

Adult 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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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

The theme of the lessons in this quarterly is compassion. The theme verses are Romans 9:15, 16 which say, "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." God has a heart of compassion, mercy and kindness. His desire is to help people through the troubles they face in life. The problem is that sometimes people do not recognize the goodness of God and refuse what He wants. King David wrote, "The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy" (Psalm 145:8). Another psalmist tried to teach the people of Israel a history lesson which portrayed the abundant compassion of the Lord. Many times Israel had rebelled against God but He forgave their sins (Psalm 78:38). Mercy, grace, forgiveness and compassion are the natural outflowing of the character of God. He is "a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Psalm 86:15).

The compassion portrayed in this lesson sprang from a source where compassion was not the norm. Israel was in Egypt. They had begun under good terms with the rulers, but a pharaoh had come to power who did not remember the goodness of Joseph. He feared them. If they decided to turn against the ruler, they could make a difference in battle. He decided to make them his workforce. They were treated like slaves. However, the harsh treatment did not decrease their numbers. He tried everything to lower the population. Pharaoh even issued a decree that every male child born to the Jews must die. This decree shows some of the terrible conditions under which the Jewish people lived. Who would ever expect a member of the ruling family to have compassion on a bunch of dangerous slaves? Yet that is the object of this lesson. One in that family exhibited compassion.

1. _____ **The Family's Faith (Exodus 2:1-4)**

Amram was a godly man. He and his wife, Jochebed, cared more about God and their family than any decree pharaoh might proclaim. Their family grew. They already had two children, Miriam and Aaron. When their baby was born, Jochebed saw he was a "goodly child" (verse 2). This word has the general meaning of something good or beautiful. When this mother looked upon her newborn baby, he was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen. How could she possibly give him up? God awoke in her a sense of compassion and protection. She knew what the family must do. She and Amram would trust God and preserve the child through whatever might come. The writer of Hebrews declared their act to be one of faith, "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment" (Hebrews 11:23). This word, proper, has the thought of being handsome. Moses would remain with the family and would not be thrown into the Nile River to drown.

This family protected the baby for three months. At that time, the parents understood the danger they were in and decided to turn the baby over to God. Jochebed took a basket and waterproofed it. She possibly wrapped the baby in a blanket and placed him into the basket. The basket was then placed among the reeds at the bank of the river. The word used to describe this box or basket into which the baby was placed is ark. This is the same

word used when the Lord told Noah to build an ark to preserve the life of land creatures when He would rain down judgment on the earth. It was a place of safety and preservation. This little baby was placed in an ark, a place of safety and preservation. This was God's plan and would produce tremendous results in years to come. Though the baby was placed in the ark at the edge of the river, he was not left alone. His sister, Miriam, remained nearby to see what would become of the baby (Exodus 2:4). God would provide help, and the family wanted to know what form it would take.

God's plans are not always known by His people. They can plan and seek an answer. Often the answer is only known by God. It takes faith to proceed when uncertainty is in the air. The example of this godly family shows how important faith is. We can trust God and follow His will.

2. _____ **The Woman's Compassion** (Exodus 2:5, 6)

Jochebed had taken the baby in the basket and placed him in the edge of the river where the reeds grew. This was not a total abandonment of the child. She had left the older sister to watch and see what would happen to the child. The place where the baby was laid was, undoubtedly, familiar to them. They knew this was the place where some of Egyptian royalty came regularly for their time of devotion. To the Egyptians, the Nile River was sacred. To wash in it was like anointing one's body with sacred waters. The Hebrews must have known the superstitions of their masters and were willing to take advantage of it. Finding the baby in those sacred waters might have been a sign for them. Pharaoh's daughter sent a servant into the waters to fetch the baby. She was moved with compassion and took the child as her own. She gave him the name of Moses, "Because I drew him out of the water" (verse 10).

The compassion she felt was natural, yet unnatural. It seems natural to be moved to love babies, but this was not an ordinary baby. This was the baby of those people she considered to be lower than herself. She recognized he was a Hebrew child. That did not keep her from seeking to save his life. Adopting him into her family would make him directly related to the royal line of Egypt. He would be in a good situation for life.

Compassion can cause people to make choices they would not normally make. To look at those who are not within the circle of friends might cause people to be negative in the treatment of those people. Compassion will cause us to look at all people as the direct creation of God and will help us seek to bless rather than hurt them. This is greatly needed in the world today. Circumstances cause people to look at others as enemies rather than other human beings. Maybe they look different or come from a different culture. If we look at them as enemies, then we will treat them disrespectfully. We should look at others as Christ does. Then we will have compassion on them and seek to help them no matter what the circumstances.

3. _____ **The Godly Provision** (Exodus 2:7-10)

The unfolding of this story reveals the hand of God in every stage of development. The choice of the parents to obey the letter of the law in putting their son in the river (though not the spirit of the law in that they placed him safely in a waterproof basket) showed God's moving in their lives. The placement of the basket at the location where pharaoh's daughter would find him showed wisdom granted by God. The compassion of the woman in preserving the Hebrew child shows an unnatural emotion. Even Miriam being on scene to play out the next part of the drama showed God's hand in what took place.

When the baby was brought to pharaoh's daughter, Miriam approached. She asked a simple question but one that could have raised questions. "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" (verse 7). Questions could have arisen as to how this child knew of a woman who could nurse the baby. Pharaoh's daughter could have decided to take the baby with her to the palace to find someone there who could take care of him. However, God was in charge of the situation. He wanted Moses to be raised with the knowledge of who God is and of his Hebrew heritage. The best way for this to happen was for Moses to spend the formative years with his natural parents. They would care for him and teach him how to fulfill God's purpose for his life. God's hand was further revealed when He provided a means of sustenance for the family of Moses.

Pharaoh's daughter gave Jochebed wages that she might raise her own child (verse 9).

Everything people have in life comes because of the goodness of God. The Scriptures declare, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). Too often people think they gain what they possess through personal effort. While we might work to provide for our families, God is the ultimate provider. Because of His compassion, we should offer Him thanks and praise. He is truly worthy.

Conclusion

Compassion came to Moses from an unexpected source. Pharaoh had decreed that every male child born to the Hebrews must be thrown into the river and drowned. Amram and Jochebed determined their new child had a specific purpose from God. They might not have known what that purpose was, but they would trust God. Placing him in a basket and putting him in the river was an act of faith. They trusted God would handle the situation and He did. Pharaoh's daughter showed compassion though no one could have expected it. God was in control and preserved the one who would deliver Israel from bondage.

Compassion is an emotion which should be expressed by God's people. He showed them compassion by providing the way of salvation and they should demonstrate it toward others. This is a godly attitude and He expects His people to comply. We should show the world God's love through the compassion we express toward them.