

Young People’s Quarterly

Compassion

Quarterly Aim: The student will evaluate his life for areas where he can show greater compassion towards others.

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About the Writer



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After obtaining his Master's Degree in Bible from the Little Rock Seminary, he has served in various capacities for nearly twenty years. Although currently serving as senior pastor of Victory Baptist Church in Sherwood,

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Robert's experience with youth began at the Conway MBSF, followed by pastoring the teens of County Avenue Baptist Church in Texarkana, Arkansas. Robert is the camp registrar for National Camp Week Two at Bogg Springs, and also assists in the planning and development of camp programming from year to year. Robert's writing experience includes authoring VBS and youth camp teaching materials for the ABA.

Robert has been married to his wife, Sherri, since 1994, and is the father of two teenage girls, Sophie and Sydney.

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A Surprise Source of Compassion

APPLICATION

To show human compassion from Pharaoh's daughter.

SCRIPTURES TO READ

Text: Exodus 2:1-10.

Related Scripture: Deuteronomy 13:17; 1 Samuel 23:21;
1 Kings 8:50; 2 Chronicles 30:9; 36:15, 16; Psalms 78:38;
86:15; Luke 15:20; 1 Peter 3:8.

Devotional Reading: Joseph's Response to His Brothers,
Genesis 50:15-21.

Introduction

Mr. Canine was an unpopular teacher. He seemed grouchy even in his best moods. He acted as though he expected every student to have straight A's. Even those who did make perfect scores got the impression that he expected more out of them. When people did not measure up, it was clear that he had little patience for them.

Jason had several run ins with Mr. Canine. While Jason was a friendly, Christian student who made good grades, he also was notoriously forgetful and clumsy. When Jason would forget his homework in his locker or when he would spill an experiment or trip over a laptop cord, it was a chore for Mr. Canine to keep himself from exploding.

One day Jason was driving to school when he got lost in a song he was listening to and missed his turn off. As a result, he had to back track and take the long way. Easing from a stop through an intersection under a green light, Jason was clipped on the rear bumper by a drunk driver. His car was spun into a utility pole on the corner. Jason was unharmed, but his car was damaged. After calling the police and filing an accident report, he arrived at school late.

Upon entering class Mr. Canine demanded to know his reason for tardiness. Jason began by saying he missed his turn off for the school. At this point, Mr. Canine erupted in a volcanic-level outrage admonishing young Jason about the need to be focused and disciplined or else he will utterly fail in life.

After a five-minute berating, Mr. Canine cooled down enough to allow Jason to interject the rest of his story. When he mentioned the drunk driver, Mr.

Canine immediately changed his tone. He began to ask questions about Jason's well-being, the condition of the car and if he needed any help. Jason and the entire class were speechless in the face of this outpouring of compassion.

When Mr. Canine realized why they were reacting this way, he explained that his mother was killed by a drunk driver when he was young. He was truly moved with heartfelt emotion for any victim of such thoughtless, selfish, criminal behavior. Jason was mesmerized by the outflow of kindness from his otherwise gruff instructor. Compassion had come to him from an unexpected resource.

- When have you been shown kindness from an unexpected person?
- Do you think this situation will affect the relationship of the teacher and student?
- Why do you suppose we think others to be incapable of compassion (when in reality anybody can be)?

In today's lesson, we will see a Bible example of compassion from an enemy of the people of God. Seeing what even the unsaved are capable of should motivate the child of God to be an even greater example.

1. Climate

When reading the context of today's story, the Bible student will see a hostile climate in which the events took place. God made a covenant with Abraham. Abraham's grandson Jacob had a son named Joseph who was sold by his brothers into slavery and ultimately ended up in Egypt. Joseph rose to the highest level of government and under his influence, brought his family to live in Egypt to weather a drought. After Joseph passed away, his family and descendants became slaves to the Egyptian government.

When a pharaoh arose into power who did not remember Joseph and all he had done for them, he decided to treat the Hebrews abusively. If the Egyptians didn't act, the Hebrews could eventually rise up and take over by their sheer might. So, they decided to break them with intensely hard labor and oppression. No matter what Pharaoh tried to do to stop them, the Jewish people continued to increase in number and strength because of the power of God in them.

Finally, Pharaoh ordered that any newborn baby boy born to the Jews would have to be thrown into the river. This is likely because one of the Egyptians' main gods was of the river and such an action would be to appease him and gain Pharaoh's favor.

This climate was hostile toward the Hebrews and toward their newborn baby boys. No one would expect any good to come to them if they were a descendant of Jacob living in Egypt. Because the situation was so bleak, it created the perfect opportunity for God to shine!

- Why do you suppose the Hebrews were so mighty among the Egyptians?
- Why would the powerful Egyptian people be intimidated by their own slaves?

- Give a few reasons why God would allow such a climate of oppression and hostility to happen to His people.

2. Circumstances (Exodus 2:1-4)

The setting of the story was not ideal for individual pleasure, but it was the right one for the circumstances God was directing. A man and a woman fell in love and married. According to God's plan for a man and a woman, they were able to conceive and they had children. When the story begins, they were having their third child. They happened to be Hebrew and they happened to have a boy. This was double trouble under the current climate in Egypt.

As with any mother, she did not willingly agree to throwing her child in the river to die. Everything in her was designed by God to protect and care for her infant. She hid him as long as she could, but he could not be kept secret forever.

When he reached the age of development where he simply could no longer remain hidden, she had to find a way to give him some small chance of survival. While she was commanded to throw him in the river, she chose to use the river as a method of rescue instead. She wove a small basket and covered it with an oily natural substance in order to make it waterproof. She was not going to set her child into a situation wherein he would not have a chance to live. She even refused to loose him into open water, but released him into the shelter of the reeds to keep him from disappearing.

The circumstances of the story were enriched a bit by the close, watchful eye of the baby's sister. She loved her baby brother and did not want him to be harmed. Being very interested in his wellness, she stood a safe distance away and watched him.

- Would you willingly kill your own child just because the government told you to do so? Talk about it.
- What do you think Moses' mother was hoping to have happen when she made a little boat for him?
- Would you be like his sister Miriam who watched with interest, or would you take some other action?

3. Charity (Exodus 2:5-10)

The daughter of Pharaoh was involved in a bath in the river accompanied by her attendants. They would generally do all the work for the princess while she patiently awaited their every assistance. It was a process of the utmost luxury which was reserved for only the wealthiest of citizens. If she was participating in any sort of religious ceremony, it would also make sense that she would be open to any communication from her river god.

She noticed the basket in the reeds which would have seemed strange to her. When she noticed it was a crying Hebrew baby boy, she might have had any number of reactions. Certainly she did not agree with her father's policy of child murder, for she had pity on the baby rather than revulsion or fury at the sight. Fortunately, Miriam was close at hand to direct her to a conclusion which was beneficial for the baby: someone to feed him.

Miriam was able to fetch the baby's own mother to nurse him until he was old enough to wean. The princess had compassion on the baby and paid to have the real mother take care of him. While she didn't know the woman who cared

for him was the real mother, she began to have feelings of her own for him. Ultimately, she took him as her own and raised him.

The princess gave him the name Moses which means to pull or lift out. She no doubt connected this event to her belief in the river god, but also personalized him as her very own. She raised him in her level of society, shielding him from the baggage of his Hebrew identity.

- Discuss the various ways that the princess demonstrated compassion.
- Can you think of any good reasons she might have not shown the baby compassion?
- How do you think Moses' mother felt when she learned she would get to keep her son while also being paid for doing so?

Conclusion

In today's lesson we see compassion coming from a surprise source. Pharaoh wanted all the little Hebrew baby boys killed, yet his own daughter went against him to raise one as her very own. There is no indication that the princess had any faith in God, yet she had compassion on the child which preserved one of the greatest leaders the world will ever know. If the ungodly people of the world can show compassion, then shouldn't the people of God also show compassion? According to 1 Peter 3:8, the believers are commanded to be compassionate toward one another. Since this is so, then make sure to open your heart to others who are in need.

- When you think of something compassionate you have done for another, what comes to mind?
- Is there a person or people that you would have a hard time being compassionate toward?
- Do you think God wants you to be a surprise source of compassion?