

**Introduction:**

- I want us to behold the tenderness of Jesus today. I want as we behold Christ that our emotions would be touched by His tenderness (very deeply) and that we in return would become tender towards Him.
- I want us to gaze at the beauty of Jesus as it manifests the Father's heart towards so many different people and I want that demonstration of tenderness to become a part of our lives that touches others. I want that to begin in your homes!
- "Some things are understood not by grasping but by allowing ones self to be grasped." Karl Rahner, German Theologian. It is Ps 34:8 "Taste and see... not study and observe."
- "Religion is not a matter of how to think about God but of actually encountering Him." Larry Crabb-*The Relentless Tenderness of Jesus*.
- There is a powerful contrast of Jesus powerful authority and His tender mercies. "Here is divinity; not Jehovah the Man of War, but Jehovah the Shepherd of Israel. Here is the fire of deity, but its gentle, warming influence is felt, and the consuming force is veiled. Greatness in league with gentleness, and power linked with affection, now pass before us. Heroes who have been most distinguished for fury in the fight, have often had tender hearts like little children; their swords were deadly to their enemy, but their hands were gentle towards the weak. It is the sign of a noble character that it can be majestic as a lion in the midst of the encounter, and roar like a young lion on the scene of conflict, and yet it has a dove's eye and a maiden's heart. Such is our Lord Jesus Christ; he is the conquering Captain of salvation, but he is meek and lowly of heart." Charles Spurgeon.

**I. A Tender Jesus****A. Jesus reveals the Father.**

1. 2 Corinthians 4:4 *whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the **light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*** NKJV

a) In this context there are four 'of's' used in this verse each meaning the source of. Light—whose source is the Good News, whose source is the glory, whose source is Christ, whose source is God.

b) So I am declaring today that God is tender!

2. Tender: Tender: Delicate; soft; sensitive; compassionate; kind; humane; merciful; pitiful. Dictionary.com: soft, delicate, loving.

**B. Not everyone sees God as tender. In fact, most struggle with the fact of a tender God. Yes, they may see God as tender but not tender towards them. They may confess, yes God is compassionate but not compassionate towards them.**

1. We struggle because we have been taught through religious teaching, upbringing, etc. that we have to earn acceptance from God. Few have learned to be accepted as they are.

- a) Many who have come out of a holiness background grew up with 'dos and don'ts' that was short on grace and short on the demonstration of love. God's holiness is a happy holiness.
  - b) Many were given a theology with strict boundaries and made to feel condemnation and not conviction when their hearts had offended the Gospel of Grace.
  - c) Parents have unknowingly without realizing the consequences of their leadership in the home caused their children to feel like they had to earn their father or mothers love.
2. We struggle because we never connected the dots or distinguished the difference between discipline and rejection. For whatever reason interpreted discipline as rejection and felt that we could never have a father's love or a mother's love until we acted or performed a certain way.
- a) Unacceptable behaviors in the home are a reality. And parents must draw boundaries of what is expected in a Christian home.
  - b) But this has to be followed up with a love that is expressed even in discipline. And, just as important—explain what discipline is and why it is import and why discipline is not rejection.
- C. Where God feels compassion, He moves with compassion. The feeling of compassion produces the movement of compassion.
- 1. In the OT the word tender is mostly associated with mercies—getting what we do not deserve.
  - 2. He desires us to know His compassion and tenderness.
  - 3. It is His compassion that moves him to provide for the person in need: food, health, teaching, freedom. This is where we see the life of Jesus reflecting the heart of God.

## II. The Fruit of Tenderness

- A. Tenderness opens the heart.
- 1. What do the poor, the sick, the troubled, the depressed find most attractive about Jesus? He treated them with tenderness
  - 2. Isaiah 40:11 *He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.* NKJV
    - a) The lambs he gathers, carries and gently leads. It is a picture of weakness in the arms of strength!
    - b) His love embraces me as I am, not as other people think I am or not as I think am supposed to be in my own self image. "Tenderness is what happens to you when you know that you are deeply and sincerely liked by someone." Author

unknown.

B. Tenderness causes me to open up.

1. If you communicate to me that you like me (and not just love me as a brother in Christ) you open up to me self-respect, self-esteem and self-love.
2. "Your acceptance of me banishes my fears. My self defense mechanisms—sarcasm, aloofness, name-dropping, self righteousness, and appearing to have it all together begin to drop off." *The Relentless Tenderness of Jesus*--Manning p.24 -- I grow more tender when this happens.

C. Expressions of tenderness. We want to see the expressions of tenderness/compassion in Jesus because it reveals the heart of the Father to us and how we reveal the Father's heart to others. Note: *ion/tenderness* - Grk. - *splagchnon*-bowels, intestines, compassion. This root refers to deep love (usually of a "superior" for an "inferior") rooted in some "natural" bond. It is used for the deep inward feeling we know variously as compassion, pity, mercy. In most uses in NT it is used with the prefix 'eu'. Together it forms a compound word that leaves one with the understanding that in tenderness/compassion is first felt and then followed by action. IE. To feel movement in the bowels and not follow through leaves one feeling bloated and burdened. To feel and not act is a hardening of the heart. Let's look at the compassion of Jesus:

1. Jesus heals the sick. Matthew 14:14 *And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.* NKJV This act opened their hearts to Him and ultimately to the Father.
  - a) Mother Teresa became famous for her works of mercy/compassion.
  - b) Jesus felt compassion and he acted.
  - c) IE. Our mana ministry here is to help the body of Christ in times of illness, death, and birth of children. The key to it's success is the heart! If we lose the feeling of desiring to love, relieve, and assist then we lose love itself. Lovers out work workers any day. When we lose our love it is hard to perform the work of ministering to others.
2. He fed the hungry. Matthew 15:32 *Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."* NKJV
  - a) Jesus felt for the multitudes and the children who came out in the wilderness to hear him. He did what He could with what He had – five loaves and two fish.
  - b) Matthew 25:37-40 *"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer*

*and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'* NKJV

3. He is willing. Mark 1:41 *Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."* NKJV
4. He taught them. Mark 6:34 *And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.* NKJV He wept over a city. He wanted to help.
  - a) Sometimes we overlook the fact that teaching someone is an act of compassion or tenderness. IE. Every time you teach in children's church or the nursery you are being positioned to serve with compassion. Embrace the place where Christ has you and with compassion sow into the lives of the little people.
  - b) We do not find Jesus driving children away.
  - c) Your children and grandchildren are a great place to begin. Here is a new thought for some of you—think of how scary this changing world is to those who are older among us. They grew up in a time when a man's word was good enough and you did business with someone you knew and trusted. Now they live in an impersonal world where many are out for themselves and you are just a number and one of little value at that.

### III. Jesus reveals the Father's Tenderness

- A. John 14:9 *Jesus said to him, " He who has seen Me has seen the Father;* NKJV
- B. Can you say to your community, "If you have seen me you have seen the Father?" This is what God is after in us.
- C. Jn 17, God wants the love that He gave the Son to be given away to others and without the tenderness of God made visible in our hearts it is hard to show others the tenderness of God.
- D. IE. Man with withered hand—I am willing. Woman caught in adultery—neither do I condemn you go and sin no more. Woman whose son died—he touched the stretch and he lived. He welcomed the children. He wept over the city. Parable of Prodigal—Father had compassion and hugged and kept kissing him. He ate with tax collectors and sinners. He touched the ungodly. (His tenderness was often offensive.) The Good Samaritan was an offensive parable of tenderness.

### • Conclusion:

- Invitation to receive Jesus Christ as Lord.
- Isaiah 49:15 *"Can a woman forget her nursing child And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget Yet I will not forget you.* NKJV God is very fond of us. He likes us!