

OPENING OUR EYES TO COMPASSION!

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

I. PASS IT ON!

Being part of a good works chain can be very rewarding. When the bottom drops out of our economy, we can react in two equal and opposite directions. One is hardening of the heart and the tightening of the purse; the other is the response we should expect of ourselves as children of God; as we try to live in a way that would please our Master and continue to minister to a hurting world. 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13. Always remember, what life does to us depends upon that which life finds in us!

II. WHAT BUILDS COMPASSION IN GOD'S PEOPLE?

Let me ask you, have you ever stopped to consider the real purpose of our struggles at any given time? Could it just be possible that the Lord our God could use our struggles to build in His people a heart of compassion? The trials of life develop humility in godly people and humility opens our eyes to the needs of others. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; John 13:34-35; Psalm 116:5; Lamentations 3:22-23. Notice by the way that these verses were written in times of lamentations. Sad times are good times for realizing the goodness of our God and His people. Philippians 4:14-19. As the Christians in Thessalonica were having a very difficult time financially because of religious persecution, Paul prays for them to abound in God's love and compassion. Matthew 5:43-48.

III. THE EXPRESSION OF CHRIST'S COMPASSION!

Paul told the believers at Thessalonica to express Christ's compassion "to one another and to all." 1 Thessalonians 3:12. Our bible gives us the basic standard for our love: 1 John 4:19-21. When Paul told this church to show compassion to one another they were probably glad to hear that but when he told them to show Christ's compassion to everyone else, that probably did not sit too well. The reason for this is that some of "the all others" would be the very people that were causing much of their hardship. Our human nature feels its way into acting. If we feel like showing compassion we will do it. Christ-centered faith acts its way into feeling. We live by faith. For the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ we walk in the Spirit: Romans 12:17-21. We do good to others even when they do not do good to us for Christ's sake and for Christ's glory!