

God's Compassion for His People

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[0 : 00] As we consider more the verses that we read in verse 7 to verse 12 where we see God's compassion for his people.

The three headings to note, the compassionate God, the commissioning God, and the committed God. In all your struggles, in all your pains, in all your confusions even, may you never lose sight of the truth of the God who cares.

God who's with you always, who's promised never to leave you nor forsake you. God isn't some remote detached deity, no.

God is the ever-present Lord, the ever-present, ever-loving God who gives and shows his steadfast love to his people at all times.

And that truth is evident here in the story of the deliverance, the rescue of God's people from Egypt. And that truth of our God who shows his compassion to his people, that truth is evident even in our own time, as we know and see his grace and mercy towards all who are his.

[1 : 22] And it's this aspect of God's tender-hearted care, his compassion, his love, his steadfast love, that's what's going to be the theme of our thoughts this morning, our sermon this morning, because at all times we put him at the centre.

And I pray that as we look again at this passage, that even if you're worshipping, as you are worshipping remotely this morning, that you'll know the presence of God with you, that you'll know him who's beside you, that you'll know that promise is sure and steadfast, that God is with you in every circumstance.

And you who know the Lord Jesus as your saviour, you know, and I pray that you'll be reminded to know, that you have that intimate relationship with him, that you have that relationship with God through the finished work of the Lord Jesus, so that you can stand before God because of the Lord Jesus, our mediator, our go-between, between God and man.

And us this morning, as we stand on mercy's ground, as we stand, as we come before God who welcomes his people to himself through the mediator, the one ultimate mediator, the Lord Jesus, well, we do have to consider Moses, the mediator between God and the Israelites there in Egypt.

And that pointing forward to the Lord Jesus, our once-for-all mediator. And so we consider, we're going to look at Moses, Moses whom God would send to deliver the Israelites from out of Egypt.

[3 : 05] Moses who'd be that go-between, between God and the children of Israel. Moses, as we'll see, who was a very reluctant mediator, mediator, but whom God chose, even in Moses' weakness.

Moses was chosen to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. And so it's this dialogue that we read there, or we began to read anyway, in chapters 3, Exodus 3, that dialogue between God and Moses at the burning bush.

So we're going to focus our hearts on this morning, as we remember to whom we give worship. It's God, the compassionate God, the commissioning God, the committed God, the compassionate God.

Many, many years after Moses met with God there at the burning bush, Moses wrote down, not just the book of Exodus, he wrote in fact the first five books of the Old Testament.

But Moses was writing down the history of the people of Israel and Egypt, and Moses, under divine inspiration, had recorded God's words to him and to his people.

[4 : 19] Even as we saw just a few weeks ago at the end of chapter 2, where Moses wrote that God heard the groanings of his people, that God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that God saw his people and that God knew.

God knew he had concern for his people. God heard, God remembered, God saw, and God knew. And that response of God to Moses was conveyed to Moses, even in earshot, as Moses met with God there at the burning bush.

And God telling Moses that he'd seen, that he'd heard, heard the misery of his people crying out to him, and that God knew their sufferings.

And in God's concern for his people, God would act. His covenant people wouldn't be left to wither and die there in Egypt. And as we continue to reflect on the way that God dealt with Moses, Moses the mediator between God and his people, the more that we see God's concern for his people, God's concern such that he would send a mediator to intervene, to save them, to save them from their sufferings.

Remember, it's the same God who spoke to Moses there in that desert location. It's the same God who speaks to you in your wilderness, in your wilderness journey, especially when your wilderness journey can so often be full of the harshness, the sorrows, the sufferings, the deprivations, the trials that, yes, come from being in a world of sin and oppression to the believer.

[6 : 13] Because God, the same God, God isn't indifferent to the suffering of his people. God won't allow any of his children to endure more than they can bear.

He hears your cry, he sees your pain, he knows your needs, he knows your needs even before you, even before you ask. God isn't a God who is unconcerned about you, he's not a God who turns a blind eye to the pain of his people.

God is a God who has compassion on you, on all who are his, even as he had compassion on his people there in their languishing in Egypt.

Such is God's grace, such is God's mercy. Yes, and even when, when we err, even when we stumble, even when we trip up, God continues to affirm his love for you, his steadfast love towards you.

We hear that echoed in the time of Hosea the prophet, as we read in Hosea 11, verse 8, when God says to his erring people, how can I give you up, O Ephraim?

[7 : 29] My compassion grows warm and tender. And it's that constant love of God towards his people and his concern for them that shows us that God had not forgotten his people, that he remembered them, that remembering that would lead to action in God's part.

As we read there in verse 8, where God says, I've come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up to, out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

You see, God hadn't forgotten his people. In God's steadfast love, he'd remembered them and God was going to fulfill his covenant promise to deliver his people, to be with them, to rescue them.

And God tells Moses that he's come down. He's come down in order to bring his people up. In fact, the way that God speaks tells us that God had already come down.

The God of heaven had come down from heaven to earth to rescue his people. God had come down to prize his people from the hands of the Egyptians. He'd come to deliver his people from that cruel hand and to bring them to a better land.

[8 : 51] And in God's coming down, he'd bring his people up. God would raise his people up from their burdens of suffering. God would lighten their load.

God would cause them to be lifted up from the oppressive hand of their oppressors there in Egypt. And in that bringing up, God would bring them to an altogether different land, an altogether different situation.

God would bring them to a land where his people could enjoy sweet fellowship with him. That land that, yes, at that time was still occupied by pagan tribes, but the land that tribes would be dispossessed of.

And then remember again, it's the same God who came down to deliver his people in order to raise them up. It's the same God who's come down to deliver you, to raise you up, to bring you to a better land, a better place, to bring you into his kingdom.

kingdom. It's what we're assured of as we read in the New Testament in Hebrews 11, 16. It's the author there where he speaks of a better country, a heavenly one, a city, the city that God has prepared for his people.

[10 : 12] And yes, while you may well be enduring many afflictions at present, even at this very moment, remember the promise that you have in the Lord Jesus, that the Lord Jesus came down from heaven to earth.

He came down to raise you up, to raise you up in him. He came down from heaven to earth to make it possible for you to be raised up in that resurrection power so that you might be with him, so that you might know him, so that you might trust him, so that you might know him as Lord and Savior, the Savior who's delivered you from oppression, the oppression of sin, the misery of the dominion of sin.

All possible because of the compassionate love of God towards you who are his. But then, secondly, we see here the commissioning God.

For 400 years since the time that Jacob arrived in Egypt with 70 of his family, God hadn't spoken directly to his people, certainly in regard to God's choosing one from amongst the people to deliver them out of Egypt.

But now, after many, many generations of Israelites there in Egypt, God had come. God had come and God identified Moses as the one who would bring his people, leave his people out of Egypt.

[11 : 44] This is Moses, 80-year-old Moses, Moses would be the one, would be God's servant, would lead God's people out of that Egyptian oppression.

God in his perfect wisdom, God in his perfect providence had chosen Moses. Moses was the man of his choice amongst God's people.

In God's sovereign purposes, Moses had been saved from death even as a little baby when God so, in his providence, ensured that the Egyptian princess would find Moses in that basket that Moses' mother had placed in the River Nile.

In God's providence, Moses had been raised even in his own family in his first nine, ten years or so. Moses had been taught the truth of God, the things of God.

And then, for 30 years or so, in that Egyptian palace learning the ways of the Egyptians, all under God's providential ruling and overruling.

[12 : 50] And then, at age 40, when Moses tried to exert his authority even in killing an Egyptian slave master, and then being found out and running away, fleeing to the land of Midian, again, all under God's providence.

God sending Moses to that wilderness experience where Moses would learn patience, learn to trust in God, learn to rely upon Him. But now, the moment has come.

The moment has come when God calls Moses to bring his people out of Egypt. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

Again, we have to see this. We have to see it in all this. God sending and choosing Moses. God commissioning Moses. That commissioning that points forward to the Lord Jesus, the ultimate mediator.

Jesus, chosen, commissioned from all eternity. Jesus, the Son of God, Jesus sent to rescue his people from the slavery of sin's oppression.

[14 : 02] and as God chose Moses from amongst his people to save his people, so God chose his one and only Son, the Lord Jesus who came for us.

Jesus who took upon himself the form of a servant. Jesus who was born in human flesh. Jesus who came to save man as man. Because it was only as man that Jesus could save man.

Only as man, a sinless man, could Jesus save sinful humanity. Only as sinless man could Jesus appease God's wrath and save sinner man.

And for that truth we give praise and thanks to God that the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, was willing to come, was willing to be sent, willing to be commissioned and to suffer as he did in saving us, saving his people from our sins.

But of the willingness of Jesus to be sent for us, if that willingness speaks of his delight to do God's will, well, what of Moses' response to God's calling him to go and to lead God's people out of Egypt?

[15 : 25] Well, look again at Moses' immediate response that we read there in verse 11. Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?

This brings us, as we're going to focus on these words, but brings us to the committed God. Because 40 years before God called Moses there at the burning bush, 40 years before, Moses certainly did consider that he was the man who'd rescue God's people from their slavery.

But that was 40 years before. That was 40 years before when Moses was a brash and self-confident man. But in these 40 years since that time where he tried to exercise his own authority.

In these 40 years hence, Moses has changed. And God willing, as we'll see next Lord's Day morning, Moses puts up many objections to God, choosing him for that great task of delivering God's people from Egypt.

But it's this first objection that in many ways is the one that I'm sure most of us can easily identify with when Moses cries out, Who am I?

[16 : 43] Isn't that the response of so many of the Lord's people whether in biblical times or in our own times? When God calls you to do a particular work for him and you respond by saying, Who am I?

Let's think of even examples in biblical times. Gideon, for example, one of the heroes of the faith. And yet, when God first called Gideon to defeat the Midianites, to defeat these enemies of God's people, when God said to Midian, Do I not send you?

Gideon was reluctant to go. Please, Lord, Gideon says, How can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh and I am the least in my father's house.

When Jeremiah, Prophet, Prophet Jeremiah was told by God that God had appointed him to be a prophet of the nations. Jeremiah made the excuse.

He said, I'm only a young man. Oh, Lord God, behold, I do not know how to speak for I'm only a youth. Gideon, Jeremiah, these men of God whom God had commissioned for God's service, these men who had been called eternally by God to do a particular work for him.

[18 : 07] But these men who replied in the same way that Moses replied to God when God called Moses to do a work for him, who am I? But to these same men, God gave the same reply to Gideon, to Jeremiah, to Moses, to you.

I will be with you. Listen to the words that God said to Gideon. God said, I will be with you. To Jeremiah, I am with you.

To you whom God is calling and commissioning for the work of the kingdom, whether indeed in your own house, in your own household, in your own home, in the street where you live, your work, this land, even other lands, he promises, I will be with you.

And yes, the task that Moses was commissioned for to go to Pharaoh, the mightiest ruler of the time, to bring God's people out of Egypt, well, humanly speaking, it was an enormous proposition.

This 80-year-old man, to go back to a land he hadn't lived in for 40 years, to speak in a language that in all likelihood he hadn't spoken for 40 years, he's going to have to move from the quiet of his wilderness experience, and go to the drama of an Egyptian court and persuade Pharaoh to let God's people go.

[19 : 35] But God makes no mistakes, makes no mistakes in whom he chooses for his work. Whether it's Moses for that particular work that God had given him to do, whether in Gideon and leading a small number of Israelites against a mighty army, whether Jeremiah to be that prophet to the nations, whether you for the work that God has given you to do for him.

Work that these men of old were given that was tough, work that God gives you that so often is difficult work. But of course, and we say in all reverence, not remotely as difficult as the work that God the Father gave God the Son to do when the Father commissioned his Son to leave heaven, to go to earth to save his people from their sins.

But Jesus came willingly. He suffered willingly. And even in that crisis there in the garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus sweated great drops of blood, and Jesus prayed to his Father that if it were possible, let the cup of his suffering pass from him.

Well, moments later, Jesus would cry out to his Father, not my will, but your will be done. Jesus was fully committed to do the work that God the Father had given him to do, even when it meant drinking from the last dregs of that cup of suffering.

Will you not follow the Lord Jesus and delight to do the Father's will? You know, it's not easy. It's not something we can do, as it were, naturally, to say, not my will, but your will be done.

[21 : 22] But we say these words in faith. You see, Moses would do the work that God had given him to do, but only after much conversing with God. But before we close our thoughts on this passage, as we saw, God promises Moses, I will be with you.

These same words of promises we've seen that God has given to those who've gone before, words of promise that God demands that you respond to by faith.

Just as Moses was asked to respond to the word that God had given him, to respond in faith. See, God said to Moses that God would be with him, but he didn't just say these words.

He said, as an attachment to these words of promise, but I will be with you and this shall be the sign for you that I have sent you. When you've brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God in this mountain.

And certainly these words were not what Moses had expected to hear. We might suggest that Moses wanted to hear something of immediate significance, but God gives Moses that future prospect, a future prospect to believe in, to hope in, to trust in, and that prospect of God's people worshipping God there on the very mountain that God was speaking to Moses through that burning bush.

[22 : 56] That was the sign. That was the sign. No specific timescale was given, but only the guarantee of the promise to be fulfilled at a future time.

And yes, you and I, we don't always, we don't often, see immediate confirmations of God's promise to be with you.

But we know that he is with you. We have that assurance that he is with us always, as the Lord Jesus promised even to the very end of the age. But remember this, that God doesn't deceive, God doesn't tell lies, as God has promised, so he fulfills.

So you can be absolutely assured that yes, even of his immediate presence now and the fulfillment of his promises in particular circumstances, even at a time that honors and glorifies God in God's time and for God's glory.

So remember then, God, the God of compassion, the God who commissions you, the God who's committed to you and to all who are his, and in seeing and knowing the compassionate God, the commissioning God, the committed God, you'd give your life to him, that you'd be assured of his love and compassion towards you, that you'd be assured that what he commissions you to do is done for his glory and for his sake, and know that as he's committed to all who are his, that he's committed to you who know him and love him and have given your life to him.

[24 : 42] And so may God bless to us his word this morning. Amen. And let us pray. Lord, we marvel at your truth, the truth that you give to us, of your promises, your promises that are sure and confirmed in the Lord Jesus.

Lord, may we live in that faith, that hope, that trust and love. Lord, help us the more to love you, to serve you, to do as you have called us to do, to go and to serve and to be your disciples.

Lord, be near us as we continue before you in worship. Be with us for the remainder of this day, your day. Lord, we thank you for the promise of your presence to be with us always.

And Lord, may we abide in that presence. Hear us, Lord, as we continue before you now. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.