

HAVING COMPASSION

By: Phillip Hayes

*"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous"
1Peter 3:8]*

I love the way Apostle Peter concludes his first general epistle to the church. "Have one mind; Have compassion; Love as brethren; Be pitiful; Be courteous". With all that is happening in our country and the world today no better advice could be given the modern church. I believe our love is waning and we have lost compassion for our fellow man.

Jesus foretold our condition in Matthew chapter 24, verses 8-13: *"All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved"*.

A horrible time rampant with violence, sin and hatred! Surely, we have arrived! It seems the atrocities are growing more outrageous and evil as human beings become lower than animals showing no regard for the precious gift of life.

With evil compassing us on every hand, how can we as Christians maintain love, respect and compassion? Jesus said the love of many would wax cold as they witness iniquity abounding. The answer is we must endure unto the end! We must endure this last day onslaught of evil and

maintain our love and compassion for our brethren and for the lost. This takes a daily dying out to our emotions and the flesh. Instead of revenge, we must pray for deliverance and salvation. We must protect ourselves from becoming cold and indifferent. If you are born again, God is in you and you can walk in His love; for God is love. *"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love"* [1John 4:7-8].

The Apostle Paul reminded Timothy, *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"* [2Timothy 1:7].

Although evil is abounding in our time we are promised that when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him (Isa. 59:19). That Spirit of the Lord is within us my friends and we are His standard bearers. Love always conquerors evil!

As far as Bible scholars can determine, the disciples were with Jesus for more than three years. They saw Him heal the sick, raise the dead and perform miracle after miracle. They saw His love and compassion as He reached out to the sick, lame, the blind, the deaf and the demon possessed. His compassion moved Him to minister to the various needs He found. But the disciples were not aware of the spirit they were of! Let me give you this startling example:

"And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit

ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village" [Luke 9:51-56].

The disciples were offended that Jesus was not received in this certain village and their reaction revealed their spirit. "Let's call down fire from heaven and consume them!" They wanted to destroy these people! Our Lord's will was to save man, not destroy man! This is the spirit He desires for all His people. Have you lost your compassion for the lost?

I had an experience as a young Christian I want to share with you. I had ended a long period of prayer and fasting. I felt really good about my experience and my commitment to God. Although very young in the Lord, God was revealing much to me and I was relishing in His Goodness and Grace.

I decided to visit a minister I knew that was conducting a revival. He was glad to see me and asked if I would like to join him for a cup of coffee at a local dinner. I agreed and we sat down for some coffee. I really needed the fellowship and was so glad to have the opportunity to talk with a seasoned minister and evangelist.

Our conversation began with mostly small talk and about the revival. As we talked I noticed a tear in his eye. I thought he might have something in his eye, and I asked him if he was OK. He said he was fine. However, as we continued talking, he began crying! I said, "What's wrong?" He said, "Look behind you." I looked and all I could see was a young couple sitting at a table several feet from us. I said, "I don't see anything, what's wrong?" He said, "Look at them, they are lost!"

I was shocked! This minister was shedding tears for a couple he had never met. Such compassion I had never witnessed! I also realized I didn't have what this man had! I had never wept for another person like this.

His compassion reminded me of Jesus when He

looked over the city of Jerusalem. *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not" [Luke 13:34].*

What's wrong with the church today? Have we lost our compassion? Think back! When you first got saved, you loved everybody. It didn't matter if they were sinful and undone. It didn't matter where people went to church. You loved the Catholics, the Pentecostals, the Lutherans, everybody! You were filled with the Love of Christ. You had compassion!

Perhaps we should consider this from the book of Revelation: *"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" [Revelation 2:2-5].* This church had performed many great things. They had labored for His name's sake; they had patience; they tried false ministers; and they had not fainted. They had religion, but they had left their first love! They needed to repent!

In order to have compassion, we must first discover or recover the Love that God has given every believer. It is within every born again believer!

Compassion is the by-product of love! You cannot have one without the other. *"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" [1 Corinthians 13:8].*

Charity (love) NEVER FAILS! As each of us journey through life on this earth, we are faced with many trials, tribulations, temptations, and heartaches. Though you be a saint or a sinner, life in general is hard.

Everyone makes mistakes. In most cases restitution and reconciliation is attempted, sometimes with success, but most times without success. But what makes the difference? I am convinced it is love that will always make the difference. But, it takes love on both sides of any issue to be able to resolve differences.

Where does love come from? Why do people fall in love? How do you get love? And, why does it escape so many?

From all my experiences as a Christian, minister, husband, father and grandfather, I have come to some conclusions about love.

The greatest problem within the church as a whole is a lack of real love for one another and compassion for the lost. We say we have both love and compassion but we seldom demonstrate either.

I have witnessed many horrible things that have happened among Christians. I have seen many churches split and countless men and women disillusioned with Christianity in general. I have seen ministers attack one another with a vengeance that would shock anyone. Why does all this happen to a people that are supposed to be examples of love?

As I understand the Bible, God's only commandment to His church is that we love Him and one another! Jesus said it this way: *"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"* [John 15:12-13].

The Apostle John reminded the church about this commandment in his first epistle: *"For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one*

another" [1 John 3:11].

John is called by many, "The Apostle of Love" because he wrote so much about the love of God and the love we should have for one another. John knew a great secret and that is love never fails, and love will always resolve any dispute. When you exercise the love of God that is in your heart, you will walk in forgiveness. You may not understand why bad things have happened in your life, but you will walk in His love.

There are many scriptures that describe what love is. 1 Corinthians chapter 13 gives several definitions of love: *"Charity (LOVE) suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away"* [1 Corinthians 13: 4-8].

We also find that perfect love will cast out fear and that God has not given us the spirit of fear but love! Love comes from God, for God is love!

It was God's love for us while we were yet sinners that He gave His only begotten Son that we might be saved. God loved us and forgave us while we were still sinners! Therefore, if we have the love of God in us, we should forgive those that trespass against us and mistreat us, or talk about us, even though they continue to do these things. Did not the Lord Jesus command us to walk in this kind of love? *"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."* [Matthew 5:44] And then He went on to say, *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."* There are many that want to be perfect

because they believe they will then have the same power Jesus had; but you will never attain unto perfection unless you walk in God's love and compassion. Revival fires will never be ignited without these two necessary ingredients!

Many Christians today cannot get along with one another for two or three services a week, let alone love one another on a continual basis. It is shocking how saints of God will attack one another most times over nothing. Let a rumor start, and I guarantee you that before the day is out, it will be broadcast all over the country. And usually by the time the rumor is told by three or four people it is so twisted that it does not resemble in any way the first story told. The Bible has a name for people that do these things: Backbiters, Gossipers, etc. These kind of folks love social media like Facebook and Twitter.

However, if you have the love of God, you will not rejoice in iniquity, you will not think evil of your brother or sister, you will not be easily provoked, you will be kind and long suffering, you will pray for them that despitefully use you, you will do good to them that hate you, and you will love your enemies. Oh, love of God! His love will produce compassion for the lost. This is what we need children of God!

Can you imagine a body of believers coming together with this kind of love?! The enemy wouldn't have a chance to destroy anyone! Our love for God and for one another would never allow the enemy to destroy our unity.

Look at yourself today. Do you still have trouble forgiving someone that has done you wrong? Oh, you might say, "I have forgiven him or her." But have you really? Do you still love that person? Do you still talk to that person or do you avoid that person? We must forgive and demonstrate our forgiveness. Remember, Jesus said, *"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"* [Matthew

6:14-15].

Several years ago, the Lord revealed to me that His people would have to come to the place that they loved each other as much as they loved Him. I believe that time is now!

We are all being tried! You will have enemies! You will have people that lie about you, and use you. You will have people that will cheat you, rob you, and attack you in every way. But remember, these things must come! How can you ever enjoy the power of forgiveness if you never have anyone to forgive?

God's love is the only resource you have to draw forgiveness from! Without love, you will never be able to forgive! Without love, you will always be the one that the enemy can use to destroy others.

So many times over the years, I have seen the enemy tear apart an individual all because of a lack of love on someones part. We talk about one another and run one another down because we don't love one another. Ministers attack each other because they have a lack of love and respect for one another. LOVE IS THE KEY! Love is the well from which we can all draw from to find contentment and peace.

Let's look at one another for a moment. Many of you have known me for years. You have known me from my personal appearances, written articles, preaching tapes, etc. I am your brother. I am your minister. You know me by the spirit that God has chosen me to this ministry. But, I am not perfect. I have many faults. I have failed God many times over the past 45 years, but God has never failed me. No doubt you respect me because of the ministry that God has placed in my life and I appreciate that very much. But, if you saw me in a fault would you pray for me and forgive me or would you attack me and try to destroy me? Now let me look at you. I have met many of you through the years. I have counseled many of you that had marital problems,

family problems, drinking and drug problems, and all sorts of terrible troubles. I can honestly say before God, that none of the things that happened to you, which I knew about, caused me to lose any respect for you or to attack you because of your weakness. I prayed for you believing that God would deliver you, and forgot the things that had happened in your life. This is the way we must all be for this is the way God is. God forgives and God forgets! God does not bring up your past and accuse you with it! That is the work of the enemy!

If you have experience and endured something horrible in your life I can guarantee you that you needed someone to love you. When you are down mentally, spiritually, and emotionally, love is the only thing that can bring you out. When a person is going through difficulties and you know about it, show them the love of God! Don't run them down and try to destroy them. It is in their trials that they need someone to reach out to them and show them kindness and love.

I have found that love will conquer every situation. It will bring peace to you if you will walk in love. You may be in a situation where there are several people involved in a dispute. I am not saying that if you walk in love the situation will be resolved, but what I am saying is that forgiving and demonstrating the love of God will give you peace. Hopefully, when others see your forgiveness, patience and love, they will also come around.

Remember, love is of God and everyone that loves is born of God. The enemy wants to steal away your love. I have seen many saints let a root of bitterness grow in them to the point that they hated instead of loved. Hate will destroy you! Envy, strife, bitterness and hatred are all works of the flesh that the devil uses to destroy families, churches, ministries and saints. Flee from these things! Love one another!

The Lord has anointed me many times to preach

about how a kingdom divided cannot stand. Many times I would tell the people that any marriage, family, or church that was divided was doomed to failure. This is why the enemy works so feverishly to bring division between a man and his wife, or in the family, or in the church. The enemy knows how to destroy and he uses men and women that lack love to accomplish his ultimate goal. As I said before, if we all loved one another as we should the enemy would never be able to destroy a church, a ministry, or a home for that matter.

What is really sad is that it usually takes only one person filled with bitterness or hatred to accomplish what the enemy wants! So many times, I have seen one person destroy a whole church! The reason is many people will give their ears to the one that is starting trouble. Once he or she has an ear that will hear them, the ball gets to rolling and soon you have a church filled with turmoil, all because of one person. What you should do when approached by such a person is say, "listen, that is our brother or sister you are talking about and I do not think it is God's will for you to talk about them. Let's pray for them right now." Oh how the enemy hates that! Satan doesn't want you praying for anyone! He wants you to accuse, rebuke, talk about, and ultimately destroy your brother or sister!

If we cannot muster love and compassion for our brother and sister in Christ how can we have compassion for the lost?

Remember, compassion is the by-product of love and these are the keys to revival. Follow after it my friends. Doing so will deliver many from evil and will cover a multitude of sins for you.

*"My little children,
let us not love in word,
neither in tongue;
but in deed and in truth" [1John 3:18].*