

God's Compassion

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MAIN VERSES

[Deuteronomy 32](#) • [2 Timothy 3:16](#) • [John 4:24](#) • [Isaiah 49](#) • [Revelation 19](#)

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family. So welcome home.

Good to be here for our last service together before entering into another year. I'm not sure if this year went by fast or slow. It always seemed to go fast. It's incredible. Same amount of time as last year. That's good. That's good. Let's see here. Today, I'm hoping to give a message of encouragement for ways that maybe we can evolve into the next year and things we can work on to be a better people of God, a better representation of our King. And I believe that orbits the attribute of compassion. It's one thing that is so easy to say, and it's one thing that we possibly think that we do very well, but I don't think we do sometimes. I think if we have compassion, it's very selective, very selective.

God's Big Nose

But before that, I want to talk about God's big old nose. What? That's what the Bible says. God's got a big nose. Oh, y'all think I'm joking. This is funny. But you're too scared to even chuckle. This is great.

So when describing the nature of God as he is introduced to his people, right after the golden calf incident and after the new 10 commandments are coming down, the replacement, the Bible says this in Exodus chapter 34 in verse 6. And it says, "Then the Lord..." There you go. Did you see it? God is slow to anger. Two Hebrew words, Erech Afeim. And it's translated as slow to anger, but literally it means big nose or big long nostrils, if you will. And I guess you could say it's kind of a metaphor, even though that's what the word means. But the reason why the words say that is because it's kind of easy. What happens when you get mad? Does anyone get like red

and hot? Remember in Looting Tombs, Wally Cody missed the bird he can't get. The Acme product backfired. And he used to turn bright red, right? And steam would start coming out. And what happens when you get mad? Do you ever do this when you get mad? Yeah, trying to get that air in to cool off. Lucky for you, God has a long nostril so he can stay cool. All of that is wrapped up at Recafim, like slow to anger. They just translate it slow to anger to make it easier because that's what the words mean. And I love that about the beautiful word of God. I love that. I am patient, long nostrils. Therefore, I am resilient against becoming unhinged for any and all reasons. I am slow to anger. There's nothing you can do that is going to make me just flip my lid for no reason. I am not like you. And I find encouragement in that.

Speaking of Metaphor

Speaking of similes and figures of speech and metaphor, I love metaphors in the Bible. Love it. Because metaphors are kind of a complex tool of communication. We've spoken about this before. They can be used to express bigger concepts than what would normally be accomplished. The Lord is my shepherd. You could have just said the Lord takes care of you. But when you say the Lord is my shepherd, you have this imagery of a shepherd that's walking and that cares for his sheep. You have all the imagery of finding the right pastures. You have the imagery of wolves or lions or whatever's coming and fighting them, protecting you. And then you have the image of you just being a dumb sheep. But it's powerful—it's a metaphor that cultivates the appropriate imagery for the character of God. [Deuteronomy 32](#): God is our rock. He's perfect. How about the New Testament? Yeshua is the bread of life. Sourdough, wheat, Ezekiel. That was the sustenance. He is the manna from God. But it's metaphor. He's not literally bread.

The Literal vs. Metaphorical Debate

I was in a class a lady was holding years ago, and I didn't realize it at the time. It was an apologetics class. Unfortunately, it was not a good one. She was attempting to show that the Bible is literal and not metaphorical. And what a horrible dichotomy to force on the library of texts we have in our Bible. But there was a very black and white line drawn. It's like, do you believe the Bible is literal or metaphorical? I mean, it has metaphor in it? It was an interesting class. And again, she was attempting to show the Bible is very literal in its application, but never acknowledging metaphor in the Bible. Everything's literal. Even the beasts of Revelation, the big Godzilla that comes out of the sea, was meant to be a literal metaphor. Guys, I'm so happy with my eschatology and the way I approach the Bible. I tell you what. Maybe I got

myself in trouble. I don't know. So the way that she was approaching the Bible with this type of dichotomy of the Bible is either that or this. And I understand where her passion came from. But she used [2 Timothy 3:16](#) as her foundational verse. And, of course, that reads, "All Scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." NIV. It says God breathed. She did not take kindly to me when I asked if Father God was a spirit or not. [John 4:24](#) says, "Yes, Father God is a spirit." Because after she agreed, I asked if Father God had literal lungs. Because the verse she was using as proof text for her objective concerning the Bible was kind of a metaphor: God breathed. And I'm glad it was, because what Paul is doing when he wrote this is he's connecting the Word of God and he's linking it to another story where God breathed in the Bible, where he breathed life and brought forth creation and brought forth vitality and animation. And so again, the use of metaphor—wow—Paul is suggesting that the scriptures are like the breath of life that vitalizes, animates, and brings forth true life. And I love that. I think that's just absolutely beautiful.

God's Womb-Like Love

You guys want to see another kind of wordplay, if you will, with the Hebrew language? It's not necessarily a metaphor, but still. So it's the same verse in [Exodus 34:6](#). It says, now, "rachum," in its noun or verb or adjective form, is closely related to the word "rachim," which means womb. It's womb. A deeply, deeply emotional word used to describe God's core attribute as having the love of a mother surrounding their womb. That deep, deep unbreakable bond of a mother. I love it when the Bible just knocks down walls and concepts we don't like. Now, if you've never heard of God being described with female attributes in the Bible before, we've done a whole message on that called Divine Nurturer Maternal Depictions of God. But God is so big, and the biblical authors use whatever they can to help us understand the depth of God's love, mercy, and grace towards us. So the God that loves us like a mother cares for her womb. At the end of Isaiah, God comforts Jerusalem, like a mother comforting her young. [Hosea 11](#): God is a nurturing mother teaching her infant how to walk and embracing her child as a mother, lifting her son up cheek to cheek and holding him close. [Deuteronomy 32](#): God is depicted as a mother who gave birth to Israel. Or my favorite, [Hosea 13](#), depicts God like a female bear who has had her young taken, and it depicts her as ferocious and reckless in the pursuit to get her young back. Very violent imagery. But all the same, mama, why not the father bear? Because even the ancient writers knew and understood there's a distinct difference in severity between the mother's capacity of violence regarding her young and the father's. And that is describing the God that loves you.

Israel's Failed Mission

Yeshua uses the same type of depiction for his sadness over Jerusalem. In the biblical story, Israel is called to be the people through whom the world experiences the blessings of Abraham. So that's their mission. That's why he chose Abraham. Come out of Babylon. Come over here in your lineage, somewhere down this line. It's going to come to a point that they are going to produce the absolute blessings of my kingdom that's going to be felt by all nations. His kingdom on earth. And the entire story of the Bible or the Old Testament is about how they failed that mission. They were redeemed from slavery of oppression and violence. And they were called to establish a kingdom that represented God's reign. And they ended up becoming power hungry, exploiting the weak around them, enslaving those who could not resist, having disregard for the poor. And they became lovers of war and conquest. And they looked like all the other nations. And this is exactly what led to the exile into Babylon. Israel would not listen. And they strayed from God's protection. That's how sin and wrath is framed in the Bible. When you continue to pursue greed or sin or arrogance or pride or violence, evil, it's not so much that God is sitting there with a lightning bolt just taking aim at you, ready to unleash his wrath. It's more along the lines of you drinking poison and God stepping back and allowing the judgment and wrath of your own consequences to overtake you. And God's wrath being poured out as God removing that protection. Israel wanted to play the game of empire like all of the other nations. Okay, what happened? A stronger empire playing the same game came in, took them out, and now they're once again in Egypt, or now it's called Babylon. But during this season of them being in exile in Babylon, a land that is not their own, they've had the place where they dwelled together with God in peace, taken from them. They begin to wonder, has God forgotten us? Maybe we overdid it, you know? And the whole time, God is urging Israel, please stop. Prophet after prophet, please don't do this. Please stop continuing to do this. Please stay under the shadow and shelter of my wings.

Stay focused on me. Stay close to me. And while in Babylon, experiencing the just consequences of their sin that God poured out, and the people are starting to say things like, God has just forgotten about us. We were so bad. God's going to leave us here forever. Might as well accept it. You ever felt that way? Ain't no way. I've gone too far now. God's just forgotten about me. I'm off the map. And here's what the prophet says, [Isaiah 49](#). It says, But Zion said, The Lord has forsaken me. The Lord has forgotten me. And the Lord responds, Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has born? Though she may forget, I will not forget. Even if a human mother forgets, sometimes God brings judgment. I like to think it's

always reluctant, slow to anger. But even when God brings judgment by allowing our sin to turn in on itself, he never loses his compassion.

God's Unwavering Compassion

In the first century, Yeshua refers to Jerusalem, which was supposed to be the holy city of God and God's people. He essentially refers to it as Babylon because the same type of sinful pursuits were still at the forefront of the minds of the people. Despite them no longer being at the top of the food chain, they still have this attitude. This is why Paul refers to Yeshua as the second Adam because it's through him that a new humanity has been birthed, one that represents God's kingdom and character. And Yeshua spends an entire chapter condemning the religious. He says, But you were not willing. Compassion. God is compassionate.

Now compassion comes from two Greek words. Com- means to come alongside, join in. And then pathos means to suffer, to have emotion, right? Suffering, passion—the passion of the Christ—to suffer, to have that emotion. So to have compassion is to come alongside those who are suffering or the emotion of another. To come alongside someone is to have compassion. It has to do with empathy. Love empathy because empathy is hard. Empathy is hard. The level in which you seek to come alongside someone is the level of connection that you have with them and understanding why they do the things they do, who they are, what they've done, where they are in their position of life. It's compassion and empathy.

Compassion as Coming Alongside

And empathy is hard because we would much rather make a judgment about someone, not have to acknowledge that they're just as much of an image of God as we are, not have to acknowledge that they're a fellow human being that's loved by God like we are. It's much easier just to make a judgment, change the label to whatever is easiest for you to dehumanize someone, and then you can make judgments about them. They're dumb. They're stupid. They're evil. They just want X, Y, Z. We're all like, oh, yeah, that's just horrible. Guess what next year is in America? Oh, the bait's there. Don't fall for it. They just want to ruin our country and destroy everybody. This narrative of both sides, right?

Empathy. Pete said something to me a while back that stuck with me. It's hard to hate someone up close because when you're up close, you see another human being. You see someone just like you, feelings just like you, probably act the same way you do, has opinions just like you, maybe a family. But because you've labeled them or someone on TV has labeled them, now you have

permission to not acknowledge that. You can even do it for your enemies. Empathy, compassion.

The Hard Work of Empathy

I teach my kids to have empathy for everyone. At least that's what I hope they will grow up to have. And to be critical thinkers. Those are the two big things I want my kids to really have. Have empathy for everyone. I love it. Like a child running into the arms of his father. Compassion. It's good. Perfect timing. I don't want my kids to have sympathy for everybody, but empathy, even for their enemies, even for people that hate them. The willingness to understand why people do the things they do. And that's something that we're missing in the world because it's so easy to make judgments about other people when you refuse to have empathy. When you refuse to see them as fellow humans, having insurmountable worth in the eyes of God.

Empathy makes judgment reluctant because hurt people hurt people, right? It's not right, nor should it be an excuse. But when someone is hurting you, not for some random reason, or when people are saying intentionally hurtful things, not because they think it's fun, but maybe because they have a wound that's never been healed in their own life. And if you can acknowledge that possibility to someone who has hurt you or your enemy, then maybe it will change the capacity you have for God's love, mercy, and grace toward them. Maybe a little bit. You can still be mad. You can still be hurt. You're still wrong. Stand in the way of evil always. But you don't have to be like them in how they view you.

A Fighter No More

A long time ago, we had a gentleman that was in his late 50s, and he had trouble staying connected with the church community. Come to find out, because whenever he would get settled in to a church community, start feeling comfortable, a conflict would occur out of nowhere that involved him, and he would take a stand on a hill that no one would die on, and no one would ever expect him to die on. And he would lash out and call people names and degrade people, do whatever it takes. He referred to himself as a fighter. "I'm a fighter." What a jerk? I don't know. Just comes to a church to fight, cause a big dramatic uproar over nothing and then leave and act like it's the church's fault.

Come to find out he was a foster child for much of his childhood. And he was not shown compassion and love that he should have been by the multiple foster homes he was placed in. So as an 11-year-old boy, guess what he learned through his environment? He learned that in

order to stay safe, he needs to be a fighter. Whenever an environment felt safe, that's when he knew he needed to put his gloves on because it wasn't going to stay that way for long, right? The greatest defense is what? And he grew up never realizing that the safety mechanism built into him should have been retired because he was safe now.

If you can just seek to understand or ask someone's story, it changes the way you view them and their actions. It doesn't make them right, but it equips you to be used by God to impact them. That whole loving your enemies thing—it doesn't mean don't hate them. It means empathize with them. It means understand why they're your enemy if you dare. Judgment doesn't work as well if you have an understanding of why a person does the things they do.

Insurmountable Worth

Compassion. Coming alongside someone or someone suffering. God saw his people as an infant child. That's the level of compassion God has. You are like a little infant nursing on my breast. Maybe the infant does something that's annoying. Bites. I don't know. I don't have experience. When Ben was born, we had this thing that strapped over my shoulder and it held a bottle. It was amazing. I didn't use it for very long. But I tried. I tried. Maybe this infant does something that's really bad or annoying. It's still an infant. It's still a little baby. It's still seen as having insurmountable worth in the eyes of God. And that is how we need to start seeing all people because that is how God sees all people. And if we're a people of God, then that's how we see God's people. All people.

The Only People Condemned

See, as believers, we claim to have experienced a new life, right? That's the whole new creation thing. Being raised to life with the power of Yeshua. We claim to have the Holy Spirit active within us. We claim a lot of things, but until we can find the capacity to no longer view people as them, as enemies, as jerks, as things and objects, as whatever, until we find the capacity to view people as—the only people Yeshua absolutely condemned in the entirety of his ministry that we have recorded were the religious. Because they figured out a way to have the best of both worlds. They can judge others. They can look down on others. They can maintain a level of arrogance and pride, and they can exploit others for their benefit, all while doing it in the name of God and being respected as the representatives of God, claiming that God speaks to them and therefore others have to listen and having a sense of self-righteousness that is fueled not by holiness, but by their own greed, selfishness, arrogance, and pride. And that's scary to me—how easily we can do that, spray paint God on.

A New Humanity

There's a new documentary that came out recently called 30 for 30 the Minister of Defense, and it was a new documentary about NFL player Reggie White. You've heard of Reggie? Reggie was pretty amazing. He was known as the minister of defense, right, because he had a zealous faith in Jesus and was extremely outspoken about it. Minister of Defense because he was a defensive end and tackle, right? And he gained a reputation of being a gospel preaching, standing on the word of God, righteous preacher in the NFL. Very bold about his faith, very outspoken. But later in life, he began diving into the word and he discovered the Hebrew foundation of his faith. He discovered the beauty of the Torah and how it reflected Yeshua. He discovered the beauty of the Sabbath. He discovered the beauty of the feast days. He started to learn Hebrew because he wanted to read the text for himself. I highly recommend it. This documentary dives into interviews that I've never seen before, and I believe interviews that have never been released, of his closest friends throughout this journey, and even of him before he passed away.

Reggie White and the Documentary

And 30 for 30, Minister of Defense. It's on ESPN Plus and I think YouTube TV. Highly recommend it. Because that's how he's remembered as being this warrior of Jesus and his preaching, zeal, never backing down, man that was loved by the evangelical community because he would make these broad blanket statements about his faith and even judgments against other people in the name of God. Many ministries capitalized on that. And then in this documentary, these interviews come out, things we've never seen before. And we have interviews where Reggie came to a place where he realized that the spiritual mentors that he had, the churches that he allowed to influence him, and the expectations of other Christians had led him to be an actor.

This was a confession he had later in life when he finally got serious about the word. I was a professional football player, and I was an actor. And he says, I realized that my act was to be the preacher. He goes on to say that he used to say God told him to do this or do that. God told me to be here today. God told me to move here. God told me to join this football team. God told me I have a word for you. And that he had realized now that he never heard God's voice. He heard Reggie's voice. Not that God didn't lead him to the places in his life where he would make an impact, but he never heard God's voice tell him to do anything.

A Way to Justify Things

It was just a way for him to justify things that he kind of wanted to do. When you make judgments and claim that God told you to make them, it's pretty easy to pull the sword out, right? And the thing is, this was not a place in Reggie's life when he was saying these things and having this huge reevaluation of his entire faith journey. This was not a place in his life where he was backtracking on his faith or walking away from God. It was the opposite, right? This was a place where he was more zealous about his faith, his relationship with God, and the life-giving word than ever before. But people thought he was walking away from his faith because he was no longer saying the things that they wanted him to say.

The Pigs and Abomination

His Hebrew teacher in the documentary was talking about when he showed Reggie in Deuteronomy where pigs are an abomination. And he said, this is how Reggie responded. He said, wow, I've eaten pig my whole life. I sure hope God doesn't judge me for that. And I should not judge others for whatever they're doing that God may consider a sin. Because it's not for me to decide that that's the sin. God will work that out. I hope that God doesn't judge me for that. And therefore, I should not be judging other people.

This coming from a man who got invited to give a motivational speech in Congress. What, 1997, 98? And ended up offending everybody. Right? He said some things that were, I mean, racial stereotypes, gay community. He just... They wanted him to give a little pep talk. Man, he went down the line. Lost his contract with Chunky Soup because of the things that he said. Remember Chunky Soup? Yeah, it's Reggie. Because of how he said things about other people in the name of God.

Called to Live, Not Just Speak

And he goes on to say in this interview, he says that he realizes now that God is not calling him to say stuff. God never called him to say stuff because that's what he was known for—saying stuff. He says, I never realized it, but God was calling me all along to actually live a way of life, live a certain way, not just say stuff as loud and as bold as you can, because that's what God is calling us all to do.

When he came to this place in his faith, it humbled him, and he matured, and he started seeing the world through a new type of lens, the lens of what took place on the cross. And it takes humility and maturity to come to a place where you can walk outside and understand what the

world is. Understand it, but then put on the glasses of what was poured out on Calvary and see each and every human being as how God sees them.

How God Sees Them

And it's kind of hard to judge other people when you do that. It's kind of hard to judge anyone for anything when you do that. Because how God sees them is how God sees you as a mother of God that loves that which is in her womb, and she will never leave it and never forget it. As a mother that loves the child she nurses, as a mother that loves her young to protect them under the shadow of her wings.

See, many of us read the Bible and we're tempted. I've been tempted in my immaturity to use the word as a sort of wrath and manipulation that empowers my own self-righteousness. Anybody know what I'm talking about? A sword that I can use in the name of God to draw blood instead of defeating the lies of Satan like [Revelation 19](#).

Immature vs. Mature Believers

A sign of an immature believer, for sure, would read in Deuteronomy that pig is an abomination. And I say this, this is a sign of an immature believer, because I know at one point I was there. I hope I'm not there anymore. But a sign of an immature believer is to read it like I used to, and that is, God says pigs are an abomination. Look at all those sinners out there. You know what? As of now, this very moment, I will stop eating pork. Therefore, I am all of a sudden Moses. And look at all of those sinners out there, and they're eating and they're an abomination to God, and they're doing this. It's just like, gosh. Don't your disciples wash their hands before they eat? Right? Like that's the thing.

And we're so tempted to do that because we know the power of God and we know the authority that God's name carries. Do like Constantine did and write his name on a sword and go out and draw blood. A mature believer who understands the heart of God, they read the pigs and abomination at Deuteronomy and they say, wow, oh, God doesn't judge me for something I didn't really have a grasp on. Being that I'm human, you could put pork or anything in there. This is just the example for Reggie. Put anything in there. Put everything in there. I hope God doesn't judge me for something I really did not have a grasp on because I'm a human. And I should not judge other people for something they likely don't really have a grasp on because they're human.

The Challenge for 2024

You see the difference between the two. One is filled with childish pursuits in the name of God, and the other is filled with the compassion and grace of God. And as we watch the sun set for the last time in 2023, I want to encourage you as the people that follow Yeshua, the representatives of God's kingdom. I want to encourage you to keep maturing in your faith. And if that means you die daily, good. Because it's hard. Especially when you're told and you're manipulated to hate everybody for whatever reason. It's hard. And next year, you will be put to the test. You're being put to the test right now. Where will you land? Where will you land?

When You Grow and Others Do Not

Those who cheered on Reggie throughout his career as a proud preacher, NFL player, were the same ones that thought he walked away from his faith when he started studying the Bible and acting differently. Not to say that he didn't make a huge impact during his NFL career for the kingdom of God. I believe he did. He did, absolutely. But his maturity is what impresses me so much because that's something that most people never experience and we should want to because that's what happens when you grow and others do not. They will always say that you're turning your back on God. They will always say that you are compromising. They'll always say that you're falling away because your faith walk doesn't look like what God told them it should look like.

Keep Going

And I want to encourage you today to keep going. Keep pushing. Make boundaries, but also extinguish boundaries that have no purpose but to divide. In 2024, let's make a commitment to love more. Let's make a commitment to show grace more. Let's make a commitment to have compassion at such a level that it makes the immature uncomfortable. I think that's where we're called to be. It's not easy, but thankfully, we have a good teacher. Amen?

Prayer and Closing

Please stand as we conclude services. I invite you to worship during this time. Pray, meditate on his word. If you need prayer today before entering into the new year, for whatever reason—things you're going through in your life, or if you need to lift someone else up in prayer. Guys, we're going to have a prayer team on either side of the stage. I encourage you, just walk up. Just walk up, okay? They will pray over you. Alvina Malcano, our Father, our King Father, we thank

you for this time that we can come together on this Shabbat, the day that reminds us of your kingdom, of the garden of peace with you, resting in your arms. Father, we thank you for giving us such timeless, creative examples in your word to remind us just how big your heart is, just how big your love is, just how far your compassion goes, that you are slow to anger, merciful and compassionate towards all. Father, I ask in the name of Yeshua, the Holy Spirit that is within us now, that you would allow us to become a reflection of you, even if it's hard, even if it takes practice, that you would remind us to keep going, keep working, and keep practicing in that pursuit. We thank you in the name of Yeshua, we pray. Amen. Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. Blessed is the name of his glorious kingdom for all eternity. May the Lord also cause you to increase and overflow in love for one another and for all people.

Closing Blessing

In order to strengthen your hearts as blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Yeshua with all his Kedoshim. And may the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance toward you and give you his peace. Because he is our Sar Shalom, our Prince of Peace.

Hallelujah. Shabbat Shalom, family.

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