

Knowledge of God Needed to be Salt and Daylight

08/09/26

What drives people to kill? All you see on the news is a shooting somewhere in our nation or a court case about someone who had killed someone. Right now, we have court cases going on for Charlie Kirk's murder and the Health Care CEO that was shot in the back two years ago. These murderers had no value on human life. I mentioned a few weeks ago that abortion in America is going up even though the Supreme Court overturned Roe vs. Wade. For women who have been raped or their life is on the line because of a difficult birth have to make tough decisions about keeping a baby or aborting a baby. However, for those who see a baby as being inconvenient and have no problem having the baby killed is a disturbing thought to me. This lack of compassion and feeling is very disturbing. We see it with children as well. The bullying issue is twice as bad as it was when I went to school. There are parents who are forced to take their children out of public schools because of bullying. They want to give their children a chance of a good education without the stress of bullying. Even adults have caught onto the bullying theme. When we get calls for the dog park at the park, it's interesting to see how people will gang up on one person like a pack of vicious animals. Adults will tear down other adults by spreading false rumors or lies to destroy the person's character or reputation. Even the Church in America has been affected by this sin. Many have allowed themselves to become hateful and nasty even at the same time they will preach love and practice doing social justice. Doesn't it seem that compassion today has become distorted even within the Church itself. Is it because the Church is developing a lack of knowledge of God? Remember last week, we talked about how God wants our loyalty and the knowledge of Him. When we lack knowledge of God, we can't be good salt or daylight to those around us because we are not reflecting the real light of Jesus. We've been looking how important it is to have a good character to be salt and daylight in this world. Just doing good deeds or social justice will not give you a good character

or make you daylight to this world. Your character must reflect something besides your own human character. What do I mean by this?

Let's look at 2 Peter 1: 3-4 where we read this, "³for His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us ^[a]by His own glory and ^[b]excellence. ⁴Through ^[c]these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world on account of lust. (NASB – www.biblegateway.com)"

Peter wants the church to have knowledge of Jesus, the Son of God, so that they can partake of His divine nature. "Divine" in Greek means "Godhead" and "nature" in Greek means "state of being or characteristics" (Strong's Concordance). In other words, Peter wants the Church to partake in Jesus' divine characteristics. The church is to reflect the characteristics of Jesus so they can be salt and daylight to this world and we do that through the divine power of Jesus that Peter talks about. This is why it is so important to have knowledge of God. How can you know what the characteristics of the Trinity is unless you look for it? Our character we have now needs to be blended into Jesus' divine nature that Peter talks about so we can start to show His divine nature or divine characteristics through us by what we say or by our actions. Jesus has the Holy Spirit help us to partake in His divine nature. So, we are not salt and daylight on our own. His divine nature or characteristics shine out through us and that makes us good salt and daylight to those around us. Maybe we need an example of what Peter is talking about.

Let's turn to Joel 2: 12 – 14, where we read this, "

¹² "Yet even now," declares the LORD,
"Return to Me with all your heart,
And with fasting, weeping, and mourning;
¹³ And tear your heart and not *merely* your garments."
Now return to the LORD your God,
For He is gracious and compassionate,

Slow to anger, abounding in mercy
And relenting of catastrophe.
¹⁴ Who knows, He might turn and relent,
And leave a blessing behind Him,
Resulting in a grain offering and a drink offering
For the LORD your God. (NASB – www.biblegateway.com)

This is prophet Joel giving warning and prophecy to the nation of Judah during the Old Testament times. Joel reveals some of God's character through this prophecy. In verse 13, Joel tells us that God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in mercy. Those who have studied the Old Testament know this is true because God is always forgiving Israel's unfaithfulness to Him. During Wednesday night Bible study, we have been studying the Book of Numbers and God's character is revealed through the chapters of that book. God supplies Israel's needs, even after all their complaining. When they sin against Him, He punishes them, but also forgives them. He takes care of all their needs as they march to the Promise Land that He has ready for them. So, God is gracious and compassionate to Israel. In fact, the Hebrew term for "gracious" that Joel uses here is "hannun" which means gracious and compassion (Strong's Concordance)". The Hebrew term for compassionate that Joel uses is "raham" which means full of compassion (Strong's Concordance). So, Joel is stressing here that God is not only compassionate, He is Full of compassion. The same Hebrew term is used in Psalm 78: 38, ³⁸ But He, being compassionate, ^{1a} forgave *their* wrongdoing and did not destroy *them*;
And often He ^{1b} restrained His anger
And did not stir up all His wrath. (NASB – www.biblegateway.com)

The Psalm writer here is talking about Israel and how God, being "full of compassion" forgave Israel's wrongdoing. We see the same term used again in Psalm 145: 8, ⁸ The LORD is gracious and compassionate;
Slow to anger and great in mercy. (NASB – www.biblegateway.com)"

I wonder if we really understand what it means to be “full of compassion”? We must if we are to demonstrate the Lord’s compassion to those around us. Maybe we need to understand there is a difference between being full of compassion and just compassion. What do I mean by this. Let’s think for a moment. As humans, our view on the term “compassion” is distorted by original sin. We no longer see what real compassion is until we meet Jesus Christ. Adam and Eve saw full compassion before they sinned and then human compassion became distorted because of sin. While Jesus was dying on the cross, He asked the Father to forgive the people for they did not know what they were doing. Jesus has compassion for “all” people. Paul states this in 2 Corinthians 5: 15, “He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live to please themselves. Instead, they will live to please Christ, who died and was raised for them (NLT)” John adds onto this in 1 John 2: 2, “He is the sacrifice for our sins. He takes away not only our sins but the sins of all the world NLT)” God showed full compassion in the Old Testament and Jesus lived out the full compassion in the flesh. The cross is the prime example of full compassion. Jesus died so that the whole world has a chance to be saved. Jesus became the sacrifice for all our sin. The gift of salvation is available to all people. The person on death row for murder can receive this gift of grace. The prostitute standing on a street corner in York City can receive this gift of forgiveness. The terrorist that fights for the Iranian army can receive this gift of love. You see, we don’t see people as Jesus sees people. We put people in all types of groups and there’s groups we don’t care much for. So, we won’t have as much compassion as we would with a group of people that think or act as we do. I’ve had a lot of bad encounters with mountain bikers over the years at the park. I see many of them as arrogant. When I get into this frame of mind, I usually see all mountain bikers as being arrogant. When this happens, my compassion level for them goes down. I’ll be more caring for an injured elderly lady on a sidewalk, than an injured mountain biker on a backtrail of a park. This shows I’m not full of compassion as a follower of Jesus. Jesus has full compassion for all people, even for the worst of people. While we, if we’re honest with ourselves, are selective on who we are compassionate with. Full compassion is part of God’s character. He is the only one who is capable to be full of compassion

and He can share that compassion to us. That is why Jesus went to the cross. He, being Son of God, is full of compassion, which the cross required. We have to realize, we must strive to receive this ability to have full compassion for people. You may say, what does this full compassion look like today? That's a good question. Some years ago, a pastor and his family in Sri Lanka was preparing for a wedding for a relative. The town they lived in was a Hindu town that was not friendly with Christians. During the set up for the wedding, some of the town people came and started to throw stones. One of the pastor's sons was injured. He was taken to the hospital. Later that night, two of the brothers were riding a motorcycle to go home from the hospital when they were stopped by a road block. Some of the attackers were there as were some people who had visited their church. Someone in the police department had leaked to the group where the brothers were headed. The group beat up the two brothers. The one brother had to spend weeks in a hospital and the other brother had all legs and arms broken. After the brothers got well, they went out to find those who beat them up to give them Bibles and to talk with compassion to them because these two brothers wanted these bad people to be saved through Jesus Christ. How about Rev. Richard Wurmbrand who would pray for the guards who tortured him in a Communist Romania prison. One story I read, he told a guard about Jesus after getting out of a small box that was attached to a pipe. The pipe was put in so rats could come into the box. This was one of the methods communist guards would torture prisoners. You see, Rev. Wurmbrand knew that these guards was under the power of sin and the only person who could break that power was Jesus. Plus, he remembered that he too was a leader within the Communist party before he got saved by Jesus Christ. He then became a new person and fought against the evil of Communism. Wurmbrand had full compassion for these horrible prison guards who liked to torture people. He knew what was causing it – sin. Maybe we should say Wurmbrand had the full compassion that can only come from Jesus Christ. He was living out Jesus in that prison as his wife did in the work labor camp she was put into. The Holy Spirit was revealing to the Wurmbrands what sin does to all people and this caused them to have compassion on the guards as did the brothers who were attacked by Hindu's because of their faith in Jesus. They

knew what sin was doing in the people's lives. As we look around us and see all the horrible things people are doing to each other, always remember they are living in sin and the only remedy and cure for this deadly disease is the blood of Jesus Christ. We need to start asking Jesus to help us to be full of compassion for those around us so the Holy Spirit can help us to see all people as Jesus sees them so we can be true salt and daylight to all people around us.

NLT Life Application Study Bible. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc: Wheaton, 1996

The Strongest Strong's Concordance. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2001