, or good behavior. Eternal life is available to you only because of what Jesus, the Lamb, has done. Trust him today to secure your citizenship in his new creation.

**Do not let me face my own ruin.**

### **Numbers 11:15**

If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me--if I have found favor in your eyes--and do not let me face my own ruin."

The Israelites complained, and then Moses complained. But God responded positively to Moses and negatively to the rest of the people. Why? The people complained *to one another*, and nothing was accomplished. Moses took his complaint *to God*, who could solve any problem. Many of us are good at complaining to each other. We need to learn to take our problems to the One who can do something about them.

## **Forgive the sins of these people.**

### **Numbers 14:19**

In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now." Moses pleaded with God, asking him to forgive his people. His plea reveals several characteristics of God: (1) God is immensely patient; (2) God's love is one promise we can always count on; (3) God forgives again and again; and (4) God is merciful, listening to and answering our requests. God has not changed since Moses' day. Like Moses, we can rely on God's love, patience, forgiveness, and mercy.

## **The king wept for his son.**

### **2 Samuel 18:33**

The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you--O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Why was David so upset over the death of his rebel son? (1) David realized that he, in part, was responsible for Absalom's death. Nathan, the prophet, had said that because David had killed Uriah, his own sons would rebel against him. (2) David was angry at Joab and his officers for killing Absalom against his wishes. (3) David truly loved his son, even though Absalom did nothing to deserve his love. It would have been kinder and more loving to deal with Absalom and his runaway ego when he was younger.

## **Those not listed with the righteous**

### **Psalm 69:28**

May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.

The book of life is God's list of those who are in right relationship to him and who remain faithful (Psalm 1:3; Psalm 7:9; Psalm 11:7; Psalm 34:12; Psalm 37:17, 29; Psalm 55:22; Psalm 75:10; Psalm 92:12-14; Psalm 140:13). The New Testament use of "book of life" indicates those who will receive eternal life (see Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 13:8; Rev. 20:15).

## Chapter 3

### **Those who remain in Jerusalem will be called holy**

#### **Isaiah 4:3**

those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem.

The “Branch of the LORD” probably refers to the Messiah, although some believe it refers to Judah. The point is that during the distress predicted by Isaiah, some people will be protected by God’s loving grace. Those protected will be set apart to God when Messiah rules the earth (Jeremiah 23:5-6; Zech. 6:12-13). Their distinctive mark will be their holiness, not wealth or prestige. This holiness comes from a sincere desire to obey God and from wholehearted devotion to him. Evil will not always continue as it does now. The time will come when God will put an end to all-evil, and his faithful followers will share in his glorious reign.

### **There will come a time of distress**

#### **Daniel 12:1**

"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people--everyone whose name is found written in the book--will be delivered.

Great suffering is in store for God’s people throughout the years ahead. This way of describing the future is also used by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 30:7) and Jesus (Matthew 24:21ff). Yet the great suffering is tempered by a great promise of hope for true believers.

## **A scroll of remembrance was written**

### **Malachi 3:16**

Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name.

The “scroll of remembrance” may or may not be an actual book. The point is that God will remember those who remain faithful to him, and who love, fear, honor, and respect him.

**They will be God’s treasured possession.**

### **Malachi 3:17**

"On the day when I act," says the LORD Almighty, "they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him.

God’s treasured possessions are those faithful to him. This fulfills the promise he made in the covenant to his people (Exodus 19:5). According to 1 Peter 2:9, believers are God’s treasured possession. Have you committed your life to God for safekeeping?

**Pardon the iniquity of this people**

### **Numbers 14:19**

Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

Moses pleaded with God, asking him to forgive his people. His plea reveals several characteristics of God: (1) God is immensely patient; (2) God's love is one promise we can always count on; (3) God forgives again and again; and (4) God is merciful, listening to and answering our requests. God has not changed since Moses' day. Like Moses, we can rely on God's love, patience, forgiveness, and mercy.

## Chapter 4

**God's city and his people will be called by his name.**

### **Daniel 9:18, 19**

O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

It would be a mistake to read the Bible as dry history and miss the deep personal feelings. In this section, Daniel was crying out to the Lord. He had a deep concern for his nation and his people. So often our prayers are without passion and true compassion for others. Are you willing to pray by pouring out your deep feelings to God?

Daniel begged for mercy, not for help, because he knew that his people deserved God's wrath and punishment. God sends his help, not because we deserve it, but because he wants to show great mercy. If God would refuse to help us because of our sin, how could we complain? But when he sends mercy when we deserve punishment, how can we withhold our praise and thanksgiving?

## **God forgives those who are small**

### **Amos 7:2**

And it came to pass, that when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? For he is small.

The following series of visions conveyed God's message to the people using images that were familiar to them—locusts, fire, and a plumb line.

Twice Amos was shown a vision of Israel's impending punishment, and his immediate response was to pray that God would spare Israel. Prayer is a powerful privilege. Amos's prayers should remind us to pray for our nation.

## **Forgive them for they know not what they do.**

### **Luke 23:34**

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Allusion may be made to the registry of births, in which those born of a particular tribe were entered in the list of their respective families under that tribe. This was the book of life; and when any died, his name might be considered as blotted out of this list. But as Moses addressed the Lord, he undoubtedly referred, by faith, to the book of God's remembrance.

Jesus asked God to forgive the people who were putting him to death—Jewish leaders, Roman politicians and soldiers, bystanders—and God answered that prayer by opening up the way of salvation even to Jesus' murderers. The Roman centurion and soldiers who witnessed the crucifixion said, "Surely he was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54). Soon

many priests were converted to the Christian faith (Acts 6:7). Because we are all sinners, we all played a part in putting Jesus to death. The gospel—the Good News—is that God is gracious. He will forgive us and give us new life through his Son.

Roman soldiers customarily divided up the clothing of executed criminals among themselves. When they cast lots for Jesus' clothes, they fulfilled the prophecy in Psalm 22:18.

### **The wrath of God did wax hot against them.**

#### **Exodus 32:10**

Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

Idols again! Even though Israel had seen the invisible God in action, they still wanted the familiar gods they could see and shape into whatever image they desired. How much like them we are! Our great temptation is still to shape God to our liking, to make him convenient to obey or ignore. God responds in great anger when his mercy is trampled on. The gods we create blind us to the love our loving God wants to shower on us. God cannot work in us when we elevate anyone or anything above him. What false gods in your life are preventing the true God from living in you?

God was ready to destroy the whole nation because of their sin. But Moses pleaded for mercy, and God spared them. This is one of the countless examples in the Bible of God's mercy. Although we deserve his anger, he is willing to forgive and restore us to himself. We can receive God's forgiveness from sin by asking him. Like Moses, we can

pray that he will forgive others and use us to bring them the message of his mercy.

**Allow me to blot out their names.**

**Deuteronomy 9:14**

Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.

It seems as though Moses acted immediately, grinding the golden calf into powder, and forcing the people to drink water mixed with it. But evidently, Moses spent 40 days and nights interceding for the people.

## Chapter 5

### **The Lord will blot his name out.**

#### **Deuteronomy 29:20**

The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.

Moses told the Hebrews that when they were ready to return to God, he would be ready to receive them. God's mercy is unbelievable. It goes far beyond what we can imagine. Even if the Jews deliberately walked away from him and ruined their lives, God would still take them back. God would give them inward spiritual renewal (circumcise their hearts). God wants to forgive us and bring us back to himself too. Some people will not learn this until their world has crashed in around them. Then the sorrow and pain seem to open their eyes to what God has been saying all along. Are you separated from God by sin? No matter how far you have wandered, God promises a fresh beginning if only you will turn to him.

### **A man is sought to stand in the gap**

#### **Ezekiel 22:30**

And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

The wall spoken of here is not made of stones, but of faithful people united in their efforts to resist evil. This wall was in disrepair because there was no one who could lead the people back to God.

The feeble attempts to repair the gap—through religious rituals or messages based on opinion rather than God’s will—were as worthless as whitewash, only covering over the real problems. What the people really needed was total spiritual reconstruction!

When we give the appearance of loving God without living his way, we are covering up sins that could eventually damage us beyond repair. Don’t use religion as a whitewash; repair your life by applying the principles of God’s Word. Then you can join with others to stand “in the gap” and make a difference for God in the world.

### **You tell my wanderings.**

#### **Psalm 56:8**

You tell my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?

Even in our deepest sorrow, God cares! Jesus reminded us further of how much God understands us—he knows even the number of hairs on our heads (Matthew 10:30). Often we waver between faith and fear. When you feel so discouraged that you are sure no one understands, remember that God knows every problem and sees every tear.

### **Let them not be written with the righteous.**

#### **Psalm 69:28**

Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.

The book of life is God’s list of those who are in right relationship to him and who remain faithful (Psalm 1:3; Psalm 7:9; Psalm 11:7; Psalm 34:12; Psalm 37:17, 29; Psalm 55:22; Psalm 75:10; Psalm 92:12-14;

Psalm 140:13). The New Testament use of “book of life” indicates those who will receive eternal life (see Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 13:8; Rev. 20:15).

**All of God’s mercies are in your book.**

Psalm 139:16

Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

**My hand shall be upon the prophets**

**Ezekiel 13:9**

And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, both shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God.

These false prophets covered their lies (a “flimsy wall”) with “whitewash”—a pleasing front. Such superficiality can’t hold up under God’s scrutiny

## Chapter 6

### Great love for the kinsmen

#### **Romans 9:3**

For I could wish that I were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Paul expressed concern for his Jewish “brothers” by saying that he would willingly take their punishment if that could save them. While the only one who can save us is Christ, Paul showed a rare depth of love. Like Jesus, he was willing to sacrifice for others. How concerned are you for those who don’t know Christ? Are you willing to sacrifice your time, money, energy, comfort, and safety to see them come to faith in Jesus?

### Help those who labored with me.

#### **Philippians 4:3**

And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life.

Paul did not warn the Philippian church of doctrinal errors, but he did address some relational problems. These two women had been workers for Christ in the church. Their broken relationship was no small matter, because many had become believers through their efforts. It is possible to believe in Christ, work hard for his kingdom, and yet have broken relationships with others who are committed to the same cause. But there is no excuse for remaining unreconciled. Do you need to be reconciled to someone today?

The identity of this “loyal yokefellow” remains a mystery. It could be Epaphroditus, the bearer of this letter, or a comrade of Paul in prison. It

could also be someone named Syzygus, another way to understand the word for yokefellow.

Those “whose names are in the book of life” are all who are marked for salvation through their faith in Christ (see also Luke 10:17-20; Rev. 20:11-15).

### **The overcomer will be clothed in white raiment.**

#### **Revelation 3:5**

He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

To be “dressed in white” means to be set apart for God and made pure. Christ promises future honor and eternal life to those who stand firm in their faith. The names of all believers are registered in the book of life. This book symbolizes God’s knowledge of who belongs to him. All such people are guaranteed a listing in the book of life and are introduced to the hosts of heaven as belonging to Christ

### **He that overcomes shall inherit all things.**

#### **Revelation 21:27**

He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

The “cowardly” are not those who are fainthearted in their faith or who sometimes doubt or question, but those who turn back from following

God. They are not brave enough to stand up for Christ; they are not humble enough to accept his authority over their lives. They are put in the same list as the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the liars, the idolaters, the sexually immoral, and those practicing magic arts.

God will reward those who can endure the testing of evil and remain faithful.

**To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:**

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

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